



INTERNATIONAL GORILLA
CONSERVATION PROGRAMME

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Peace and conflict impact assessment (PCIA) of IGCP activities in the Virunga-Bwindi region

A project of IGCP in partnership with the
International Institute of Sustainable Development

Background

Conservation work in conflict zones and across international borders has impacts on more than just wildlife populations and their habitat; it can also have a profound effect on the peace and conflict dynamics in a region. For example, while the International Gorilla Conservation Programme (IGCP) implements activities with the primary objective of conserving mountain gorilla populations and habitat, anecdotal evidence suggests that these activities have also improved communication and dialogue between different authorities in the region, thereby fostering relationships and cooperation that are fundamental to peacebuilding. Conversely, decades of experience has shown that conservation interventions can cause tensions and contribute to conflict. This is especially portentous in conflict zones, where any external intervention can unintentionally fuel tensions and conflict by sending the 'wrong' message or entrenching perceived inequities.

As a result, IGCP is now searching for a more detailed and systematic understanding of how their conservation and development activities impact peace and conflict dynamics in the Great Lakes Region. In order to ensure that they do not inadvertently exacerbate the conflict dynamic but instead actively contribute to peacebuilding, IGCP - in collaboration with the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) – will be conducting a Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) of some of their field operations.

Project Goals and Objectives

The goals of the project are as follows:

1. To assist IGCP in achieving their conservation goals by integrating conflict sensitivity in their activities, ensuring that peacebuilding opportunities are maximized and threats to biodiversity conservation are addressed.
2. To develop knowledge about the relationship between conservation and peace/conflict dynamics that will contribute to conservation thinking and practice beyond the central African region.

In order to achieve these goals, the following objectives have been specified:

- a. Analyze how IGCP activities address – both positively and negatively – the root causes of conflict in the Virunga/Bwindi region;
- b. Integrate the results of the PCIA analysis into the management and monitoring plans of IGCP activities;
- c. Build the capacity of IGCP staff to design, conduct and implement the results of PCIA's;
- d. Communicate the value of conflict-sensitivity in TBNRM activities to the broader conservation community

Methodology

The PCIA will utilize a case study approach. Case studies will be informed through background research and qualitative analysis using interviews and open-ended questions with many different actors. The case studies will represent IGCP activities at two different spatial scales; regional and local.

At the **regional level**, two case studies will be selected. They are:

An examination of the **role of transboundary cooperation** in promoting peace and conflict in the region. Activities to be assessed include:

- Regional meetings;
- regional warden meetings;
- joint patrols, etc.

The second case study is an assessment of activities conducted by IGCP through its many partnerships to promote **mountain gorilla tourism**. Activities to be assessed include:

- Tourist development in the Kinigi region including curio shops, honey production and additional tourist infrastructure development

At the **local level**, case studies will be selected that examine the impact of sustainable development (enterprise) programmes on peace and conflict. Case study selections at the local level include:

Land purchases of gorilla habitat at park borders in the Nkuringo region of Bwindi Impenetrable National Park;

The development of the Mgahinga Community Development Organization (MCDO)

Timeline

Assessment activities will be ongoing throughout the period of March 2004-March 2005. An initial brainstorming workshop will be conducted at Ruhengeri, Rwanda on March 23rd 2004 including IGCP staff and protected area authorities from the three countries.

Case study development will include three visits by the assessment team. The first will follow the brainstorming workshop in March 23rd 2005 and will conclude on June 13th. The second will be in late September/early October 2005 and the third in December 2006.

Results from the field assessment will be presented to IGCP staff and protected area authorities in early 2006 in order to solicit additional feedback before developing final recommendations.