

Project update: May 2021

This is the first progress report of an ongoing community conservation research project in Rwanda funded by The Rufford Foundation. The current phase aims at making contact with local authorities, trainers, selecting the project beneficiaries and pre-assessment survey. During this phase, we have also conducted a face-to-face interviews with different households living near the park and the aim of the interview was to get basic information on the socio economic status of the communities. After this step, the next one was to randomly select the project beneficiaries based on the basic information collected in addition to their level of education and age. The selected project beneficiaries were explained in details about the project and we have conducted pre-assessment survey to know their basic knowledge on the eastern chimpanzee conservation, how humans can directly or indirectly threaten the species, assessing whether they know any ecological and economical importance of the species and the park in general on their wellbeing and how do they think the income generating activities can help in the sustainable conservation of the eastern chimpanzees of Nyungwe National Park. During the selection of the project beneficiaries, the priority was given to the households belonging in 1&2 economic classes and their proximity to the park.

After the pre-assessment survey, we paid visit to our trainers working places to make sure that they have enough practical and theoretical skills to equip our project beneficiaries towards their improved livelihoods, sustainable conservation of the eastern chimpanzees of Nyungwe National Park and the sustainable development of the country as well. According to the responses from the project beneficiaries, we have seen that some persons do not understand well the ecological importance of the park and its biodiversity on their wellbeing. All beneficiaries are aware that the park is very important for oxygen and rain provision (100%) while 41% consider the park as the source of firewood, 33% take the park as the source of tree for construction and agricultural activities and 29% consider the park as the source of meat for consumption and for selling. These results show that some persons are still depending on the park and harvest its resources and this a negative impact on the park's biodiversity especially the eastern chimpanzees which are listed as endangered on the IUCN Red List. We believe that this project will contribute to raising the communities' awareness, ownership and their level of understanding and it will also improve their livelihoods which will help in reducing the community dependency on the park and its biodiversity as well.



Selected project beneficiaries are being explained about the project details and asking different questions (L) and pre assessment survey with selected beneficiaries in handcraft (R).



Visiting beehives of the beekeeping trainer (L) and Pre- assessment survey with the project beneficiaries in beekeeping (R)



Group photo after pre-assessment survey



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FRONT VIEW



BACK VIEW

Promotional materials