



**ENVIRONMENT  
GOVERNANCE  
INSTITUTE(EGI)**



## **RAPID ASSESSMENT REPORT OF COVID 19 IMPACT ON THE LIVELIHOODS OF TOURISM HOST COMMUNITIES' IN MURCHISON FALLS LANDSCAPE - UGANDA**

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# ACRONYMS

Acronym	Meaning
<b>CCW</b>	Community Conservation Wardens
<b>CDO</b>	Community Development Officer
<b>COVID-19</b>	Corona Virus Disease 2019
<b>DCDO</b>	District Community Development Officer
<b>DEO</b>	District Environment Officer
<b>DFO</b>	District Forestry Officer
<b>DTO</b>	District Tourism Officer
<b>EGI</b>	Environmental Governance Institute
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FGD</b>	Focus group discussion
<b>IUCN</b>	International Union for Conservation of Nature
<b>KII</b>	Key Informant Interviews
<b>SMEs</b>	Small and Medium Enterprises
<b>SOPS</b>	Standard operating Procedures
<b>TOR</b>	Terms of Reference
<b>UWA</b>	Uganda Wild life Authority

# Executive Summary

The outbreak of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Uganda and subsequent nationwide lockdown by government helped the country register low corona virus cases, but the measures had a devastating impact on the country's economy particularly on the Tourism sector, which placed livelihoods of tourism host communities at risk.

In response Environment Governance Institute (EGI), with support from [IUCN Save Our Species](#) and Co-Funded by the [European Union](#) (EU) commissioned a Rapid Assessment Survey in the five districts of Hoima, Kibale, Masindi, Kiryandongo, and Bulisa that are within the Murchison falls national park green belt. The main objective was to assess the impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on the livelihoods of tourism host communities'.

The target groups of the Survey; were the tourism host communities around tourism sites in Murchison falls landscape, the traditional custodians of these sites; the Community, Environmental Groups and tourism associations that have been affected by halt of tourism activity, the District and sub county concerned officers and representatives of Uganda Wild Life Authority.

A Part from complying with the Standard operating procedures (SOPs) and the Ministry of Health COVID-19 guidelines during the survey, the researcher also employed a cross-sectional study design, which was applied to collect data using Simple random and purposive sampling. The total sample size comprised of 184 respondents. The researcher further used Key Informant Interviews (KII), which were conducted both on telephone and physically following the social distancing protocol.

The findings of the Rapid Assessment generally indicate that; the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic put all activities of tourism host communities at a standstill. The closure of protected areas led to loss of revenue from the sector which resulted into lack of funds to support tourism host communities' in pursuing alternative ventures.

There was also loss of jobs that were previously offered by hotels, lodges, restaurants and other related tourism service industries like entertainment groups and art craft industry among others, which led to widespread unemployment.

The Survey further registered increased poaching, encroachment, and degradation of the protected areas by jobless individuals looking to earn a meal for the next day. There is also, a trend communities are referring to as "revenge", wild animals whose habitats had been destroyed moved to neighboring community buffer areas and spread diseases to domestic livestock. There reports of instant deaths of domestic animals attributed to the interaction between wildlife and domestic animals as cross-referenced by the existing literature.

The survey also reports rise in food insecurity resulting from elephants evading people's crops, this situation has remained a common community wildlife conflict. Given the fact, that no compensation in form of food relief and other products has been received as it used to be before the pandemic, communities' have turned to poaching as a sign of revenge especially the youth in order to earn a living.

The Survey further found that livelihood options, like Eco-friendly agriculture with crops that deter animal invasion into the

community, trading enterprises, eco-tourism development through medicinal plantation, entertainment groups, art and craft ventures, African Restaurants that fed tourists on the African delicacies, bee keeping projects, have slowed down and UWA has no funds to sustain the projects.

Most of the people who previously engaged in these income-generating activities especially the youth, as reported by UWA, have eventually turned to protected areas to subsidize their living.

It is evident that they returned to forest related encroachment activities and some of these are contributing to the greenhouse effect. This can be attributed to the fact that the conservation tourism host community groups have not been supported as the case used to before COVID-19 pandemic outbreak and the eventual lockdown.

The Survey has mapped out a number of stakeholders that should be involved while addressing these concerns. These have been categorized from National level, District,

Sub County and Community level. They do include; UWA officials, District officials, Conservation groups, tourist host organized groups as Identified in Appendix 1 and 2 among others

In conclusion, it can be asserted that the outbreak of COVI-19 pandemic and eventual nationwide lockdown put all activities of the tourist host communities at a standstill, and their livelihoods at stake.

Therefore, following the resumption of the tourism sector and the opening up of protected areas, it is important, that different stakeholders take a practical role in supporting tourism host community initiatives with stimulus packages in order to minimize encroachment and poaching within the PA. some of the livelihood options hit hard by the Pandemic which will require massive support after the crisis include; personal businesses in form of Trading enterprises, entertainment, restaurants, art craft, eco-tourism ventures among others as indicated in Appendix. 1and 2.



## 1.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the background of Covid-19, its impact on the Ugandan economy and the tourism sector, objectives, purpose, scope of work, and the main target groups of the Rapid Assessment Survey.

### 1.1 Background of Covid-19 Pandemic and its impact on the Ugandan Economy plus the Tourism Sector

The outbreak of the coronavirus disease, also known as COVID-19 in Uganda was announced in March 2020 and the first case was recorded on the 21<sup>st</sup> of the same month. By end of month cases had risen to 33 and to date (October 2020), cases have risen to over 10,000. In view of the outbreak, a number of measures were put in place to contain the pandemic. These included; a. closure of all the Educational Institutions, which accounted for 15 million young Ugandans; b. Suspended communal prayers in Mosques, Churches or in Stadium and other open-air venues; c. Stopped all public political rallies, cultural gatherings or conferences; d. A ban on Ugandans from moving to or through category one e. countries that had had a large number of corona cases; by 7th of March these countries were China, France, Germany, Iran, Italy, South-Korea, Spain, USA, UK The Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, Austria, Malaysia, San Marino and Belgium. F. discouraged the hexagonal, extravagant Ugandan-style weddings; Weddings allowed only for a maximum of 7 people. g. Suspended all public passenger transport vehicles and those were taxis, coasters, buses, passenger trains, tuk-tuks (tricycles) and boda-bodas.

In order to scale down the numbers of the populations in the markets, only food sellers remained in the markets.

To make matters worse, Borders were closed together with Entebbe airport, all passengers coming into Uganda were stopped and the entire tourism sector came to a halt with business running out of liquidity.<sup>1</sup>

The tourism sector has been the main sustainable source of government revenues accounting for \$ 1.6bn from the 1.3 million tourist arrivals in 2019. The sector has been contributing approximately 8% of the GDP and supported 700,000 jobs directly and 1.6 million jobs indirectly according to 2018/2019 financial year.

Estimates from the Ministry of Tourism indicate that Uganda is expected to lose nearly \$ 2 billion in tourism earnings in 2020 due to travel restrictions implemented after the coronavirus outbreak.

The government had forecast to receive 1.5 million visitors in 2020 before the outbreak of covid19. These projections were also based on a situation where the virus would be quickly contained, but the shortfalls could significantly exceed projections if the current restrictive control measures continue.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the sector having proven resilience in response to previous crises, the sheer depth and breadth of the COVID-19–impact cannot be underrated. It is likely that, there will be

<sup>1</sup> Exchange Uganda – Status Report COVID-19 Report in Uganda Version 2.0 7<sup>th</sup> of May 2020

<sup>2</sup> Socioeconomic Impact of Covid-19 In Uganda Aug 2020 How Has the Government Allocated Public Expenditure for FY2020/21? devinit.org

increased poverty as the economy slows down. What has been projected already clearly does indicate a slowdown of the economy nearly by the half of the financial year 2019/2020 with further uncertainties by the financial year 2020/2021 and this is likely to rise poverty during and after the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Today, the airports, boarder's markets and others have remained closed, it has raised fear among the tourism host communities which has increased encroachment on Eco sensitive areas to sustain their livelihoods. However, interventions by CSOs and partners to help the tourism host communities including promoting climate-smart agriculture, animal husbandry, fruit seedlings, bee keeping among others are timely.

## 1.2 Objectives of the Rapid Assessment

The objective of the Rapid Assessment is to;

1. Determine the magnitude of the impact of COVID 19 on the livelihoods of tourism host communities in the green belt of Murchison falls national park
2. Identify and propose alternative livelihood options, suitable for the communities
3. Identify the conservation needs of Murchison falls national park green belt that communities can make a contribution.

## 1.3 Main Target Group

The main target of the Survey are the tourism host communities around the tourism sites in Murchison falls landscape, the cultural and religious leaders, who are the traditional custodians of these sites. The Community, Environmental Groups and tourism associations that have been affected by the loss of tourism activity, district and sub county concerned officers and representatives of Uganda Wild Life Authority.

## 1.4 The purpose of the Rapid Assessment Report

The Rapid Assessment Survey findings will enable EGI and other CSOS to determine the current livelihood options, the most suitable approach and the best livelihoods that can be adopted by communities and guarantee the conservation of key biodiversity habitats.

## 1.5 Scope Work:

The Rapid Assessment Survey report documented the impacts of COVID 19 on tourism host communities in Murchison falls national park belt or landscape in the districts of Hoima, greater Kibale, Masindi, Kiryandongo, and Buliisa. The survey also documented the best approach and methods of engaging with communities while diversifying and introducing alternative livelihoods. The survey further ensured an assessment of the possible impacts the project will have on threatened species identified.



## 2.0. Methodology/ Approach

In order to achieve the Objectives of the Rapid Assessment, the survey team considered and applied Standard Operating Procedure and the presidential COVID- 19 guidelines during the Rapid Survey. The team further made use of the cross-sectional study design, which was applied to collect data using simple Random and purposive sampling. The total sample size of the Rapid assessment was 184 respondents drawn from tourism host communities in Murchison falls national park belt in the districts of Hoima, Kibale, Masindi, Kiryandongo, and Buliisa. The consultant also documents the best approaches, in Identifying alternative livelihoods for tourism host communities.

Using Key Informant Interviews, the consultant interviewed a sample of stakeholders that included district officials, community development officers, tourism host communities and warden community conservation.

### 2.1 Sample size

The Actual sample size of respondents was 184 drawn from tourism host communities' districts of Hoima, Kibale, Hoima, Masindi, Kiryandongo, and Buliisa. The cultural institution of Bunyoro, UWA and Independent conservation groups as detailed in the table below;

Category	Male	Female	Total
UWA Officials	5	3	08
Leaders of tourist Host Communities'	12	08	20
Community representatives	55	45	100
CDOs	08	02	10
Tourism Officers	6	4	10
Environment Officers	4	1	05
Vermin Control Officer	2	4	06
Leaders of Conservation groups	7	3	10
Entrepreneurs within and outside the Protected Area	7	8	15
Total	106	78	184

### 2.2 Secondary data Review

The survey further carried out a Review of secondary data to determine the impacts of COVID 19 on tourism and the economies of tourist host countries at both Global and National Perspective respectively.

### 2.3. Data analysis and Reporting:

Data collected was scrutinized, cleaned, edited and analyzed according to different themes and the findings thereof was compared to the baseline socio-economic

conditions of the people to determining the magnitude and the impact of COVID 19 on the livelihoods of tourism host communities. The Consultant further identified and proposed alternative livelihood options, suitable for the communities and the approach to be used for increased adoption and acceptability of the livelihoods based on the response received.

## 2.4 Ethical code of Conduct

As noted in Creswell, (2009)<sup>3</sup> any study involving people and about people ethical issues must be anticipated. It was anticipated that the methodology of the study would to raise issues such as privacy and confidentiality that required ethical consideration. These were anticipated to arise during interviews

and the questionnaire. To ensure professional ethical conduct, the study was planned and conducted in accordance with the ethical requirements and standards of any research Survey. Before data collection, there was an issuance of a formal introduction of the consultant to the respondents explaining the purpose of the Survey. Respondents were given freedom to choose to or not to participate in the survey. For the respondents who chose to participate in the survey, consent was thought through by telephone owing to the COVID-19 Standard operating procedures of social distance before data was collected. To ensure utmost confidentiality of the data collected, final findings of the Survey are presented as anonymous and shall be used specifically to information

<sup>3</sup> Creswell, J (2009). Research Design: Qualitative, quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publication Limited

## 3.0 THE RESULTS OF THE RAPID ASSESSMENT

### 3.1. Introduction

This section presents the finding of the Rapid Assessment including but not limited to the current livelihood options, the current conservation issues key stakeholders to engage during project implementation within Murchison Conservation belt.

### 3.2 Conservation Needs within Murchison Falls Green Belt

During the survey with the UWA officials, the conservation needs of Murchison falls were identified as increased poaching activities, reduction in revenue sharing funds, and halt in tourism activities leading to the fall in the forex earned. Another threat identified was oil and gas activities affecting conservation this was further elucidated by the tourist host community key stakeholders (13) of District officials (2) community conservation wardens, 5) leaders of the tourist host community groups and hoteliers neighboring the Murchison Conservation Protected area. They also intimated that conservation within the protected area cannot be maintained without directly relaying on community" tourism Activities. They went ahead to suggest the need to constitute a fund in order to avert a sector-wide crisis management situation, that can help to boost the recovery efforts of the tourism sector after the Pandemic.

A study by the East African Business Council (EABC) indicates that EAC Partner States will potentially lose about 6.2 million tourists and receipts of upwards of \$5.4b for the year 2020; due to COVID-19 and the associated

inevitable restrictions. The trickle-down effects will be felt across affiliated industries and the rest of the economies within the region<sup>4</sup>.

Arguably it was further realized by Leaders of the Tourism Host Communities' that in order to support the tourism sector, liquidity should be extended to the tourism business especially the SMEs that are likely to get out of business because of the biting effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic outbreak

The survey established that eco-friendly tourism activities such as community trails, nature walks, accommodation facilities, entertainment, crafts making, and extensive engagements with tourism host community leadership are a prerequisite in achieving a balanced Eco- tourism conservation program.

In addition, eco-friendly agriculture with crops that deter invasion of wild animals has been a pillar in promoting conservation but these initiatives were lost during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Therefore, in order to achieve a great conservation agenda people who lost employment opportunities must be helped to rejuvenate their Collapsed small-scale tourism based businesses and Change business ideas to suit the current situation (5 Environment Officer's Assertion).

### 3.3 Climate Change

Protected areas provide two key functions a. Protect: maintain ecosystem integrity, buffer local climate, reduce risks and impacts from

<sup>4</sup> East African Business Council (EABC) Writer Chairman of the Uganda Tourism Board 21st April 2020



events such as storms and droughts and sea-level rise b. Provide: maintain essential ecosystem services that help people cope with changes in water supplies, fisheries, disease and agricultural productivity caused by climate change. Murchison falls National Park, houses a combination of grassland, wooded savannah, tropical forests wetlands, and open water covering approximately 39,000 ha. The park houses 109 species of mammals, 478 bird species and 145 trees/plants.<sup>5</sup>

During the field survey, discussions were held with two of the Murchison falls National Park Community Conservation Wardens and 11 leaders of the organized community Conservation groups like the Kyamalera Wild Life Education Center from Hoima, where a number of issues were highlighted regarding conservation of endangered species and the critical habitats. The survey found out that the biggest concern was hinged on the level of human Encroachment especially for agriculture on natural resources and deforestation, of critical habitats of both rare and engendered species, wetlands and riverine forest destruction.

According to Vesperini (2002), Poaching is a serious problem and has cost wildlife a lot of resources to fight it. Animals are hunted for bush-meat and trophies, non-targeted species are sometimes injured or even killed by traps and snares targeting other animal species. Wild animals are hunted for their products, such as hide, ivory, horn, teeth and bone, are sold to dealers who make clothes, jewelry and other materials from them. In others cases animals are poached for game meat, cultural and medicinal values.

According to Bailly D et al., (2010) *“Deforestation caused by human activities such as agricultural expansion,*

*charcoal production and illegal logging inside and within the buffer areas can undermine the ecosystem and climate benefits of PAs. Deforestation in buffer areas further undermines the connectivity among PAs, and thus leads to Isolation which in turn can potentially cause restriction of the ability of plant and animal species to relocate to new geographic areas as well as changing plant community structure and diversity within PAs because of herbivore concentration”*<sup>6</sup>

From 2002 to 2019, Uganda lost 64.3kha of humid primary forest, making up 7.9% of its total tree cover loss in the same time period. Total area of humid primary forest in Uganda decreased by 87% in this time period<sup>7</sup> which Constitutes a significant contribution of the total anthropogenic emissions from the land-use change in the country. These would provide the theoretical basis for strengthening the protection of existing conservation areas, allocating additional areas of conservation and improving the connectivity of PAs.

Further interrogation during the survey revealed that communities encroach on these resources in search of large expanse of virgin land for farming/agriculture; cutting trees for charcoal burning, wetlands have been destroyed for Agriculture and aquaculture farming.

Some community members have intensified their activities in the protected areas in a bid to harvest firewood, poles for construction and grass for thatching their houses and others go to look for pasture for their animals.

It was also made clear that the encroachment has been exacerbated by the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic and because of this,

<sup>5</sup> Climate Change and Biodiversity in Uganda African and Latin American Resilience to Climate Change (Arcc) August 2014

<sup>6</sup> Bailey, D.; Schmidt-Entling, M.H.; Eberhart, P.; Herrmann, J.D.; Hofer, G.; Kormann, U.; Herzog, F. Effects of habitat amount and isolation on biodiversity in fragmented traditional orchards. *J. Appl. Ecol.* 2010, 47, 1003–1013.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.globalforestwatch.org/dashboards/country/UGA/>

increased illegal activities in the protected area can potentially increase climate change effects. In addition, changes in the climate due to human activities have changed the natural habitats of wildlife and eventually the actions have reduced wildlife population over time.

### 3.4 Disease Transmission

Another conservation issue that the study found was reported by the Vermin Control officers interacted with, was the transmission of foot and mouth disease from wild animals to the farmland livestock within communities and this has been mostly claimed along the fringes of Murchison falls conservation Belt, especially in Kaniopabidi Masindi, Ngwedo Sub county in Bulisa among others. The wild animals are interacting more often with domestic livestock and some of these diseases are being transmitted to humans. This state of affair has increased conflicts between the farmers and the wild life officials.

Diseases between livestock and wild animals have been observed and studied for many decades but recently there has been an upsurge in interest with improvement in our understanding of the epidemiology of multi-host infections and better diagnostic tools. Schwabe, (1978), argues that "Written records of the transmission of diseases between species are almost as old as civilization itself. There are classical examples such as anthrax and tuberculosis, with relatively more recent reporting of the role of multiple wild and domestic hosts in the epidemiology of diseases such as influenza (birds-mammals), rabies (mammal – mammal) and Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) (wild bovids – cattle *Bos indicus*), as well as the improved understanding of the complex vector-host relationships of many diseases (African Horse Sickness, African and Classical Swine

Fever, trypanosomosis, theileriosis, Rift Valley Fever"<sup>8</sup>).

### 3.5 Human wildlife conflict

The Survey also registered increasing conflicts between wild animals and humans and according to the Community development officers, Community Conservation Officers and game rangers. They asserted that these conflicts are escalating because of increased encroachment of communities on wildlife habitats.

A discussion with the four assistant wardens for community conservation within Murchison belt headed by Mr. John Onechan a conservation ranger in Bulisa revealed that because of increased park activities especially from the oil and gas sector, animals especially elephants have moved north wards which in turn wreak havoc in Porongo villages destroying people's crops.

This has apparently forced UWA to erect electric fences to drive back these animals to the park. Despite all efforts to contain animals, they still move along the fence until they find an exit to people's Gardens. This situation has increased bad blood among the conservationists and the local community.

The survey further reports incidences of the members of the community being shot at by rangers whenever they cross into the national park. This narration is synonymous to the Oct, 8<sup>th</sup> 2019 incident where, Elly and Maate UWA rangers attached to Nkuringo ranger post who were on their normal foot patrols in the national park met three suspected poachers who engaged them. "On confrontation, one Aloyse Kakuru, 28 a Ugandan resident of Nteko village, Nteko parish, Nyabwishenya sub-county in Kisoro district was shot dead whereas another suspected poacher was

<sup>8</sup> The current epidemiological revolution in veterinary medicine. Part I Preventive Veterinary Medicine Volume 1, Issue 1, August 1982, Pages 5-15

arrested. The third suspect ran away," Maate said. This incident happened at River Ivi within Bwindi national park, the suspect was later identified as John Kaheru<sup>9</sup>. This concern seems relevant because the Community claims that they have a path in the buffer zones gazetted by UWA which leads them to cross to the next village, but whenever they step into the protected area, they are mistaken to be poachers and end up being shot at by the rangers. This situation has increased bad relations between UWA officials and the community.

## 3.6 LIVELIHOOD ISSUES

### 3.6.1 Conflict regarding the conservation fund

The survey has found that the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) in close collaboration with the community Conservation Wardens have gazetted critical ecological areas in order to conserve critical species. Revenue collection from the conservation efforts by the protected area management is low due to COVID-19 Outbreak, to the extent that; the organized conservation groups and communities neighboring the protected areas hardly share in revenues arising from gate collection and incomes from hotels, lodges and restaurants.

This survey has registered cases of conflict on sharing of the conservation fund which comes in form of subsidies to the community especially those whose property, crops and domestic animals get attacked by wild animals,

Subject to the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic, everybody within the community claims compensation even when some of these people are not affected at all. Failure to extend any money they turn into poachers

and start encroachment on the reserve as a revenge.

During the assessment, the National Park authorities were found to be very essential in terms of community Livelihood development through Corporate Social Responsibility. This has been possible through establishment of community projects and Provision of 20% gate collection to adjacent communities. These Authorities do encourage community members to establish eco-friendly initiatives for income generation. They sensitize some communities on the importance of conservation and further Support rural communities to start alternative livelihood projects to boost their income, however because of the impact of the pandemic UWA management in Murchison belt requested that they needed support in;

- a) Agricultural value addition, processing and marketing
- b) Supporting high value crops that require limited land resources (aquaculture, apiary, pepper growing, mushroom growing etc.)
- c) Skills in high value and attractive crafts making and marketing
- d) Skills in high quality furniture making and marketing
- e) Skills development in welding and hair dressing etc.

### 3.6.2 Business within and outside the Protected Area

The Consultant interacted with Seven (7) business owners within and outside the protected area to determine how their businesses were affected by the outbreak of COVID-19 Pandemic. The results indicate that the pandemic affected the functioning of the Tourism sector in the way that; there are

<sup>9</sup> <https://nilepost.co.ug/2019/10/08/uwa-rangers-on-patrol-shoot-dead-suspected-poacher-in-bwindi-national-park/>



No more tourists or visitors a situation that led to low revenue generation. The Closure of tourism sites led to the loss of employment opportunities, lost revenue and increased pressure on natural resources by humans who have lost such opportunities. This means that they have to look for new avenues of survival.

The leaders of the businesses within and outside the park also explained that, the closure of the park resulted in direct and indirect implication. 1., lodges and hotels both inside and out the park lost business. 2. A number of restaurants also closed below are some of the tourist hotels and Lodges claimed to have run out of business.

### **In Murchison Fall**

- Red chili safari camp
- Simbiya River Lodge
- Bakers Lodge
- Twiga Lodge
- Kabalega Lodge
- Murchison River Lodge
- Nile Safari Lodge
- Yebbo Visitors' Camp
- Tree House in Bulisa among others

Closure of these hotels and lodges resulted into high levels of unemployment, redundancy, hopelessness of many groups of people living near the protected area. This situation according to the Community conservation warden has exacerbated illegal activities in the protected area; consequently, the cases of poaching, human- wild life conflicts are high and increased cases of crop raiding by varmines and stray wild animals.

A Case in point, Community Conservation Wardens of Kibale and Murchison registered increased community encroachment on tourist conservation sites or protected areas. This has unfolded in terms of poaching

and destruction of habitats of key wildlife species because of weakening engagements with communities attributed to resource constraints resulting from low revenue and taxes collected from the tourism related activities that have been brought about by the outbreak of the pandemic.

### **3.6.3 Social Protection and Access to Food Security**

During the survey, 10 of the community development officers, UWA officials and 11 leaders of the tourist host communities' asserted that; there were changes in the tourist host community livelihoods due to COVID-19 outbreak. The changes were majorly socio-economic specifically categorized as; community lifestyles, where entertainers, aircraftsmen and women, hoteliers, and other businesspersons have moved to practicing Agriculture.

They further revealed that tourist host communities' in Murchison lost their income generating activities due to closure or collapse of their businesses.

The Outbreak of COVID-19 saw the closure of public transport system, Change in transport fares, loss of employment including people learning the harder way to start saving and credit schemes require support.

From the Agricultural perspective, support should be extended to the Agribusiness industry; a fund should be allocated to address the issues of value addition in this sector.

Tourist host communities are in a state of jeopardy, COVID-19 pandemic just ravaged their entire means of survival. This situation has forced communities turn into poachers, encroachers' and above all human wildlife conflict has increased.

### 3.6.4 What constitutes a community livelihood option?

During this assessment, the survey interacted with 10 District officials in both Bulisa, Hoima Masindi and Kiryandongo including the community development officer, tourism officer, Environment officer; sub county community development officer and the UWA representatives.

Interactions with these officials was meant to seek their input onto what would constitute Alternative Livelihood options for the tourism host communities amidst and after Covid-19 Pandemic. The responses received indicate that; People need to be supported to practically take on more of Agricultural production. Others, should be supported to start personal businesses, in form of Trading enterprises, development of Eco tourism through medicinal plantations, planting palm trees and processing palm oil on commercial basis and encouraged to have in place Environment and Social commitment plans which must be followed to the latter

In another development, While, in discussion with four UWA officials. They revealed that they tried to allocate land to Farmers especially along the buffer zones for cultivation and tree planting. However, the covid19 outbreak devastated the process to the extent that UWA failed to live up to its responsibility of providing tree seedling and crop seedlings to the farmers.

Eleven (11) of the Leaders of tourist Host Communities,' revealed that they had formed groups to start alternative income generating activities like, Goat rearing, bee keeping, farming like Irish potato growing, maize, beans and sweet potato, hand craft making and cultural entertainment to perform at hotels for tourists. However, funding agencies withdrew support when the COVID-19 pandemic broke out and the

initiatives stopped see **Appendix 1 and 2**

While in discussion with ten (10) of the Community development officers, the consultant needed to ascertain the protected areas project that benefits the community directly. The Survey found that, Covid-19 affected the trench digging project that prevents large mammals from crossing to people's gardens, for example it was revealed that a 1 meter dug trench costs 20,000/UGX approximately \$6 and this money is paid directly to the community member who participates in the activity the project however vanished with the outbreak of the pandemic.

A discussion with 5 leaders of the Conservation Groups Friends of chimpanzee revealed that conservation groups have been very handy in handling wild animals outside the protected areas but they lack resources. Therefore, it is important to support such initiatives that deal with conservation of wild animals outside the protected areas because many chimpanzees have been found roaming in people's homes.

## 3.7. Proposed Key Stakeholders to work with in addressing COVID 19 impacts on Tourism host community livelihoods

### 3.7.1 National Level

- Uganda Wildlife Authority

### 3.7.2 District Level

- District Chairperson
- Chairperson LC 5 and the executive
- Chief Administrative Officers
- District community development officers
- District Tourism office (Trade Industry and Social Economic Development Department)

- Environment office (Natural Resources Department)
- Resident District Commissioners'
- Forestry officers
- Kyamalera wildlife Education Center
- Community wildlife Conservation Wardens
- Sub county Community Development Officer

### 3.7.3 Community level

At community level, there are a number of stakeholders that are involved in conservation activities these include and are not limited to;

- Uganda wildlife foundation (AWF), they work mainly on problem animals and complement the livelihood programs.
- Uganda Conservation Foundation (UCF) support the construction of Ranger Camps
- Communities neighboring fragile ecosystems like protected areas, community forests, crater lakes, critical wetlands, etc.
- Youth and women associations
- Sub county chiefs
- Area parish chiefs
- People who formerly and Currently derive their livelihoods from the protected areas



## CONCLUSION

Results from the survey within Murchison belt, indicate that the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic put all activities of the tourist host communities at a standstill, the protected areas were closed, and the conservation fund has not supported these communities. This state of affairs means that the revenue which used to come from employment, offered by hotels, lodges, restaurants services and other related tourism ventures like entertainment groups has apparently been lost. The different groups of people within and outside protected areas need to be supported to cope in order to mitigate their encroachment on these areas.

Going forward, a comprehensive tourism COVID-19 recovery plan needs to be developed by the different stakeholders that includes a special stimulus package that integrates creation of alternative livelihood interventions and resources to support tourist host community's initiatives.

## Recommendations

Basing on the finding of the Survey, both strategic and policy recommendations have been identified and these include and are not limited to;

- There is need to offer training to the tourist host communities' and organized groups to instill hope and confidence that Conservation and Tourism are the most lucrative ventures going forward. The trainings, should be extended to the already existing but weak groups to boost their ventures like Bee keeping, Environmental conservation and other income generation initiatives. Community groups should be trained in forest-based enterprise development, Biomass and energy saving technologies. Agriculture production and Agri- processing plants be reestablished. It is equally important that these community groups be helped to develop management work plans in the long run.
- In order to strengthen the economic resilience of tourist host communities' within the Murchison belt, the survey recommends that support should be provided to the new alternative livelihood options including: - goat rearing, piggery, Poultry, apiary Agriculture farming, saving and credit projects' eco-tourism projects, art craft, entertainment industry among others.
- The survey further recommends support to communities with high value crops that also require limited land resources (aquaculture, apiary, pepper growing, mushroom growing, as these may not be easily destroyed by wild animals.
- Tourism host communities should be further supported and encouraged to start personal businesses, in form of Trading enterprises, development of Eco tourism through medicinal plantations, planting personal woodlots

and processing palm oil on commercial basis for daily income.

- Community Based Eco-Tourism should be encouraged and supported with adequate resources to mitigate and recover from the Covid-19 shock
- The Identified key stakeholders should be brought on board during project

implementation to encourage and instill a sense of ownership among the tourism host communities'

- Climate change mitigation and adaptation initiatives should be supported to enable the communities absorb the shocks and avoid competing with wildlife for resources

## 13.6. Summary of the identified livelihood options in Kibaale Conservation Area that Need Support During and after Covid-19 Outbreak.

No	Community Group name	District	Sub County	Proposed project	Membership
1	Ndaiga Community Association	Kibale/ Kagadi	Ndaiga	Goat rearing	50
2	Friends of Chimpanzee	Kibale/Kagadi	Muhooro	Goat rearing and Artcraft	40
	Bunyoro Tourism and Environmental Conservation	Kibale	Kagadi	Eco-tourism, Tree planting and Art craft	49
	Mpefu Apiary Group	Kibale/Kagadi	Mpefu	Bee keeping	30
	Pachwa Collaborative forest Management	Kibale/Kagadi	Pachwa	Tree planting for re-afforestation	35
	Pachwa Linda Ebyobuhangwa Association	Kibale/ Kagadi	Pachua	Tree planting, Bee keeping	96
	Kasato Forest and Kyamurangi forest Reserve Association	Kibale/Kagadi	Pachwa	Tree planting, Apiary	90
	Kiryanga Private Forest Owners Association	Kibale/Kagadi	Kiryanga	Tree Planting, Agriculture and Apiary	90
3	Kyamalere Wildlife Education Center	Hoima	Kyabigambire Mparangasi	Eco- Tourism, Education	125
	Kyamalera Women	Hoima	Mparangasi	Hand craft	40
	Youth group	Hoima	Mparangasi	Hair dressing	50
				Tree planting	
				Tailoring	
				Bee keeping	
				Eco-tourism	
				Arts and crafts	
				Goat rearing	
				Tree planting	
4	Private Forest Owners Association	Hoima	Mparaangasi	Tree planting	35
5	Busiriba reformed poachers.	Kamwenge	Busiriba	Bee keeping	
				Goat rearing	
				Piggery	
				Arts and crafts	
				Wood lot establishment	
6	Ntabago Park group	Bunyangabu	Rwimi	Apiary, goat rearing and savings and credit	
7	Friends of Chimpanzee		Hoima	Goat rearing, savings, and credit.	



## 13.7. Identified Livelihood option with organized Groups around Murchison Falls Protected Area That Need Support Amidst and After COVID-19 Outbreak.

S/No	Name of the Group	Team Leaders	Location and type of Project to be supported	Number of beneficiaries
01	Kigaragara Community Youth Skills Handicraft Farming, farming, saving and credit scheme project, Pakanyi sub county, Masindi District	Kyomuhendo Charity	Handcraft Making in Kigaragara village, Kihaguzi parish, Pakanyi Sub county, Masindi District.	19
02	Nyamahasa resource User group, Nyamahasa Sub County, Kiryandongo district	Othuba Muhammad	Bee keeping equipment for Livelihood Improvement. Based in Nyamahasa sub county, Kiryandongo district.	51
03	Lagazi Ex-poachers group. They are involved in patrolling with rangers to remove wire snares. Since they are reformed poachers, they need to be empowered so that they can have an alternative source of livelihood, Purongo sub county, Nwoya District	Based in Pabit parish, Purongo sub county, Nwoya District Ojok Richard Louis	Piggery Project and bee keeping.	25
04	Walukuba Resource Users Group- has been involved in wire snare removal in Bugungu WR, helping to impound cattle from the park, apprehended poachers, in Butiaba sub county, Buliisa District	Walukuba landing site, in Butiaba sub county, Buliisa District, Chairperson is; Okechi Mary	Poultry Project, Handicraft making and tents and chairs hiring at public functions.	25
05	Kaniyo Pabidi Eco-tourism Guides Association	Joyce	They have been involved in Bee keeping for livelihood improvement	23
06	Kasenye Apiary Mixed Bokwe	Kiiza Bokwe	They have been involved in Bee keeping for livelihood improvement	16
07	Lapono Farmers group	Opobo Geoffrey	They have been involved in Bee keeping for livelihood improvement	18
08	Green Uganda Incorporated, Buliisa group(In Ajigo village, Mvule Parish, Ngwedo sub county, Buliisa District)	Isingoma Benson	They have been involved in Bee keeping for livelihood improvement	14
09	Anke Bee Keeping group,	Hakim Masaba in Nyamahasa A Village, Nyamahasa parish, Mutunda sub county, Kiryandongo District	They have been involved in Bee keeping for livelihood improvement	21

## 3.0. The Impact of COVID-19 on Main tourism activities of the real economy<sup>10</sup>

Activity	Impact	Recovery Period	Reasons
Livestock Farming	Moderate	Short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prices and demand should return to the pre-lockdown/ Covid-19 outbreak levels. Marketing challenges that resulted in reduction of livestock slaughter will be a short term effect on livestock rearing activities</li> </ul>
Food crop growing	Moderate	Short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>With favourable weather, food crop growing activities should improve after the Covid-19 lockdown following ease of marketing and increased access to inputs.</li> </ul>
Accommodation and foodservices ( Tourism )	Severe	Long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Even when the travel bans are lifted, both foreign tourist arrivals and domestic tourists' movements are expected to remain very low because of heightened risk aversion, measures related to social distancing and lower disposable incomes.</li> <li>Slowdown in the tourism sector will have knock-on effect on hospitality industry; occupancy rates may remain very low until 2021.</li> <li>In an effort to increase and improve the bottom lines, many businesses are expected to cut down travel and accommodation costs for their employees</li> </ul>
Art, Culture and Recreation ( Tourism )	Severe	Long term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This activity is expected to remain subdued because of persistence of risk aversion, social distancing and other precautionary measures aimed at averting second round Covid-19. Outbreak.</li> </ul>
Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises	Severe	Long term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MSMEs are expected to experience severe liquidity problems due to limited purchasing power.</li> <li>The Strain in the banking system is expected to increase the credit gap for MSMEs</li> </ul>

<sup>10</sup> 21 Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) '2019 Africa: SDG Index and Dashboard Report

# MISSION & VISION



## EGI Vision

**A society that equitably uses natural resources for socio-economic development.**



## EGI Mission

**To promote the sustainable management of natural resources in Uganda and the great lakes region.**





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