



*Africa Development*, Vol. XXXI, No. 2, 2006, pp. 39–68

© Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, 2006  
(ISSN 0850-3907)

## **From Paternalism to Real Partnership with Local Communities? Experiences from Bwindi Impenetrable National Park (Uganda)**

Agrippinah Namara\*

### **Abstract:**

Conserving and sustainably managing Uganda's wildlife and protected areas in partnership with neighbouring communities and other stakeholders for the benefit of the people of Uganda and the global community is the expressed mission of the Uganda Wildlife Authority. This article explores the form that conservation partnerships between the central government, local government and communities are taking in Uganda's wildlife sector. Are these partnerships paving the way from the paternalistic approach to protected area management to partnerships between the wildlife authorities and local communities that are beneficial to both groups? To what extent are institutions representing the local community able to advance local interests and contribute to decision making on wildlife management within these partnerships? Are we moving towards democratic natural resource management? These are the questions that this article ponders.

### **Résumé:**

La mission du Service Ougandais de la Faune est de conserver et de gérer durablement la faune et les aires protégées en partenariat avec les communautés riveraines et d'autres parties prenantes, ceci pour le bénéfice des Ougandais et de la communauté internationale. Cet article explore les mécanismes qui émergent du partenariat entre le gouvernement central, les communes (ou les conseils locaux) et les communautés locales dans le domaine de la gestion de la faune en Ouganda. Ce partenariat se déplace-t-il des approches paternalistes de gestion des aires protégées vers une approche collaborative entre les autorités du Service de la Faune et les communautés locales bénéfique tant à ces dernières qu'à la conservation? Jusqu'où les institutions représentant les communautés locales sont-elles capables de défendre les intérêts locaux et participer à la prise de décision à l'intérieur d'une gestion collaborative? Evoluons-nous vers une gestion démocratique des ressources naturelles? Autant de questions sur lesquelles réfléchit cet article.

---

\* Consultant in natural resource management, Kampala, Uganda.  
Email: [agrip\\_namara@hotmail.com](mailto:agrip_namara@hotmail.com)

## **Introduction**

Management of wildlife resources in Uganda, be it in national parks, wildlife reserves, or central forest reserves, is still largely centrally controlled by the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) and the Forest Department (which was recently replaced by the National Forest Authority). Prior to the 1990s, management of these resources was by command and control, through a strict law-enforcement or policing approach, which protected the resources from the people. However, due to economic reforms that have been implemented since the late 1980s—notably Structural Adjustment Programmes—there have been budget cutbacks leading to fewer staff on the ground. The policing function of conservation agencies thus became ineffective in the face of the escalating depletion of natural resources by communities that derive their livelihood from those resources. The command and control approach also created conflict and animosity between local populations and protected area managers, leading to further destruction by, for example, local communities setting sections of protected areas ablaze or poisoning wildlife in protest.

These experiences sparked global concern by international agencies, donors, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and governments, which in turn induced new approaches designed to counteract the perceived widespread decline of bio-diversity. During the 2003 Fifth World Parks Congress in Durban, South Africa, delegates from wildlife management authorities, NGOs and local communities reiterated the position that governments have to view ecosystem sustainability as essential to human life. They also agreed that, in practical terms, conservation and management of protected areas could only be effective through considering the rights, knowledge and aspirations of neighbouring populations. Moreover, ethically, the least protected areas should do is to not harm adjacent local communities; that is, no net loss of bio-diversity must be balanced with no net loss of livelihood options and opportunities for neighbouring communities.

Managing protected areas with ‘community’<sup>1</sup> participation<sup>2</sup> is one of the key strategies of the UWA management style as laid out in the Uganda Wildlife Policy (Republic of Uganda 1999). The mission statement of UWA as laid out in Wildlife Policy is: ‘To conserve and sustainably manage the wildlife and Protected Areas of Uganda in partnership with neighbouring communities and other stake holders for the benefit of the people of Uganda and the global community’. Thus, the ‘Community Conservation’ approach to protected area management has become a logical one to achieve conservation goals. ‘Community Conservation’ has been used by the UWA as a broad term to describe all work that involves interaction with communities living around

protected areas. It includes education and awareness programmes; conflict resolution to reduce the impact of wildlife on communities and vice versa; and consultation to get people's ideas on the best way to manage wildlife, and to create a sense among communities that they are important stakeholders. A major aspect of community conservation has been the extension of benefits to local communities as an incentive for them to assume responsibilities that support national and international conservation interests, broadly known as collaborative management.<sup>3</sup> Benefits include, but are not limited to, access to protected areas (such as for spiritual purposes); controlled access to protected area resources; sharing of protected area revenue with local communities; and international conservation financing mechanisms, like the Mgahinga and Bwindi Impenetrable Conservation Trust.<sup>4</sup>

The community conservation approach is expected to reduce the animosity between local communities and protected area authorities, and to increase local communities' stake in protected resources, thus increasing their support for conservation. This approach to protected area management endeavours to link communities to the protected areas, to share with them not only the benefits, but also the responsibilities of wildlife management, which the central government has come to realise it cannot fulfil alone given the ever-dwindling human, material and financial resources available. The Uganda Wildlife Statute 1996 (section 15:1) allows the UWA Executive Director to enter into collaborative arrangements with any person for the management of a protected area or part of it. As such, the Uganda Wildlife Policy (Republic of Uganda 1999) provides for collaborative management<sup>5</sup> of resources by UWA and local communities, and stresses active promotion of collaborative management. This includes a programme to enlist community support for park management, as well as participation in park management activities through community-based institutions. Community institutions have been created under different names since 1994 to serve as avenues for community participation. The current ones in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park (BINP) are the Community Protected Area Institution, the Resource User Groups, and to some extent the Production and Environment committees which are sub-committees of Local Councils.

This article explores the form that conservation partnerships between the central government, local governments and communities are taking in Uganda's wildlife sector, within the context of decentralisation, with BINP in the Southwest as an example. It takes a close look at what the UWA has advanced as 'partnerships' with local communities in order to assess whether there has actually been a movement away from the paternalistic approach to protected area management—which has been blamed for creating conflict

between communities, and thus for undermining conservation goals—to real partnerships that benefit both conservation and local communities. I try to assess whether the partnership building process has been characterised by dialogue, shared assessment of problems and opportunities, fair negotiation of decisions and actions, and mutual agreement, which are all the cornerstones of real partnerships for resource management (Borrini-Feyerabend and Sandwith 2003; Whande, Kepe, and Murphree 2003). Assessment is made of the extent to which institutions representing the local community are able to advance local interests and contribute to decision making on wildlife management within these partnerships.

The concern in the article is not to evaluate the impact of conservation partnerships between the central state, local community and local government, but rather to consider whether the partnerships are or have the potential to become real and to advance democratic natural resource governance. Because democracy is about having a certain degree of self-determination and control over decisions being made on behalf of the population in question, obtaining the local community's perspective is important in evaluating its presence. The study shows that where very minimal powers are devolved to local community institutions, their legitimacy is undermined within the local community, especially when they cannot independently make decisions about matters important to the community. Additionally, the central government remains largely unwilling to devolve substantial 'rights' to local communities and local governments, and instead passes on 'privileges' that are not legally defensible. This contradicts the present rhetoric about devolution of decision making to local governments. What is taking place in practice, as Bazaara (this issue) has noted, is a form of 'de-concentration', where the central government rids itself of functions and responsibilities not deemed critical, in line with the available operational resources.

The article is based mainly on research we carried out at different times between 1999 and 2002 in the areas around the BINP.<sup>6</sup> The study also drew upon results of work done by different people and organisations working in the area. Bwindi Impenetrable National Park (BINP) was selected as the study area for two reasons. The first reason is that it is the first National Park in Uganda where the collaborative management approach to park management was tested and is still in practice. Secondly, that BINP, together with Mgahinga National Park, was among the first parks around which a programme of local government participation in park management and decision making was established through a clearly defined institutional framework. This model was used as a pilot programme and its experiences were relied upon during the drafting of the official UWA policy guidelines for community and local

government participation in protected area management, enshrined in the 'Community-Protected Area Institution Policy' (UWA 2000c). Section Two of the article gives a brief historical account of the changes in the management in BINP and interaction of the forest management regimes and local communities. These events eventually led to the alienation of local communities from the forest. Section Three outlines the efforts that have been successively instituted to re-link local communities to the forest. Section Four analyses the forms and essence of partnerships developed between the central government and local communities in terms of the kind and extent of authority that has been devolved. Section Five provides a concluding discussion.

### **The History of Forest-Resource Alienation**

BINP is located in South Western Uganda, situated on the edge of the Western Rift Valley occupying the highest elevations of the Kigezi Highlands. The park borders the Democratic Republic of Congo, located in Kabale, Kanungu, and Kisoro Districts. The forest was first gazetted as a Forest Reserve in 1932 and as an Animal Sanctuary in 1964 under the name of the Impenetrable Central Forest Reserve. Until 1991, BINP was managed as both a forest reserve and a game sanctuary, under the joint management of the forest and game departments. In 1991, it was gazetted as BINP, occupying an area of 330.8 square kilometres. The park was listed as a World Heritage Site in 1994 according to the World Heritage Convention of 1972 to which Uganda is party. BINP alone hosts about half of the world's population of the endangered mountain gorilla (*Gorilla beringei beringei*) with a total world population estimated at about 650.

The areas around BINP are some of the most densely populated in Uganda. The provisional results of the 2002 housing and population census indicate that Kabale District has an average population density of 290 per square kilometre, and this density has increased by thirty-four people per square kilometre since 1991. Kisoro District has an average population density of 323 people per square kilometre, which has increased by forty-eight people per square kilometre since 1991. Kanungu District has an average population density of 160 people per square kilometre, an increase of thirty-five people in the same area since 1991. The population densities in the three districts are among the highest in the country, which has an average population density of eighty-five people per square kilometre. This has had implications for the resources inside and outside the parks. As population has increased, land and other essential resources have become scarce and people's dependence on the park resources has in turn increased. The populations around BINP are primarily agricultural, with a few households owning few numbers of

livestock. Traditionally, before the forest was gazetted as a national park, they also carried out logging/pit sawing, hunting in the forests, and mining as major economic activities in Bwindi Forest. Beekeeping is also a common secondary activity that has traditionally been carried out in and around the forest.

Gradual changes in the management approaches to Bwindi Forest have altered the way local people relate to it. Increased control and protection of the forest by the state agencies created a sense of alienation among local communities. The protectionist and top-down style of forest management introduced in the 1930s gradually weakened local people's rights over the forest and changed their perceived relationship with the resources. People around BINP refer to three historical eras in the history of the management of Bwindi Forest as the pre-gazetted era, the Forest Reserve era, and the National Park Era. The pre-gazetted era was marked by the absence of a forest boundary, which was when people had unlimited access to forest resources. During this time, people say they used to obtain all the resources they wanted from the forest with no one stopping them. They cultivated on the forest fringes, hunted and trapped animals in the forest, kept bees in the forest, cut trees and converted them to timber, and mined gold (Kijoto Parish, pers. comm. 1999). It was during this era that the people felt the forest was completely 'theirs' because there was no management or control from outside the community. Some of the respondents, however, believe that had the forest not come under some form of management, most of it would have been cleared by now.

The second era began after 1938, when the first forest boundary was delineated by exotic trees planted along the government-prescribed boundaries. Local people did not understand why the boundaries were being created. This era marked the onset of the state-sanctioned resource-access regime and the reduction of community control over the forest. Although permits were issued for pit sawing and cutting trees for other purposes, illegal wood harvesting continued. Hunting, collection of forest products, and cultivation inside the boundary continued.

The third era began with the declaration of the area as National Park in 1991, which introduced stringent forest policing—a system that some of the local people have perceived as mainly benefiting foreigners. Local people were officially de-linked from the forest, and many vulnerable groups suffered adversely. For example, the Batwa (pygmies), a group which had predominantly depended on the forest for their survival, were affected to the extent that they no longer consider the forest as 'theirs', but as 'the government's' (Namara, Gray, and McNeilage 2001). Besides restricted access

to the forest resources, local people also have incurred losses (crops, livestock and occasionally human lives) from wildlife. The increased restriction by the government created hostility between the park authorities and communities around the park. To mitigate some of these negative sentiments and to reduce the pressure the communities were exerting on the forest, a community conservation programme was implemented by UWA in partnership with other conservation organisations. It was intended to address community needs around the conservation of the forest.

### **Partnerships for Conservation**

Good governance and the involvement of local governments and communities in natural resource management is prominently featured in current debates on sustainable management of natural resources, and were highlighted in the recent 2003 Fifth World Parks Congress in Durban. The main argument is that community-based natural resource management brings about empowerment and control of forest resources by the community, which in turn leads to efficient, effective, equitable and sustainable forest management. Uganda is one of the countries that have embraced decentralisation. Government has devolved some powers and responsibilities to local authorities, including those governing the management of natural resources. Agrawal and Ribot (1999) define effective decentralisation as the establishment of a realm of local autonomy by the meaningful empowerment of local authorities with decision-making powers and the resources to act on them.<sup>7</sup>

Effective decentralisation is based upon systems where there are locally accountable and representative bodies with powers over resources and decisions. In the area of natural resource governance which has until recently been centrally controlled, an important step in devolving government responsibilities is to recognise local institutions as legitimate actors in the governance of natural resources and to empower them to manage the resources at their levels in aspects that have been decentralised. Where no representative institutions have existed before, the establishment of local institutions in natural resource management has been viewed as a critical requirement for community involvement in conservation (Barrow, Gichohi, and Infield 2000). Recognising these institutions as legitimate and empowering them should in turn make them accountable to the users of these resources. One of the aims of decentralisation is to democratise society through representative decision-making (Ribot 2002; Oyono 2004).

However, such local institutions are often not as representative as assumed, or their value to constituencies is diminished by central authorities that only decentralise responsibilities and not powers. In this case the institutions wield

no powers to decide on critical issues. In areas of high bio-diversity importance (especially around national parks, wildlife and forest reserves), the governance of natural resources often attracts varied concerns and interests, mainly of central government, local governments, national and international conservation bodies. This is well demonstrated in the two Ugandan gorilla national parks.<sup>8</sup> Activities within BINP and Mgahinga Gorilla National Park have brought together the local government, national government, and international community interests, which sometimes are not in harmony with local community aspirations, and have far-reaching effect on the outcomes of resource governance. Part of the reason why Uganda has shifted its protected area management approach to include the aspirations of local communities has largely been because of the influence from international donors represented through international organisations like the African Wildlife Foundation, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and CARE International.

### **Collaborative Management**

Collaborative management is now a common approach to protected area management in Africa. Collaborative management lies in the middle position on the community conservation continuum, which ranges from protected-area outreach to community-based resource management (Barrow and Murphree, 2001:32).<sup>9</sup> Collaborative management is focussed upon conservation with some rural livelihood benefits on state-owned resources. Similarly, collaborative management is itself a continuum, with many different models delivering different degrees of power sharing. The range of models could include: informal or semi-formal agreements between protected area authorities and other stakeholders regarding the use of specific resources; agreements largely based upon the discretion of the protected area authority staff on the ground; or formal agreements with some form of stakeholder institution, but largely limited to immediate protected area boundary communities with the main aim of regulating access to protected area resources. It is the protected area authority that largely drives this model. Other features collaborative that management can include are complex agreements with local communities in and around the protected area; shared decision-making on protected area management; multi-stakeholder protected area-management institutions, with greater roles in decision-making accorded to all stakeholders; and either a reduced role of the protected area authority or resources entirely managed and decisions primarily made by non-government stakeholders, with government represented.<sup>10</sup>

Uganda began adopting the second collaborative management model in the above continuum in 1992 around BINP, and by 1996, UWA implemented

similar collaborative management initiatives in other protected areas. In 1991, the Board of Trustees of the Uganda National Parks (now UWA) granted permission to BINP management and supporting partners to formulate arrangements with communities to allow beekeepers, on a pilot basis, to resume bee-keeping activities inside the park in 1992. The programme was later expanded in 1993 to allow more activities including access to medicinal plants, basketry materials, and seedlings of indigenous tree species and bamboo rhizomes to plant on farms, and spiritual/cultural sites. In exchange for access to resources, UWA expects Resource User Groups to use resources sustainably, to monitor and report illegal access to protected area resources, and to assist in emergencies such as forest fires. After UWA created Resource User Groups with the CARE-Uganda's Development Through Conservation Project, it was realised that they were operating in an 'institutional vacuum', due to the lack of linkages to local government structures, a fact that could jeopardise the long-term sustainability of these groups, and could potentially restrict wider acceptance of their legitimacy and long-term survival.

Consultations between CARE, UWA, and the lower level local government came to the conclusion that user groups needed to develop a formal linkage with parish structures through the Parish Production and Environment Committee, a committee of the parish local council. The chairpersons of the various Resource User Groups became members of the Parish Production and Environment Committee, and in turn the Community Protected Area Institution (CPI). This created a direct link between forest user groups, wider concerns found at the parish level, and protected-area authorities, ensuring that the interests of the forest user groups were represented on higher-level local government bodies (Blomley, Franks, and Kabugenda 2000). To a limited degree, the community-resource access programme created a sense of community ownership of the park and enabled dialogue between the communities and the park management. BINP pioneered a process of developing and implementing resource use agreements on a national level. The process helped develop and strengthen community institutions, and to some extent provided real benefits to the resource users (Worah et al. 2000).

Demand for more parishes to access resources eventually arose, however, as did demand for greater access to resources within parishes where the programme already existed. There was also a feeling within the community that the programme was restrictive regarding the range of resources, as it excluded those of high-value. In fact, some of the resource users lost interest, especially those that used to collect weaving material. Beekeepers, however, seemed to remain the most active participants in park-related activities like monitoring resource use and putting out forest fires, since they had a direct

stake in protecting their hives in the forest. This confirms Barrow and Murphree's (2001) contention that the strength of a collaborative management agreement is subject to the level of benefits derived from resource use and the contribution to local livelihoods that such resources make. This, in turn, determines the level of motivation to fulfil obligations as laid out in the collaborative management agreement.

Under the resource-use programme, Resource User Groups were expected voluntarily to monitor illegal activities within their respective multiple-use areas, and to report to relevant authorities if they detected any. Recent research has revealed that improved attitudes towards the park among local communities. Controlled access to park resources, together with other interventions within the communities, have been given as reasons for this change. The programme also seems to have been effective in enlisting willing participation of communities in controlling forest fires. The beekeepers (and at times other resource users), having a stake in protecting their hives from fire, have refrained from starting forest fires and have quickly responded to extinguish fires when they start (ITFC forthcoming). However, our research shows little change in illegal activities in the park in general, or in the areas where registered resource users carry out their activities in particular. There is also no evidence of a significant increase in the reporting of illegal activities, by registered resource users or the general community.

Many community members are still illegally accessing forest resources, including game meat, timber, building wood, bamboo and weaving material. The occasional arrest of culprits, snares and other signs of illegal activities found in the forest reflect this. This raises questions about the adequacy of the range and amount of resources allowed to be collected officially. Who really decides on what resources the community needs from the forest? Illegal exploitation is a form of protest against existing restrictions. Recent research (ITFC forthcoming) has revealed that the social costs associated with reporting illegal activities (basically, enmity created in the community) are a big hindrance to community co-operation. Communities around BINP are closely-knit, making the social costs of co-operating with park authorities highly prohibitive. However, communities have also identified the inability of park staff to respond to reports of illegal activities made by community members. This inability exists partly because the parks are understaffed. It also exists sometimes because the park rangers themselves collaborate with illegal harvesters for personal gain. People can never be certain of the affiliations of the ranger force member they are reporting to, who, too, could be part of the racket. This poses quite a risk for community reporting.

### **The Community Protected Area Institutions**

To enlist community participation in the management of national parks, Community Protected Area Institutions (CPIs) have been instituted to represent the interests of all parishes bordering particular protected areas. The CPI is supported by the Community Protected Area Institutions Policy (UWA 2000c). Its membership is drawn directly from Parish-level Local Government. Each protected area is supposed to have one Community Protected Area Institution and, depending on whether one or more districts surround the protected area, its membership is drawn from one or more districts. Around BINP, the institution is inter-district because three districts surround the park. The inter-district nature of this institution makes it unique in a context where district governments emphasise their autonomy. Its inter-district nature is a constraint for facilitation (especially funding).

Community institutions have been evolving since the early 1990s. The CPI replaced the Park Management and Advisory Committee that was initiated in 1993/4 under Uganda National Parks. The two institutions differ in the objectives for which they were formed, their mandate, their membership, and available mechanisms of feedback to their constituencies. The Park Management and Advisory Committee was criticised for being primarily an institution to advance the interests of Uganda National Parks (and later UWA). Its membership was also detached from the existing local government structures, and it had no clear channels through which community representatives could give feedback to the communities. The experiences of the Park Management and Advisory Committee were useful in the conception of the UWA policy guidelines on community institutions, which tried to guard against the factors that caused the Park Management and Advisory Committee to fail. It was thus the intention that the CPI be ‘genuinely created and managed’ by the local government and communities to represent and advance community interests in protected area management. Its membership is drawn from existing local government structures that also provide institutionalised channels of feedback to local communities (Blomley, Franks, and Kabugenda 2000).

Key roles of CPIs were laid out in the UWA Policy Guidelines on Community Protected Area Institutions (UWA 2000c). They included providing an avenue for communities living adjacent to the protected area to co-ordinate and present their interests to park management, providing an avenue for park management to present their interests in a co-ordinated way to those communities, in turn, and seeking those communities’ active participation in park management. The committee was also expected to play an advocacy and brokering role between the communities and the management

of the park. Where appropriate, it could lobby conservation bodies of the state at higher levels and provide an avenue for discussion and negotiation on benefit sharing programmes. In particular, the CPI was expected to screen and select parish-level projects for funding under the UWA revenue sharing programme and to identify any excessive conduct of the park staff and report this to park management. The extent to which the CPI has been able to play these roles will be subject to analysis below.

### **Authority Devolved to Local Institutions**

How much authority has been devolved to local governments and communities? It is important to explore authority that is transferred to newly created local institutions to facilitate community participation, and the asymmetries that are built into the current laws and therefore into the relation between local people and park authorities. First, we explore the legal constraints to community and local government participation in protected area management. Some of these constraints are a result of the law and policy formulation process, while others are a result of the interpretation of the law. The National Environment Statute, the Uganda Wildlife Statute and the Environment and Wildlife policies govern the process of local government participation in management of natural resources. However, these laws were drafted with little or no input from lower level local government and communities, who were the subjects of these laws. The formulation of the National Environment Policy (Republic of Uganda 1994) was a result of the National Environment Action Plan process, which, apart from the studies that were done to identify environmental issues, involved very little consultation of local communities and lower local government. Rather, consultations were carried out among the District technical staff and Sub-county councillors, and subsequently among line ministries at national level. Due to the low awareness of environmental issues at the time (early 1990s), these consultations yielded minimal information, and the main ideas came from the technical personnel at central government level.<sup>11</sup> The National Environment Statute (1995a), in turn, was drafted based on this policy.

Likewise, the draft Uganda Wildlife Policy (1995) on which the Wildlife Statute (Republic of Uganda 1996) and the revised Uganda Wildlife Policy (1999) were based, was basically prepared by technical staff from the Uganda National Parks (now UWA), the Ministry of Tourism, Trade and Industry and the Forest Department. There was very limited input from local governments or communities. Though the various departments of UWA are expected to develop operational/policy guidelines that can include local government and community input, it is up to the concerned UWA staff to decide who to consult, the depth of the consultation, and ultimately whether

or not to use the information provided. Moreover, operational guidelines have to be in conformity with the overall environment and wildlife policy and legislation, which were formulated without community input. Thus, community input into the operational guidelines or even bye-laws cannot deeply alter the ideology behind the environment and wildlife legislation and policies, unless the process leads to amendment of the legislation. Fortunately, the current national law review may include the Uganda Wildlife Statute (1996). However, as the statute now stands, it contains provisions that disfavour local communities surrounding national parks. Below we provide two examples to illustrate this: revenue sharing, and problem-animal management. Provisions within the wildlife policy and legislation concerning both of these issues are constantly contested by local communities, who have demanded on various occasions that the Uganda Wildlife Statute (1996) be reviewed.

### **Revenue Sharing**

UWA's revenue sharing scheme remains a contentious issue, often challenged by local government. Prior to the enactment of the Uganda Wildlife Statute (1996), parks were required to share twelve percent of their total revenue with local government and communities. This, however, was just a policy decision, not a statutory requirement. In 1996, this changed to twenty percent of gate entry fees. For some parks in Uganda, this represented a net increase, as most parks made the greatest share of their revenue from entry fees.<sup>12</sup> For the gorilla parks (BINP and Mgahinga Gorilla National Parks) and other national parks with many tourist activities, however, this meant a decrease in the local government and community share (Blomley 2003). Gorilla trekking permits, which tourists must buy to view gorillas in the park, cost US\$ 275 per person for a single trek by a foreign tourist—foreigners being the biggest group of tourists to Ugandan national parks as of February 2004. This fee includes only about US\$ 15 as the gate entry fee into the park per person, leaving a balance of US\$ 260, which local communities do not directly benefit from. Even in other parks where tourism has been relatively high, there was a decrease in local government share of the revenue since gate entries comprise just a small fraction of the total revenues of the parks. Moreover, this initially was exacerbated by the fact that UWA sometimes did not regularly deposit local government shares to the revenue sharing bank accounts, which created greater distrust and resentment (Blomley 2003). However, this situation is now improving.

Communities around various protected areas have questioned the basis of the 20 percent figure and why it is a fraction of only gate-entry fees, and not total revenues. Faced with these questions, managers on the ground often

answer that the law provides for this arrangement, which can only be changed if the law is reviewed by parliament. Rural communities know that reviewing a law by parliament in Uganda takes a long time, and that influencing parliament to advocate issues important to communities at the periphery of political influence, like forest-edge communities, is an impossible task. Protected area border communities are marginal, illiterate and have no effective political voice at the various political levels. The top-down manner in which decisions are made (for example, who actually decides on the contents of policy guidelines) undermines the principles of democratic governance and local autonomy. Examples of decisions that are usually driven by UWA in a top-down manner include decisions about who gets concessions to operate businesses within protected areas and decisions about what resources communities can access from the protected areas, in what quantities and where. Some of these decisions are justified by references to 'science', which is itself a reflection of power relations that determine whose 'science' is accepted as legitimate. 'Science' is often used to support the dominant paradigm subscribed to by the powerful and privileged (Whande, Kepe, and Murphree 2003).

### **Wildlife Conflict**

Damage to crops and property by wildlife is one of the most widespread and significant problems faced by 'frontline' communities living next to forest and wildlife protected areas in Africa. Due to the problems of remoteness and isolation, households living immediately adjacent to national parks often have the most limited options and opportunities to diversify and sustain their livelihoods. This is reinforced by the very real threat of crop raiding—which places additional costs on already stretched households. A common coping mechanism involves the deployment of children as crop guards during daytime and older family members at night, while crops mature and ripen. Some household therefore have to deny children educational opportunities to provide the needed labour of crop guarding, further reducing their opportunities for breaking out of poverty.

According to the Wildlife Statute (Republic of Uganda 1996), vermin control is decentralised to the districts. However, only the UWA can spearhead the solutions for this problem, and may enter into collaborative management agreements with affected local governments. Moreover, before any control measures are adopted, UWA has to gazette which animals can be treated as vermin and which are 'problem animals'. Problem animals cannot be treated as vermin according to conservation status accorded by international conventions and national interests with regard to the tourism industry. UWA also has to approve the problem animal control methods that communities

can adopt. Traditionally, communities hunted and trapped vermin and thus controlled their numbers. Now, it is illegal to apply control methods not recommended by UWA. In a manner, the people have been disempowered to take action to protect themselves and their property. If they kill animals, they risk penalties.

The problem of wildlife damage around BINP has been compounded in some areas by the presence of the flagship species: the mountain gorillas. Gorillas occasionally damage crops, property and at times threaten people's lives in the areas that are close to their home range (UWA 2002; Madden 1998). Habituation of gorillas for tourism (making them familiar with the presence of human beings, so that tourists can be able to view them) seems to have increased this damage since the gorillas' fear of people is reduced. Some gorilla groups spend more time in people's gardens than in the forest. This problem is common in Mukono and Nteeko Parishes adjacent to the western boundary of the park. The problem is aggravated if park staff take tourists to view gorillas on private land owned by community members. This does not go down well with the landowners, who feel they should then get a share of the gorilla viewing fees whenever gorillas are tracked on their land. Park management continues to brush the issue off, asserting that viewing gorillas on private land is not an issue, and that communities should not be bothered since they benefit from tourism in many other ways. They insist that paying landowners for viewing gorillas on their land may become an incentive for park edge landowners actively to attract gorillas to their land, with the associated risks to gorilla and human health.

UWA and its supporting donors have instead opted to purchase the community land on which gorillas frequently forage, in the hope that this would reduce the associated health risks and reduce the conflict. Peasant landowners were given this one option. They, in turn, agreed to sell off their land, if only because retaining it would make it useless to them, since they cannot realise agricultural or any other form of production from it. The process of land valuation and purchase itself was characterised by unequal power relations, with the legally aware UWA and conservation NGO officials taking the lead in determining terms of purchase, with no real community participation. They hired the assessors and surveyors. The peasants did not enter the transaction as equal partners. They did not have all the necessary information to consider all the possible options of getting value out of their land. Perhaps this one of the best opportunities the UWA has foregone to create a real partnership with the community around Uganda's most biologically diverse national park, which would have not only contributed to resolving conflict, but also to building a strong relationship with the

community. Instead of purchasing the land, UWA could have entered into some collaborative management venture with the affected landowners so that the people could realise perpetual economic benefits from their proximity to this very important resource.

The act of buying land from the affected communities actually signifies the reluctance of UWA to involve local people in wildlife management in mutually beneficial ways. Though officials from UWA and supporting conservation organisations often argue that the land was purchased at competitive prices between willing buyers and sellers, and that the owners can buy better land elsewhere, if one considers the possible perpetual benefit from the land under tourism ventures, it might be concluded that the peasants were blindfolded. Had they been able to organise themselves into a pressure group, they could have negotiated with UWA for a more rewarding partnership. Moreover, the land purchase may not provide a lasting solution to the problem, as it only temporarily shifts the frontier. Soon the land purchased will regenerate into forest and the gorillas will then forage in it and still move beyond to the next agricultural fields, affecting other community members. Will the park authorities then continue buying an increasing amount of land? The whole process has built suspicion within the local community. People are concerned that it could have negative social implications. Other local people have expressed fears that the park is expanding and squeezing people out, and may eventually create a class of landless people, which might become a problem for remaining local communities.

The story is different around Lake Mburo National Park (LMNP), where UWA realised that large numbers of wildlife live on community land, and that the only way to protect them is to enter into partnership with the local community and the private sector to ensure that communities realise economic benefits from hosting wildlife on their land. A pilot project is being undertaken where wildlife is being utilised for trophy hunting (UWA/ FD/IUCN&IGCP 2003). The difference between the BINP and LMNP is probably the size of the community land affected. The affected community ranches around LMNP are much bigger, and probably UWA could not afford to buy them. But more significant may be the fact that communities around LMNP are much more politically assertive than the very remote communities near BINP, and would have resisted moves to alienate their land. It may also have to do with the conservation status of the wildlife species in question in BINP (the endangered mountain gorillas).

The wildlife policy and law in Uganda does not compensate for problem animal damage, whether crop raids, human/livestock injury or death. However, the policy seems to focus on protecting wildlife, with limited consideration

of the impact wildlife has on local people. Local people are unable to take legal action against UWA since the statute defines UWA as an agency managing wildlife on behalf of the people of Uganda, who, by implication, own the wildlife. In the view of local communities, control of problem animals/vermin has not been accorded the attention it deserves by UWA. Yet, members of the communities continue to be heavily fined for mere grazing or illegal entry into the park. Vermin control has been decentralised to the district governments, but the districts are reluctant to invest meaningful resources into this activity because they consider wildlife to be a resource controlled by the central government, and not directly benefiting them. Thus, the districts feel the central government ought to foot all expenses associated with it (Blomley et al. 2003; Namara, Gray, and McNeillage 2001). Furthermore, as long as the problem animal damage issue remains outstanding, all programmes that seek to enlist local community participation in environment or wildlife management will not be perceived to be of real value to the affected communities.

### **So How Much Authority Is Devolved?**

Local Councils in Uganda wield judicial and adjudication powers. However, some park staff on the ground remain unwilling to involve local leaders in resolution of conflicts involving local people, even in instances where conflicts are officially supposed to be resolved with the consultation of communities or their leaders (Local Councils and CPI representatives). Some staff members, especially those in remote ranger posts, may do this to extort bribes from the culprits, and thus have to keep the case out of the public spheres. Others have an attitudinal problem: they believe communities have no authority over park affairs. To some park staff, increased powers in local community hands threaten their own basis of authority and power. Attempts to decentralise effective decision making over natural resources management are usually resisted by those institutions or individuals who will lose power in the process. This leaves communities confused, as the rhetoric and practice do not tally.

Conflict between the central and local bodies is bound to occur due to competing interests. Such conflict needs clear adjudication forums that are separate from the disputants. However, research has shown that in many cases in Africa, sectoral authorities such as Forest Departments or Wildlife authorities/Services also act as adjudicators or are in strong positions to influence the manner in which conflicts between them and local authorities/communities are adjudicated (Ribot 1999; 2001). This is very true for Uganda, and around BINP, local leaders feel it is also a major problem hindering the implementation of the collaborative protected area management. There is a tendency to completely overlook or undermine the authority of local

community institutions. A minimum of authority is devolved to the institutions that are supposed to participate in protected area management. In BINP, this includes handling cases/offences that are deemed 'not critical' by UWA, such as crop raids by wildlife, which many communities would definitely define as a 'grave' offence against them. However, only the UWA and the police can handle the cases that UWA defines as serious (killing of wildlife, cutting big trees). In other words, the decisions in such cases are not entrusted to local communities. It is UWA's definition of the gravity of offence that matters, not the communities' definition. Yet excluding local authorities from resolution of park-related conflict (especially illegal access to resources) hinders the success of resource protection. When park staff arrest and extort bribes from the culprits, excluding local institutions from settling the cases, it perpetuates the illegal activities.

These issues point to the important issue of legitimacy of local actors. Ribot (2001) indicates that local bodies with no powers are unlikely to be considered as legitimate by their constituencies. An important form of power that confers legitimacy is the independent power to make decisions and rules or to adjudicate. Through his research in Senegal, Ribot (2001) shows that villagers will not respect local authorities if they know that they cannot independently make important decisions. He cautions that this does not mean that there should not be oversight by the centre over the local authorities; rather, that it should be at a distance, directed to ensure that local action is within the law, though not to approve every single action that local government takes, nor to completely bypass them in decision making. The effectiveness of community institutions in influencing important decisions in the interest of communities also largely depends on how the UWA perceives their roles. UWA staff on the ground still feel uncomfortable with the CPI playing a watchdog role (Blomley, Franks, and Kabugenda 2000), for example, through reporting 'excessive behaviour' of park staff and checking that the right amounts of community share of revenue are deposited in local government revenue sharing accounts. A meeting was observed where a park warden complained about the CPI chairman who, according to him, wanted to 'play the role of a warden'. The said community leader had asked the park authorities to make available to him the records of revenue-sharing funds deposited on to the revenue-sharing account. He had also tried to intervene in a case where a local community member had been arrested and imprisoned for illegal resource access.

The trend has also been that UWA staff in the parks have deliberately refused to be transparent to the local government with regard to park revenue. Community leaders have repeatedly complained that they lack adequate

information about protected area revenues from which their revenue sharing percentages are deducted. This attitude among some UWA staff is a manifestation of the fact that the mandate of local institutions is not yet fully recognised. In fact, UWA was at the head of the process to define the role of CPI (UWA 2000c). This act of UWA to 'define' what CPI is and should do through the guidelines demonstrates a move to control the powers of the institution. This interest in developing guidelines should not be construed to indicate willingness on the part of UWA to create an enabling environment for and to empower the local institution to advance community interests in natural resources governance. Rather, it is an attempt by UWA to administer and manage the CPI to serve wider conservation goals (even if they are in conflict with community interests). It is now evident that unless UWA recognises the CPI's mandate to represent community interests legitimately and independently, its influence will be limited.

### **Controlled Resource Access: How 'Collaborative'?**

Communities around BINP access some park resources under what is referred to as the 'Multiple Use' programme. In Uganda, there has been a significant shift from the traditional exclusive management style of national parks, which allows no extraction of resources, to collaborative management. Under collaborative management, communities are allowed to participate in protected area management, albeit to a limited degree, and reap benefits from protected areas, including sustainable access to resources. Both national legislation<sup>13</sup> and the wildlife policy indicate that natural resources are managed for the benefit of the people of Uganda and that local communities should be central actors in the management of resources in their locality, and should also benefit from such resources. Such benefits include employment opportunities, revenue sharing, and access to the forest resources under collaborative management arrangements. The Uganda Wildlife Statute states that the Executive Director of UWA may issue a permit to any person for accessing resources from protected areas in a controlled manner (amounts collected, numbers of people involved, areas where resources are harvested, frequency of collection). In BINP, activities allowed include beekeeping and access to medicinal plants, basketry materials, seedlings of indigenous tree species and bamboo rhizomes to plant on farms, and footpaths to spiritual and cultural sites. Apart from these tangible benefits, communities living around protected areas enjoy other ecological benefits including the role of the forest in control of soil erosion and climate maintenance.

By the time Uganda adopted its model of collaborative management, the government considered the adopted model to be a radical move, adopting it reluctantly: they mainly adopted it as a response to the international influence

on the local conservation agenda mainly by donor organisations. The Multiple Use programme, as it is known around BINP, has been hailed for opening the way for regulated resource use by local communities and for granting communities unchallenged access to the forest, as compared to when this previously was an offence punishable by law. Moreover, negotiations around resource use and access undertaken in the early 1990s had broader implications in that they began to open lines of communication between park authorities and local communities at a time of deep mistrust and hostility (Wild and Muteb 1996; Worah et al. 2000; Blomley 2003). Additionally, the experiment in BINP provided useful information for drafting the sections on Collaborative Management in the Wildlife Statute and Policy. Regulated access to park resources has also contributed to improving relations between local communities and protected area staff and involving local people in protected area management around different parks in Uganda (Chhetri, Mugisha and White 2003). However, as time went on, the approach became another form of state control over resources of national interest, with the protected area management authority unwilling to trust resource users and subsequently to relinquish some of its responsibilities and authority, and the resource users also mistrusting the park staff.

This mistrust, for example, has been manifest in accusations of blame for illegal activities between park staff and resource users. Yet the element of trust between parties is clearly important if meaningful participation is to be realised, and if collective responsibility for natural resources is to be built (Bazaara 2006). Part of the reason why some UWA staff remained reluctant to embrace collaborative management entirely is that it was seen to be largely donor driven as shown above, with international organisations like the African Wildlife Foundation, the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and CARE International forcing the approach upon UWA. This somehow determined the level and type of partnerships that were created in the programme, and consequently limited its value to meeting the interests of communities and conservation as shown above. This is not unique to Uganda, as it is documented that many protected area authorities in Africa remain unwilling to involve local people in genuine partnerships, which involve dialogue, shared assessment of problems, and opportunities and fair negotiation of decisions and actions (Borrini-Feyerabend and Sandwith 2003).

The process of establishing collaborative management in BINP was tainted with unequal power relations between the two main parties to the agreements: the powerful, para-military, uniformed protected area managers, who were fully aware of the governing laws and policies on one hand; and the largely illiterate and poorly organised local communities, unaware of their rights or

responsibilities on the other (Blomley et al. 2003). During negotiation, the park staff adopted a stance of negotiating from a 'position of strength' rather than entering into open-ended negotiations, with compromises made on both sides. They were unwilling to concede (or even discuss) access to resources of any significant value. The resulting agreements thus limited the number of resources permissible for harvesting and the number of people involved. However, significant reciprocal responsibilities were placed on the shoulders of local communities, including patrolling for illegal activities, reporting law-breakers within the community to park staff, assisting in extinguishing forest fires, as well as maintaining detailed records. So, to what degree does allowing access to 'non-timber forest products' provide tangible benefits to local communities? How tangible are the benefits? (Worah et al. 2000; Blomley 2003). It does appear that the rights of forest users have been outweighed by their responsibilities to UWA, and as expected, the tangible benefits do not accrue to every community member. As such, for many there is no form of 'compensation' for the costs they incur due to the presence of the park.

Blomley (2003) asks whether resource access by communities is a 'right' that local communities can demand, or whether it is just a 'privilege' offered by protected area authorities when deemed fit. The distinction between privilege and right is critical in decentralised natural resource management. Ribot (1999:45), following Mamdani (1996), points out that when local authorities only receive privileges, local people are more likely to be managed as subjects since authorities with privileges that can be taken away are more likely to respond to those who have the discretion to take away their powers.<sup>14</sup> Having to be responsive upwards reduces the discretion of these local authorities. The discretion of local authorities and the impetus to participate becomes meaningful when powers are transferred in the secure form of rights.

On many occasions, conservationists assert that the primary objective of national parks is not resource use or even community benefit per se, but rather conservation. Collaborative management is a tool to achieve the conservation objective and not an objective in itself. As such, UWA remains unsure about whether it is wise to substantially devolve control and management of these protected areas or parts of them to the local people given the pressure for resources access and external political influences in relation to the objectives of conservation. Because of these hesitations few real rights over management or forest use are transferred to local authorities or populations. Compromise from all partners—including conservationists and government—is a must if collaborative management initiatives are to succeed. Without significant decision-making rights devolved to communities by UWA, are there real incentives and is enough meaningful discretionary

power transferred to sustain community commitment to assuming voluntary responsibility?

UWA did not allow the use of many of the resources that local people were interested in, and those that were finally allowed mostly fell short of community expectations. Moreover the memorandum of understanding that lays out the agreement between the two parties is seen by local people as an instrument that favours park management and can be revoked at any time. The needs of the Batwa (pygmies) as a group have not been addressed in the resource access program. Batwa's needs from the park include fish from the rivers in BINP, wild yams, wild honey and access to ancestral sites. However, access to these resources is not considered in the programme, mainly because the UWA believes local people use unsustainable harvesting methods. As such, the Batwa genuinely feel that their needs have been marginalised in the Multiple-Use programme, and yet the loss they incurred due to the creation of the park is relatively greater than those of other community members. As long as their needs are not addressed, they may continue to be tempted to access the resources illegally, with negative ecological impacts such as forest fires. According to Barrow and Murphree (2001), the strength of a collaborative management agreement is a function of the level of benefits derived from resource use. If resources accessed form an important contribution to local livelihood, the agreement is strong. If however resources accessed are few and unimportant for local resource users, the agreement will be weak. In BINP this could lead to reluctance to fulfil obligations as laid out in the agreement—for example, communities may be unwilling to dedicate time to monitoring resource access and controlling illegal use. It is clear that UWA wants to maintain local people as subjects within the framework of 'collaborative' management. Local authorities have no control powers; they are given limited conditional privileges rather than substantive and secure rights.

### **Conclusions**

The 'Community Conservation' approach to protected areas has become popular in conservation circles as a form of decentralisation within the wildlife management sector. It is intended to involve local communities in protected area management, reduce animosity between communities and protected area authorities, and extend benefits to local communities as incentives for them to assume responsibilities that support conservation. In this article we have looked at efforts geared towards enlisting community participation in park management activities and sharing of protected area benefits as a means of increasing their stake in the protected area. Part of the process has been the

creation of local government and community-based institutions through which communities are supposed to participate in park management. Research completed thus far reveals that even with the rhetoric regarding the decentralisation of important roles to local governments and communities from central government agencies, the natural resource management sector in Uganda remains heavily centralised, with central agencies maintaining tight control over decision-making and resources. Even under what is supposed to be 'collaborative management' of important natural resources between the central government, local governments and communities, central government agencies such as Uganda Wildlife Agency maintain local people as subjects, with no decision making or control powers.

Local authorities are given 'privileges' rather than 'rights', and local communities are given more responsibilities than benefits. Part of this control is exercised through the legislation and policy formulation processes, which remain centralised, with little or no participation of local communities. However, even where niches within the laws could allow for communities to influence decisions about issues that affect them, central government agents on the ground remain unwilling to relinquish many of their powers, frustrating the evolution of real and effective partnerships with local communities. Clearly, effective decentralisation has to begin with the democratisation of law and rule making, but also of the everyday decisions concerning management and use. Unless communities can influence changes in law and in local decision making to reflect their wishes, decentralisation will not improve participation in protected area management. It is no surprise that even with the evident changes in policy towards community and local government participation in natural resource management, most local governments and communities still perceive resources such as national parks as owned by the central government. The centralised authority that agencies such as UWA continue to exercise over these resources makes it difficult for local people to develop a sense of ownership and collective responsibility. So even where their participation is sought by the central government under what is supposed to be 'collaborative management', local people tend to see themselves as rendering a service to the government, not to themselves. Sometimes members of community-protected area institutions have demanded to be paid for playing their prescribed roles.

There is a need for park management authorities to be open to change, to create partnerships with communities that benefit both conservation and enhance community livelihood. This, for example, should involve genuine consultation of communities on important issues and joint decision-making. For example, on the issue of problem animals, instead of buying off people's

land, which may not be a lasting solution, more of the funds should have been invested in problem animal control mechanisms and compensation of affected farmers. Compensation could have come in the form of a regular share of revenue from the parks, however limited. Granted, neither the UWA alone nor the Uganda government can possibly afford to compensate every farmer affected by the presence of wildlife. However, if safeguarding global benefits implies costs to local farmers, Uganda should not bear all the cost alone, but should seek contributions from the global community. At the 2003 World Parks Congress, it was stressed that protected areas should contribute to poverty reduction—or at least not increase poverty, and that bio-diversity be viewed not only as a national and global resource, but also for its contribution to local livelihoods. This calls for equitable sharing of costs and benefits at local, national and global levels.

There is an urgent need for the equitable participation of all key stakeholders in decision-making concerning protected area management, with particular attention to the needs of local communities and disadvantaged groups. This can be accomplished via a range of mechanisms, including full information sharing; joint visioning and participatory assessment exercises; benefit sharing; support to stakeholder organising and capacity building; negotiated management agreements; full empowerment for conservation in co-managed protected areas; and transfer of powers as rights rather than privileges. Part of this process would involve programmes to develop and strengthen institutional and human capacities for co-management of protected areas as part of efforts towards good governance and more effective management. This involves the setting up basic training and refresher courses for natural resource managers (including protected area authority staff and local communities), exchange visits and joint learning initiatives among protected area institutions and sites engaged in co-management efforts. Ultimately, however, it is the establishment of rights in the co-management negotiation process that renders these negotiations binding—and therefore meaningful and sustainable.

### **Acknowledgements**

The author is thankful to USAID that funded the ‘Accountability, Decentralisation and the Environment’ policy research initiative through WRI, on which a large part of this article is based. Special thanks go to Dr Jesse Ribot of WRI and Phil René Oyono of CIFOR-Cameroon, for tirelessly encouraging the group of researchers who participated in the research project to publish our findings, and also for offering academic guidance. I am grateful to the late Dr Bazaara Nyangabyaki of the Centre for Basic Research for the guidance he offered for the initial research. Many thanks to my reviewer,

Phil Franks, the CARE International Integrated Conservation and Development Programme Coordinator based in Nairobi, who read this article and gave constructive comments. Most importantly, I thank the community members, the local leaders, primarily Parish Kijoto, one of my key informants, the staff of CARE Uganda, and the Uganda Wildlife Authority, who willingly gave me the information on which this article is based over the years that I have interacted with them. Thank you all very much.

### Notes

1. 'Communities' are social constructs, which, in real life, are complex and dynamic. Within communities are power dynamics based on class, educational differences, ethnic backgrounds, gender and general socio-economic status that can dictate differential access to resources, services and information. Mandondo (2000), Leach (1999) and Sundar (2000) raise questions about the concept of the 'community' that is advanced by environment and development interventions. 'Communities' are usually assumed to be ideal units which, if enabled to own, manage, and use resources, will lead to better management of those resources. Such a notion is based upon idyllic images of fixed and homogeneous groups of people.
2. Often official documents will stipulate 'community participation' without being specific on its extent. Thus, it can mean anything along the continuum from 'passive participation', where communities are just informed about protected area management actions, with no response expected, to 'Interactive learning', where multiple perspectives are sought and taken seriously, and local communities are entrusted with local decisions. (Pimbert and Pretty 1995). The level of participation applied usually depends on the interpretation of protected area staff involved, but usually falls on the left side or in the middle of the continuum (Uganda National Parks 1995).
3. Collaborative management is broadly defined as 'conservation with people', where local communities gain rights of access to certain resources on state-owned land, through agreements between resource users and the state that indicate the rights and responsibilities of each party. Collaborative management is a third stage within the Continuum of Community Conservation that ranges from total control by the state to Protected Area Outreach ('Conservation for people') to Collaborative Management and Community-Based Conservation (conservation by people) (Barrow in UWA 2001:6, 10).
4. The Mgahinga and Bwindi Impenetrable Conservation Trust is an endowment fund from the World Bank through the Global Environment Facility to finance local community projects, including social infrastructure and some income generating projects around Bwindi Impenetrable and Mgahinga Gorilla National Parks.

5. Collaborative management is officially defined by UWA as a process whereby the protected area authority genuinely shares with locally resident people benefits, decision-making authority and responsibility in the effective and sustainable management of the natural resources of protected areas. The details of this shared management are arrived at through meaningful negotiation and expressed in a written agreement (The Uganda Wildlife Policy 1999: Appendix 3). In Uganda the agreements usually take the form of Memoranda of Understanding.
6. Namara and Nsabagasani (2003).
7. Ribot (2001) emphasises that democratic decentralisation is about rights that local governments can exercise on behalf of their constituencies; it is about enfranchisement and democratisation. He (1999, 2001) also shows that the term 'decentralisation' is often used to refer to reforms and programmes that are designed to retain central control, some of which should instead be called 'de-concentration', a system where local actors perform centrally defined functions in the local arena. This is the form that many programmes in the name of decentralisation tend to take. Local democracies are created but given no powers, or powers are devolved to non-representative or upwardly accountable local authorities.
8. Apart from BINP, Mgahinga Gorilla National Park, which is located on the Uganda side of the Virunga Ranges along the confluence of the borders of Uganda, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, also hosts the Mountain Gorilla (Uganda National Parks 1995).
9. According to Barrow and Murphree (2001), community-based resource management or community-based conservation is characterised by the highest form of community participation in conservation along the community conservation continuum that ranges from Protected Area Outreach to collaborative management to community-based resource management. In community-based resource management, the focus of conservation is on sustainable rural livelihoods, with communities controlling the resources, which are conserved as an element of land use. Community-based resource management is mostly practised in Southern Africa (Namibia, Zimbabwe). Protected Area Outreach as an approach is centred on conservation of ecosystems and bio-diversity on state-owned land, with the state in charge of decision making about resource management. This is common in East Africa. Collaborative management is in the middle position, centring on conservation with some rural livelihood benefits on state-owned resources. It is common in East and some Southern African countries.
10. This information was obtained from training material used in a Collaborative Forest Management training programme conducted in Uganda during 2003. The material was not referenced, but the author found it appropriate.
11. Personal communication from Margaret Lwanga, National Environment Management Authority, September 1999.
12. The Uganda Wildlife Statute (1996), section 70 (4).

13. The Wildlife Statute (1996), The Environment Statute (1994) and The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (1995).
14. According to Ribot (2001), while analysing decentralisation and the construction of local autonomy, we need to make a distinction between rights and privileges. Local governance units or individuals can have rights. Rights are held by authorities and citizens, with citizens having the available mechanisms to influence authorities who hold powers over them or to defend the rights they have. Privileges, however, are given by an allocating authority that is free to withdraw them at whim. Privileges are not statutory or defensible; thus, they do not enfranchise populations, rather they make them upwardly accountable to the allocating authority. Democratic decentralisation is about enfranchisement; therefore, in its context local authorities should have rights, not delegated privileges which can be taken to reflect lack of commitment on the part of government to the decentralisation process.

### References

- Adams, W. and Hulme, D., 2001, 'Conservation and Community. Changing Narratives, Policies and Practices in African Conservation', in D. Hulme and M. Murphree, eds., *African Wildlife and Livelihoods. The Promise and Performance of Community Conservation*, Oxford, James Currey.
- Agrawal, A. and Ribot, J.C., 1999, 'Accountability in Decentralisation: A framework with South Asian and West African Cases', *Journal of Developing Areas*, 33, pp. 473-502.
- Barrow, E., H. Gichohi and Infield, M., 2000, 'Summary and Key Lessons from a Comparative Review of Community Conservation in East Africa', Working Paper No. 2, Nairobi, IUCN-EAPO.
- Barrow, E. and Murphree, M., 2001, 'Community Conservation. From Concept to Practice', in D. Hulme and M. Murphree, eds., *African Wildlife and Livelihoods. The Promise and Performance of Community Conservation*, Oxford, James Currey.
- Barrow, E. and Fabricius, C., 2002, 'Do Rural People Really Benefit from Protected Areas-rhetoric or Reality?', *Parks*, 12(2), pp. 67-79.
- Bazaara, N., 2006, 'Subjecting Nature to Central Authority: The Struggle over Public Goods in the Formation of Citizenship', *Africa Development*, vol. xxxi, N°2.
- Blomley, T., 2003, 'Natural Resource Conflict Management: The Case of Bwindi Impenetrable and Mgahinga Gorilla National Parks, South Western Uganda', in *Natural Resource Conflict Management Case Studies: An Analysis of Power*, pp 231-250, Rome, FAO Community Forestry Unit.
- Blomley, T., Franks, P. and Kabugenda, A., 2002, 'Towards "Institutional Landscapes"? Biodiversity Conservation within the Context of Decentralised Governance', in Schultz, P. and Noppen, D., eds., *The Landscape Approach*:

- Learning from North to South*, Copenhagen, Environment and Development Network.
- Blomley, T. and A. Namara, 2003, 'Devolving Rights or Shedding responsibilities? Community Conservation in Uganda over the Last Decade', *Policy Matters*, 12, pp. 283-289.
- Borrini-Feyerabend, G. and Sandwith, T., 2003, 'Editorial', *Parks*, 13(1), pp 1-5.
- Butynski, T.M., 1984, 'Ecological Survey of the Impenetrable (Bwindi) Forest, Uganda, and Recommendations for its Conservation and Management', Report to the Government of Uganda, New York, Wildlife Conservation International.
- CARE-Uganda, 1998, 'An Institutional Framework for the Management of Environment and Natural Resources in Kabale, Kisoro and Rukungiri Districts of South-West Uganda', Unpublished report, Kampala, CARE-Uganda.
- Chhetri, P., A. Mugisha and White, S., 2003, 'Community Resource Use in Kibale and Mt Elgon National Parks, Uganda', *Parks*, 13(1), pp 28-38.
- ITFC (Institute of Tropical Forest Conservation), 2004, 'Bwindi and Mgahinga National Parks in Uganda: Has 15 years of ICD Programming Succeeded in Increasing Support for Conservation among Local Communities?', Report of an assessment study of selected Integrated Conservation and Development strategies implemented in BINP and MGNP, Kabale, Uganda, ITFC.
- Leach, M. and Fairhead, J., 2001, 'Plural Perspectives and Institutional Dynamics: Challenges for Local Forest Management', *International Journal of Agriculture, Resources, Governance and Ecology*, 1(3/4), pp.223-242.
- Madden, F., 1998, "'The Problem Gorilla", A report of the East and Central African Workshop on problem mountain gorillas using the situation in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park as a basis for solution development', Unpublished paper, International Gorilla Conservation Project/CARE-Uganda, Kampala.
- Mandondo A., 2000, 'Situating Zimbabwe's Natural Resource Governance Systems in History', CIFOR Occasional Paper No. 32, Bogor, Center for International Forestry Research.
- MTWA (Ministry of Tourism, Trade and Industry), 1996, 'Outputs of the Taskforce on Collaborative Management for The Uganda Wildlife Authority', Report, Kampala, MTWA.
- Namara, A., Gray, M. and McNeilage, A., 2001, 'People and Bwindi Forest. Historical Account as Given by Local Community Members', Unpublished report, Nairobi and Kabale, Uganda, WWF-EARPO and Institute of Tropical Forest Conservation.
- Namara, A. and Nsabagasani, X., 2003, 'Decentralisation and Wildlife Management: Devolving Rights or shedding responsibility? Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, Uganda', Working Paper No. 9, Environmental Governance in Africa Series, Washington, D.C., World Resources Institute.
- Oyono, P.R., 2004, 'One step forward, two step back? Paradoxes of natural resource management decentralization in Cameroon', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 42(1), pp. 91-111.

- Pimbert, M.P. and Pretty, J.N., 1995, 'Parks, people and professionals: Putting Participation into Protected Area Management', UNRISD/IIED/WWF-International Discussion Paper 57, Geneva, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development.
- Republic of Uganda, 1994, *The Uganda National Environment Policy*, Kampala, Ministry of Land, Water and Mineral Development.
- Republic of Uganda, 1995a, *National Environment Statute*, Entebbe, Government Printer.
- Republic of Uganda, 1995b, *The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda*, Entebbe, Government Printer.
- Republic of Uganda, 1995c, *The Uganda Wildlife Policy*, Kampala, Ministry of Tourism, Trade and Industry.
- Republic of Uganda, 1996, *The Uganda Wildlife Statute*, Entebbe, Government Printer.
- Republic of Uganda, 1997, *The Local Government Act*, Entebbe, Government Printer.
- Republic of Uganda, 1999, *The Uganda Wildlife Policy*, Kampala, Ministry of Tourism, Trade and Industry.
- Ribot, J. C., 1999, 'Decentralisation, Participation and Accountability in Sahelian Forestry: Legal Instruments of Political-Administrative Control', *Africa*, 69(1), pp. 23-64.
- Ribot, J. C., 2002, 'African Decentralization: Local Actors, Powers and Accountability', Democracy, Governance, and Human Rights, Paper No. 8, Washington D.C., United Nations Research Institute for Social Development.
- Ribot, J. C., 2002, 'Democratic Decentralization of Natural Resources. Institutionalizing Popular Participation', WRI Research Report, Washington, D.C., World Resources Institute.
- Sundar, Nandini, 2000, 'Unpacking the "Joint" in Joint Forest Management', *Development and Change*, 31(1), pp. 255-279.
- Uganda National Parks, 1995, *Bwindi Impenetrable National Park: Management Plan 1995-1999*, Kampala, Uganda Wildlife Authority.
- UWA (Uganda Wildlife Authority), 1996, 'Memorandum of Understanding Between Uganda Wildlife Authority—Bwindi Impenetrable National Park and The people of Nyamabare Parish, Ikumba Sub-County, Kabale District, An agreement concerning Collaborative Beekeeping' (Forest Resource Use) in *The Park*, Kampala, Uganda Wildlife Authority.
- UWA, 2000a, *Revenue Sharing Around Protected Areas*, Kampala, Uganda Wildlife Authority.
- UWA, 2000b, *Uganda Wildlife Authority Collaborative Management Strategy*, Kampala, Uganda Wildlife Authority.
- UWA, 2000c, *Community-Protected Area Institution Policy*, Kampala, Uganda Wildlife Authority.

- UWA, 2001, 'Collaborative Management within Uganda Wildlife Authority', Report of the Senior Staff Retreat held at Ranch on the Lake Hotel, Uganda Wildlife Authority, 2nd June 2001, Kampala.
- UWA, 2002, *Bwindi Impenetrable National Park & Mgahinga Gorilla National Park General Management Plan, 2002-2112*, Kampala, Uganda Wildlife Authority.
- UWA/FD/IUCN&IGCP, (Uganda Wildlife Authority/Forest Department/IUCN/International Gorilla Conservation Programme), 2003, 'Protected Areas in Uganda, Benefits beyond Boundaries', Paper published to mark Uganda's participation in the World Park Congress, September 2003, Durban.
- Whande W, T. Kepe and Murphree, M., eds., 2003, 'Local Communities, Equity and Conservation in Southern Africa, A Synthesis of Lessons Learnt and Recommendations from a Southern African Technical Workshop', Proceedings, PLAAS, University of Western Cape, Cape Town.
- Wild, R. and Mutebi, J., 1996, 'Conservation through Community use of Plant Resources. Establishing Collaborative Management at Bwindi Impenetrable and Mgahinga Gorilla National Parks, Uganda', *People and Plants Working Paper No. 5*, Paris, United National Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation.
- Worah, S., 2002, 'The Challenge of Community-based Protected Area Management', *Parks*, 12(2), pp. 80-90.
- Worah, S., Moyini, Y. and Ssuna, J., 2000, 'Report on the Participatory Review of CARE's Development through Conservation Project', Kampala, CARE-Uganda.