

Project Update: June 2021

Creating the income generating activities for the communities living around protected areas create a win-win solution through improving communities' livelihoods and reducing their dependency on the protected areas for harvesting their resources. This dependency reduction brings a positive impact on habitat and food availability of the species living around these protected areas.

Project activities carried out

Activity 1: Meeting with the project beneficiaries

After selecting the project beneficiaries, we had meeting with them and explained details about the project and how they could transfer the knowledge to their colleagues. The project beneficiaries got a chance to ask various questions they had as some of them did not understand well how they could be the solution to the sustainable conservation of the eastern chimpanzees of Nyungwe National Park. After we responded to their questions, they realised how some of their colleagues were directly or indirectly threatening the chimpanzees and they became engaged to be the change makers in the sustainable conservation of this flagship species of Nyungwe National Park.



Figure 1: The project beneficiaries being explained in detail about the project and how it will improve their livelihoods and promote the conservation of the Eastern chimpanzees of Nyungwe National Park as well.

Activity 2: Identifying the trainers, prepare training materials and purchase the equipments

The trainers were identified based on their experience and skills. We had series of training events as we could not train the project beneficiaries in parallel due to the COVID-19 preventive measures in our country. During the training sessions, the trainers were coaching all trainees individually to make sure that they acquired practical skills as the aim was to transfer the skills to their colleagues who would wish to join the cooperatives.

Activity 3: Training Sessions

We conducted a series of training sessions. During the training, the COVID-19 preventive measures were respected as requested by the Ministry of Health in Rwanda. Each attendee's temperature was measured and they washed their hands or used sanitiser upon entry into the training venue; we encouraged them to frequently wash their hands, wear a face mask properly and respect the physical distance of more than 1 m. For some tools and equipment that we were sharing, we disinfected them after each participant's use, and we mostly conducted our training sessions outdoors with enough aeration and social distance.



Figure 2: Some of the project beneficiaries with the trainer after the training sessions



Figure 3: Project leader with trainers after training sessions



Figure 4: The project beneficiary sanitizing his hands before joining other project beneficiaries for training sessions

Activity 4: Operationalising the project

After acquiring the theoretical and practical skills, the trained project beneficiaries started working independently and we were coaching them on daily basis to make sure that they were able to make the most competitive products. We were amazed by the products that the trainees were making, and we were optimistic that their products would be good quality and appreciated at the markets.



Figure 5: One of project beneficiaries making a baby bedcover



Figure 6: Handcrafts made after acquiring theoretical and practical skills

Next Project Activities

The main next activities are to identify the markets for the project beneficiaries' products and to conduct a post-assessment survey to evaluate how the communities' level of understanding has increased and how the project has contributed towards improved sustainable conservation of the eastern chimpanzees and communities' livelihoods as well.



Figure 7: Beehives set with bees inside