



REALISING THE RIGHTS OF COMMUNITIES LIVING ADJACENT TO PROTECTED AREAS IN UGANDA



Case of Kanungu, Rubirizi, Mitooma, Buhweju, Masindi and Nebbi districts. Areas adjacent to Karinja and Budongo forests, Bwindi Impenetrable Forest, Queen Elizabeth and Murchison Falls National Parks

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This Booklet is dedicated to the Ugandan population that have committed their time and resources to work to change the lives of those marginalized in any way through empowering them to know and demand for their rights.

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Cover page: Tumuhairwe Fred (center) lost his finger when a leopard strayed from Queen Elizabeth National Park and attacked him and four others on 6th April 2014 in Kyabakara Sub County-Rubirizi District.

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Uganda Debt Network (UDN) is a lobby and advocacy organisation which operates in partnership with community based organizations in different districts to promote and advocate for pro-poor policies and full participation of poor and marginalised people in influencing poverty-focused policies, demand for their rights and monitor service delivery to ensure prudent, accountable and transparent resource generation and utilisation.

UDN has been cognizant of the fact that there are issues specific to people living in and around the various forest reserves and wildlife protected areas in Uganda. In 2010, the Organisation embarked on an advocacy journey to expose the key concerns of communities living in protected areas to engage the Minister for Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities as well as their respective Members of Parliament to improve the lives of people living adjacent to wildlife protected areas.

The affected communities are Mpungu and Kayonza sub counties neighbouring Bwindi Impenetrable National Park (BINP) and Kichwamba, Kirugu, Kyabakara, Katunguru and Katerera sub counties in Rubirizi district neighbouring Queen Elizabeth Protected Area (QEPA), Karujubu Sub County in Masindi District (Budongo Forest) and Panyimur Sub County in Nebbi District (Murchison Falls National Park). These are communities of UDN operation which are adjacent to protected areas. The Policy, Legal and Institutional Framework at the time were not comprehensive on some vital aspects like compensation for injury, loss of lives and property to animals straying from the National Parks.



A team from UDN, Community Based Monitors, local government leaders and MPs after meeting Hon. Maria Mutaganba (front row-3rd right), the Minister for Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities in August 2013, in Kampala.

Most notable among the advocacy strategies employed by UDN to be able to expose the issues affecting the communities living adjacent to protected areas of Queen Elizabeth National Park and Bwindi Impenetrable National Park were;

1. Gathering information on issues facing protected area settlements through on-site observations, key-person interviews, meetings with the affected communities, consultancies and reports of previous and relevant studies.
2. Meetings with the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities as well as area MPs.
3. Collecting signatures from people affected by animals straying from National Parks and drafting a petition to Parliament seeking to improve the lives of people living adjacent to wildlife protected areas through Policy revision/ change.
4. Lobby meetings with area Members of Parliament.
5. Media advocacy especially on radios
6. UDN Policy Review Newsletters for instance Vol. 13 Issue 4, July-October 2013, pages 6-7
7. Consultative meetings with Uganda Wildlife Authority.
8. Written input into the UWA Policy Guidelines

UDN concern 1: Human - wildlife conflict

Major conflict related to crop raiding, loss of livestock to predators, and human injuries and death resulting from animal attacks. There is no compensation by UWA for property and lives lost to wildlife, since it is not provided for under the law.



Despite the loss of his finger (left) and other injuries, Fred Tumuhairwe and Musiime Grace (right) whose goat was eaten by a stray leopard from Queen Elizabeth National Park were never given any compensation because the laws did not provide for it.

Recommendation

UWA and parish local governments should maintain separate registers of hostile animal incidents to accurately monitor incidents and recognize trends that can possibly lead to identification of the most effective hostile animal management option in certain areas.

Policy action (UWA Policy 2014)

Objective 4: To effectively mitigate human-wildlife conflicts (Strategies - Page 19)

- b) Regularly compile baseline information on damage occasioned by wildlife for crops, livestock, property, injury and loss of life.
- c) Establish and implement a scheme to compensate for the loss of human life and injuries occasioned by wild animals escaping from wildlife protected areas.

UDN Concern 2: Limited Local Government Capacity

Local governments lack resources to deal with pests

Recommendation

The capacity to manage vermin and problem animals should be developed at community level where the problem is felt most since UWA and district local governments have failed to effectively manage human-wildlife conflict. UWA should be charged with the responsibility to train and equip the communities (with radios, rifles, etc) for community-led problem animal management, while the respective district local governments should be responsible for paying community guards who prevent problem animals from invading people's homes and gardens as part of the civil service.

Policy action (UWA Policy 2014)

Objective 2: To sustainably manage wildlife populations in and outside wildlife protected areas (Strategies –Page 17)

Build capacity of Local Governments to effectively participate in wildlife conservation.

Objective 4: To effectively mitigate human-wildlife conflicts (Strategies –Page 19) e) Create the capacity of local governments and communities to address problem-animal and vermin control challenges; and f) Strengthen sector institutional capacity to manage human wildlife conflicts.

UDN Concern 3: No clear information on animal species classification

Animals not declared vermin have also been responsible for loss of life and property around Bwindi Impenetrable and Queen Elizabeth National Parks.

Policy action (UWA Policy 2014)

Objective 4: To effectively mitigate human-wildlife conflicts (Strategies –Page 19)

g) Identify wildlife species that should be classified as vermin, problem animals and protected species.

UDN Concern 4: Questionable integrity of rangers

UWA rangers take long to respond and demand bribes from community members when requested to deal with vermin and problem animals.

Policy Action (UWA Policy 2014)

Objective 8: To effectively combat wildlife crime (Strategies –Page 21)

f) Maintain a disciplined, motivated, trained, equipped and proactive wildlife sector workforce.

UDN Concern 5: Expensive and/or ineffective interventions by UWA

Problem animal management interventions by UWA are expensive to maintain or ineffective



Left: Community members digging a trench around Queen Elizabeth National Park to prevent Wild animals from crossing over. Right: A wire mesh around Queen Elizabeth National Park to prevent wildlife from destroying people's crops and livestock in Kihikihi sub county. These measures have proved ineffective since wildlife, especially elephants, still cross over them.

Recommendation

The full-range of problem animal management options including target area-specific electric fences, deterrent crops (red pepper, etc), non-palatable crops (tea, etc), scare shooting, live fences, trenches, beehives, etc should be employed at all vulnerable boundary points. A community problem animal management group should be made responsible to maintain and expand the various problem animal management options with UWA and local government support.

Policy action (UWA Policy 2014)

Objective 4: To effectively mitigate human-wildlife conflicts (Strategies –Page 19)

a) Establish and maintain barriers along wildlife protected area boundaries for all areas susceptible to stray wild animals.

UDN Concern 6: Land issues resulting from human population growth

Growing human population is increasing land pressure around BINP and QEPA resulting in increased zoonosis and the transmission of diseases between livestock and wildlife.

Policy action (UWA Policy 2014)

Objective 4: To effectively mitigate human-wildlife conflicts (Strategies –Page 19)

i) Manage and control human-wildlife-livestock disease interface.

UDN Concern 7: **Need to revise Revenue sharing guidelines**

Revenue sharing funds from the 20% gate entry fees to protected areas are little and are currently thinly spread to demonstrate effective conservation benefits to communities.

Recommendation

UWA should increase and dedicate the gate entry fees to:

- 1) Problem animal management interventions like supporting the work of the community problem animal management groups.
- 2) Empathetic financial contributions to households that experience human and livelihood losses due to problem animals.

Policy Action (UWA Policy 2014)

Objective 1: To promote sustainable management of wildlife Protected Areas (Strategies – page 16)

d) Define and implement clear guidelines, on protected area management, revenue sharing, resource access and other local community protected area relationships.

Objective 4: To effectively mitigate human-wildlife conflicts (Strategies –Page 19)

c) Increase and direct revenue sharing funds to human wildlife conflict mitigation and other wildlife conservation related interventions.

Objective 9: To promote local, regional and global partnerships for conservation of wildlife (Strategies –page 21)

UDN Concern 8: **Disputed boundaries**

Communities often dispute the location of protected area boundaries. For instance, a swamp near Kigabo and Kyangabukama villages in Katunguru Parish, Rubirizi District which residents believe was forcefully included within QEPA boundaries in the 1980s. Another example is the Mbwa Tract that was erroneously gazetted as part of BINP. UWA officials agreed, but the issue has never been concluded.

Recommendation

Community consultation and participation in planning and decision-making, marking of protected area boundaries should be an integral part of UWA modus operandi.

Policy action (UWA Policy 2014)

Objective 1: To promote sustainable management of wildlife Protected Areas (Strategies – Pg 16)

e) Ensure that all Protected Areas boundaries are surveyed marked and secured.

UDN paid a courtesy visit to the Ag. Commissioner Conservation Planning and Partnerships in the Department of Wildlife Conservation in the Ministry of Tourism Mr. Akankwasah Barirega, on 6th May 2015. He noted that;

1. Preparations to amend the Wildlife Act, 2000 are underway. A Bill is being drafted by Ministry of Justice for presentation to Cabinet for approval before submission to Parliament for discussion and the attendant Regulations made to operationalise the Act.
2. In advancement of advocacy in this area, it is imperative that UDN actively engages the Committee on Tourism, Trade and Industry which he said is passionate about issues concerning protected area settlements.
3. In addition to the current Uganda Wildlife Authority Human Resource Manual that guides on discipline, the Ministry is in the process of developing regulation on the training, discipline and use of firearms by rangers to prevent cases of misuse. This was done after consultation with the Inspector General of Police.



The UDN team Mr. Kapwepwe Julius (left) and Ms. Agaba Adellah (centre) interact with Ag. Commissioner Conservation Planning and Partnerships Mr. Akankwasah Barirega (right)



As UDN continues her advocacy journey on the rights of communities living adjacent to protected areas, the imminent priority actions are;

1. Sharing the 2014 UWA Policy (which addresses most of the earlier concerns of communities' living adjacent to protected areas) with the affected communities and simplification of the Wildlife Act, 2000 when passed into law.
2. Follow up on the proposed amendment to the Wildlife Act, 2000 to keep up to date with new developments as well as engaging with the Parliamentary Committee on Tourism, Trade and Industry to provide input into the amendment and ensure that the rights of the said communities are upheld.
3. Follow up the implementation of the 2014 Uganda Wildlife Policy.
4. Follow-up on the progress regarding the regulations that the Ministry is developing on use, training and discipline with regard to firearms by rangers to prevent cases of misuse. When finalized, they will be shared with the concerned communities for their information and action.

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UDN will continue
her advocacy
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VISION

A prosperous Uganda with sustainable, equitable development and a high quality of life of the people

MISSION

UDN works to promote and advocate for poor and marginalized people to participate in influencing poverty-focused policies, demand for their rights and monitor service delivery to ensure prudent, accountable and transparent resource generation and utilization.



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