Healing the Rift

Peacebuilding in and around protected areas in the Democratic Republic of Congo's Albertine Rift

ICCN — INSTITUT CONGOLAIS POUR LA CONSERVATION DE LA NATURE

USAID — FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY

iisd 2010 20th — Better living for all—sustainably.

Acknowledgements

Suggested Citation

Kujirakwinja, D., Shamavu, P., Hammill, A., Crawford, A., Bamba A. & Plumptre, A.J. 2010. *Healing the Rift: Peacebuilding in and around protected areas in the Democratic Republic of Congo's Albertine Rift.* Unpublished Report to USAID.

Executive Summary

All conservation managers have to manage conflict in their work. Whether it is dealing with a farmer who has lost a cow to a wolf next to Yellowstone National Park in the USA or a farmer who has had a visit by crop-raiding elephants outside Virunga National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), there is a need to work with people to manage these conflicts and minimize their negative impacts. Conflicts vary between sites but are often associated with control over access to land and water, or access to resources (biological or mineral) on the land or in the water. Where conflicts become intense, they can escalate to armed conflicts and lead to loss of life. There is effectively a continuum between minor conflict and complaints, up to armed conflict and war. Conservation practitioners can influence this continuum: increasing conflict by being totally insensitive to the different stakeholders' needs and desires; or reducing conflict by using conflict-sensitive approaches to conservation.

This report summarizes a 27-month project that piloted a conflict-sensitive approach to conservation in the eastern DRC at four main sites: Virunga National Park, Kahuzi-Biega National Park, Itombwe Reserve and the Misotshi-Kabogo Massif. It built upon an 18-month project that tested the conflict-sensitive approach in Virunga Park that was also supported by USAID. At each site, assessments were made of the conflicts taking place and where best the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) could intervene to try to reduce the conflict or minimize its impacts on conservation of the natural resources as well as the people involved. The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) provided technical expertise in conflict-resolution approaches, developing training programs, developing a manual for conservation practitioners in conflict-sensitive approaches to conservation (which was translated into French under this project) and creating a website where conservation practitioners can access tools and materials to help them (www.csconservation.org).

The project had an overall goal to: adapt and replicate a conflict-analysis and resolution approach, previously tested in Virunga National Park, to existing conflict and violence situations elsewhere in the Albertine Rift.

The four main *objectives* of the project were to*:

1. Build the capacity of ICCN to understand, manage and resolve conflicts using integrated approaches that emphasize community participation and collaboration.
2. Assess, map and prioritize conflicts in project protected areas to inform application of conflict-mitigation approaches and develop conflict-resolution plans for each area.
3. Tackle prioritized conflicts using collaborative approaches in the Albertine Rift protected areas.
4. Summarize and disseminate peacebuilding lessons.

The various conflicts that were addressed at each site included:

1. *Virunga Park:* There are three legal fishing villages in Virunga Park: Kyavinyonge, Vitshumbi and Nyakakoma. A pilot project to address conflict among fishers, the fisheries management body (COPEVI) for Lake Edward, the military and l'Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature (ICCN) was tackled in the initial 18-month conflict-resolution project by bringing the stakeholders together, analyzing the conflict and developing a committee made up of all representatives involved in fishing to address the conflict. This approach was relatively successful and, as a result, the other two villages requested WCS to help them establish a similar process to help them better manage the fisheries under their jurisdiction. This project supported conflict-resolution work at all three villages which has led to some reduction in illegal fishing, has stopped ICCN's involvement in illegal fishing and has established a system of governance that helps curb the illegal activities of the military. A second project in Virunga tackled transboundary conflicts between Uganda and the DRC. The project brought together ICCN and their counterparts in Uganda, the Uganda Wildlife Authority, to address conflicts over transboundary use of natural resources. This has helped reduce poaching activities between Virunga and Queen Elizabeth National Parks, brought together the fisheries departments in both countries to start developing a lake-wide approach to fisheries management on Lake Edward and also assessed the transboundary trade in illegal timber. A third project that was tackled in Virunga looked at the encroachment of the western coast of Lake Edward by local people for access to fishing on the lake and for farmland. This project was launched in the first year and led to the voluntary resettlement of over 500 people. Unfortunately, in the second year, rebel forces settled in that region and it was impossible to operate there.

2. *Kahuzi-Biega National Park*: Following an assessment of conflicts in and around this park it was agreed that WCS would help ICCN tackle conflicts between their Community Conservation Committees (CCCs) and the local communities. The CCCs were seen as ICCN's attempt to spy on the local communities' activities and were not seen as a mechanism for the park and the community to work together. Two CCCs, one in the highland sector of Kahuzi-Biega Park and one in the lowland sector, were selected as pilot committees. Unfortunately, half way through the project, the DRC military (FARDC) decided they wanted to move into the park to remove the *Interahamwe* (responsible for the genocide in Rwanda) and, as a result, the whole region became very insecure. Activities were continued with the CCC at Bugobe in the highland sector but it was impossible to access the lowland site at Nzovu until very recently. However, despite these constraints, the conflict-resolution approach has significantly improved relations between ICCN and the local communities at Bugobe and, as a result, ICCN is asking WCS to help expand the approach to other CCCs around the park as security slowly improves.

3. *Itombwe Massif*: The Itombwe Massif is one of the most biodiverse parts of the Albertine Rift and of the DRC. It has been recognized as such for many years and in 2006 a ministerial decree was made to gazette a reserve in the massif. This was made with no consultations with the local communities and the boundary of the reserve was not clearly defined in the gazettement document. As a result there was a major conflict between local communities and ICCN over the status of the area as well as between the large NGOs working in the region, some who wanted the place conserved and others who were concerned about the rights of the people living there. A conflict-sensitive approach was first used to bring the large NGOs together to reach agreement on a way forward among themselves and an agreement to collaborate together. This was then expanded to bring together the various communities across the massif together with the NGOs and ICCN. The main result of this process was an agreement to work together to map zones within the core area of the reserve, including: core protected areas, areas where sustainable uses of natural resources will take place and areas where development to improve the livelihoods of people can occur. Local communities are currently moving ahead to map areas in the reserve around their villages, despite high levels of insecurity following the FARDC's move to remove the *Interahamwe* from the massif.

4. *Misotshi-Kabogo*: This region has also been known as Kabobo but this is not a name recognized locally and until a name is agreed for the region we have been using Misotshi-Kabogo. Biodiversity surveys by WCS, the Field Museum of Chicago and WWF in 2007 showed that this massif was very biodiverse. Six new vertebrate species for the world were discovered in a very short time and it is likely more species will be found in the future. A socioeconomic survey undertaken by WCS in 2008, and partially supported by this project, showed that local people were willing to see some form of protected area created in this region provided they had access to forest products. We therefore used a conflict-sensitive approach to work toward establishing a protected area in the region. In July 2009, we brought together traditional chiefs from the villages together with the provincial authorities to discuss the results of the biological and socioeconomic surveys and to ask for their opinions about whether a protected area should be created and, if so, what type of protected area it should be. Meetings were held with representatives from Katanga and South Kivu provinces, who separately agreed to establish a national park with a surrounding buffer zone (in the form of a natural reserve). These meetings were followed by a process to work with each village to develop a map of where they currently farm, where they would like to be able to expand to in the future and where the boundaries of the natural reserve could be established. This mapping has been completed and we have also started to meet with the provincial governors of Katanga (in Lubumbashi) and South Kivu (in Bukavu) to move ahead with the establishment of the park and reserve. There is a need to obtain agreement on the final map with the villages and this will take place during the summer of 2010; we will then work with ICCN to formally gazette the park. This will be the DRC's eighth national

park and will be gazetted with the full support of the surrounding local community. We believe this is one of the first parks to be created in Africa with such local support and, as such, the conflict-sensitive approach that has been used could become a model for future protected area development.

A conflict-sensitive approach to conservation has yielded positive results in the eastern DRC despite continuing levels of insecurity in the region and the inability to work at times because of the risks to staff and people involved. Local communities have valued the approach and have become more willing to work together with ICCN and the conservation NGOs at a site as a result of these pilot projects. As a result, this has led to requests to support the expansion of our activities to other sites in Virunga and Kahuzi-Biega Parks, and external funding to support the process from the Governor of North Kivu, because he recognized that the approach was achieving results. A formal evaluation of the pilot projects was made by IISD and lessons learned from the process derived and made available in the *Conflict-Sensitive Conservation Manual for Practitioners.*

Some of the reasons this approach has been working is because the approach often establishes a system of governance that includes the local community. Committees were established in each fishing village in Virunga Park and with the CCCs in Kahuzi-Biega Park that allowed everyone to have a voice at the table. This enabled people to "name and shame" other groups who were known to be involved in illegal activities (including ICCN staff), and it also created a forum where everyone could try and work together to find a solution to the problem, to develop targets and monitor the implementation of their actions. As such, there was some devolvement of power at a local level which encouraged 'buy-in' to the approach and also contributed to peacebuilding within the community. There have been setbacks and the hoped-for results have not always materialized, partly because of increased insecurity in the region during the project or because one stakeholder in the process decided they wanted to flout what had been agreed during the meetings. The regular turn-over in military staff in Virunga Park, for instance, meant that every new group of military in the fishing village had to be brought on board and agree to be part of the process which could set activities back for a time. Similarly, ICCN's change in attitude, with an incoming new park warden of Virunga who has taken a much stronger confrontational stance to the protection of the park, has sometimes led to poor attendance by ICCN at meetings and less support for the conflict-sensitive approach to conservation of the park. Sometimes conflict is necessary to regain control and authority where it is needed, and not all conflict is necessarily a bad thing, however given the results we have been seeing, we believe there is a need to balance the stance that has been taken with an approach to resolving conflicts, particularly between ICCN and the military as well as ICCN and people who have encroached on the park.

We hope that the more detailed descriptions in this report of the pilot projects which used conflict-resolution techniques to tackle conflicts over access to natural resources, will encourage conservation practitioners to think about incorporating these techniques in their daily activities. In

order to facilitate this, several tools have been developed which are freely available on the Internet. A manual (in English and French) that details how to assess and map conservation conflicts and how to tackle the conflict is available at www.csconservation.org.

Table of Contents

Introduction

The *Healing the Rift* project sought to apply lessons learned and best practices from six years of working in and around conflicts over natural resources in Virunga National Park to other protected areas in the eastern DRC. The project's overall goal was to: adapt and replicate a conflict-analysis and resolution approach previously tested in Virunga National Park to existing conflict and violence situations elsewhere in the Albertine Rift.

The specific objectives for meeting this goal were to:

1. Build the capacity of ICCN (l'Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature) to understand, manage and resolve conflicts using integrated approaches that emphasize community participation and collaboration, with the objective of incorporating institutional sustainability.
2. Assess, map and prioritize conflicts in project protected areas to inform application of conflict mitigation approaches and develop conflict-resolution plans for each area.
3. Prioritize conflicts tackled using collaborative approaches in the Albertine Rift protected areas.
4. Summarize and disseminate peacebuilding lessons to protected area managers and the wider conservation community as well as other areas of civil society.

The conflict-sensitive approach to conservation was initiated in 2006 with four pilot projects in Virunga National Park, financed by an 18-month U.S. State Department grant. For the *Healing the Rift* project, the scope was expanded to include the four sites in the Albertine Rift region, described below: Virunga National Park, Kahuzi-Biega National Park, Itombwe Massif and Misotshi-Kabogo. The work is being led by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), with financial support from USAID and technical support from the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD).

Conservation and conflict

The management of natural resources is often conflictual. Whenever the decision is made to protect land, water and other natural resources, a decision is also being made about who can access those resources, and for what purpose. This can often lead to competing interests among stakeholders in the same, sometimes dwindling, natural resources, which can lead to conflict. This is particularly evident in developing countries, where dependence on natural resources is high.

Conservation, as an attempt to manage natural resources sustainably and improve human well-being, inherently attempts to minimize some important causes of conflict. As such, it can often be seen as a peacebuilding tool. Despite these intentions, however, managing competing claims to scarce natural resources can also create or exacerbate grievances that can lead to conflicts with, among and within

local communities (IISD, 2009). There are three broad ways in which conservation and the management of natural resources can lead to conflict (IISD, 2009):

- Conservation can restrict peoples' access to key livelihood resources.
- Conservation can introduce new or additional economic burdens or risks on the population, such as crop or livestock loss to park animals.
- Conservation can result in the unequal distribution of benefits.

Conflict is not, of course, a strictly negative phenomenon. Hammill and Brown (2007) offer the following helpful definition:

> *Conflict is a multi-dimensional social phenomenon, indicative of social change and transformation. Depending on how conflict is diagnosed and managed, it can lead to a range of outcomes, from constructive development opportunities to violence and human suffering.*

> *Conflict takes place when two or more parties perceive that their interests are incompatible, express hostile attitudes, or pursue their interests through actions that damage the other parties. When resolved peacefully and non-coercively, conflict can be a force for positive social change. It can be a sign of a society adapting to changing economic, social and environmental realities, and an opportunity for marginalized groups to redress injustice. When conflict is ignored or suppressed, it often leads to increased frustration and tension, which, when left unchecked, may result in violence.*

While conflict in itself is not always negative, *violent conflict* always has negative repercussions. Areas that are experiencing, or have recently experienced, violent conflict—i.e., conflict zones—are characterized by volatile sociopolitical dynamics that complicate conservation efforts. Undertaking conservation activities in these areas can alter—and sometimes amplify—the links between conservation and conflict described above (USAID, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c; Hammill & Brown, 2006; CDC, IISD & Saferworld, 2009; Zahler, 2010). That is, restricting access to livelihood resources, introducing additional economic burdens or distributing benefits unequally through conservation activities may have more destructive consequences in a conflict zone since tensions are already high, human suffering is more pervasive, and governance and law enforcement mechanisms are weak. But, if designed in a conflict-sensitive manner, conservation activities can avoid or minimize having such negative consequences and can be used to address conflict and build peace (IISD, 2009). Indeed, protected areas and conservation actions are increasingly seen as one way of building peace and establishing good governance in regions emerging from conflict (Rosas, 2010; Ali, 2007). These reports show that in certain situations conservation can help reduce conflict in a region while in other situations conservation leads to increased conflict.

Thus, conservation managers must be aware of the relationship between their conservation activities and conflict. Such awareness will help them achieve their conservation goals: the sustainable management of natural resources and improved human well-being. If undertaken in a conflict-

sensitive manner, such managers can ensure they are not contributing to conflict, and that their activities can even contribute to peace.

Conflict can be characterized according to:

- Causes: Sociocultural, economic, governance and security issues that generate grievances.
- Actors: The individuals and groups contributing to or affected by conflict.
- Geographic scope: The physical scale and spread of the conflict.
- Intensity: The spectrum of conflict intensity ranges from violent conflict, characterized by "open acts of hostility," to non-violent. The latter can include latent conflict, where tensions exist but parties have not decided to act, or manifest conflict, where parties decide to act, but not through the use of violence.

Given the wide range of factors that drive conflict, it is clear that if conflicts are to be adequately addressed, their context must be clearly understood.

The project site: the Albertine Rift

The Albertine Rift is a region of great biodiversity value (Plumptre *et al.,* 2004, 2007; Brookes *et al.,* 2004). Unfortunately, it is also a conflict-prone region with a long history of armed violence. As such, it was chosen as the site for piloting the conflict-sensitive conservation (CSC) approach.

The Albertine Rift is home to very high human population densities (Balmford *et al.,* 2001a; Cordeiro *et al.,* 2007). In fact, across Africa high levels of biodiversity and high human population densities often co-exist, most likely due to the greater geological diversity and more fertile soils found in such areas (Balmford *et al.,* 2001a). The local population continues to grow rapidly and, as a result, competition and tensions over access to land, water and natural resources are increasing. The region's long (and continuing) history of armed conflict further complicates these dynamics (Balmford *et al.,* 2001b).

The Albertine Rift lies in the Great Lakes Region of Africa and has experienced conflict in the eastern DRC in the 1960s and 1970s and again in the 1990s and 2000s; in Uganda during the 1970s up to the mid-1980s; in Rwanda in the early 1960s, early 1970s and in the mid- to late 1990s; and in Burundi during the 1970s, 1990s and 2000s. The only country in the Albertine Rift region that has escaped armed conflict is Tanzania, although it helped overthrow the Ugandan regime of Idi Amin in the late 1970s after he invaded Tanzania briefly. This region therefore is a good area to pilot approaches to conflict resolution and management.

A conflict-sensitive conservation approach (CSC – summarized below) was piloted in Virunga National Park by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and IISD during an 18-month project between July 2006 and January 2008, with support from a U.S. State Department grant. This project

identified the main conflicts occurring in the park with relevant stakeholders and then addressed four of these as pilot projects. The four conflicts were: a) illegal fishing at Nyakakoma Fishing Village; b) involvement of the military in illegal activities; c) encroachment of the western coast of Lake Edward; and d) encroachment around Lubilya on the Uganda border (Kujirakwinja *et al.,* 2007; Hammill *et al.,* 2009). None of these conflicts were resolved completely during the short grant period but the results showed that the process did lead to a willingness of the various stakeholders to work together to find solutions. This led to the development of this larger *Healing the Rift* project that focused on sites in the Albertine Rift region of the eastern DRC that piloted these approaches at four main sites in the eastern DRC, a region that has been through armed conflict over at least the past 15 years and in some areas since 1960.

The four project sites were:

1. **Virunga National Park (PNVi)**: Established in 1925 as Africa's first national park, PNVi, expanded over the following 12 years to include some of the most diverse habitats of the Albertine Rift. PNVi, together with the contiguous Queen Elizabeth, Rwenzori Mountains, Semuliki and Bwindi Impenetrable Parks in Uganda and the Volcanoes Park in Rwanda, form the Greater Virunga Landscape, one of the most biodiverse landscapes in the world. Managed by the Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature (ICCN), it was declared a World Heritage Site in 1979.

During the recent civil conflicts in the DRC, PNVi has been illegally settled by people looking for farmland and access to Lake Edward's valuable fishery. This in-migration has strained the park's natural resource base, with resultant over-fishing leading to a near-collapse of the Lake Edward fishery. The Congolese military has operated in the park for years, working to expel various armed groups of rebels from PNVi, but in the process have become engaged in a number of illegal activities, including fishing, poaching, charcoal production and firewood collection. In 1994, due to conflict and the subsequent collapse of the institutions managing the park, it was listed as a World Heritage Site in Danger; its status has not changed.

2. **Kahuzi-Biega National Park (PNKB)**: Established in 1970, PNKB has a long history of conflict. The park was created without the participation of local stakeholders, and since its initial gazetting has experienced a number of conflicts with the local population. Conflicts persist over the presence of villages in the park (despite the fact that these villages pre-date the park) and the activities of community members in the park. Conflicts have also arisen over the influx of people to the park to mine gold and columbite-tantalite (coltan), to illegally cut wood for fuel and construction purposes, and over the encroachment of the park for farming, particularly in the narrow corridor that links the highland sector of the park to the larger lowland sector. As a result, relations between ICCN and the local population are not good.

In 2000, ICCN established community conservation committees (CCCs) to try and improve their relationships with these local communities. These CCCs have not yet broadly succeeded in fostering cooperation, as they continue to be perceived as simple agents of ICCN, against which communities will continue to struggle for valuable natural resources. In 1997, PNKB was listed as a World Heritage Site in Danger; it remains listed as such.

3. **Itombwe Massif**: The Itombwe Massif is one of the most biodiverse parts of the Albertine Rift and of the DRC. It has long been recognized as such, and in 2006 a ministerial decree was made to gazette a reserve in the massif. No consultations were carried out with the local communities prior to the decision, and the boundary of the reserve was not clearly defined in the gazettement document.

As a result, conflicts arose between the local communities and ICCN over the status of the area. Additional conflicts were created between the large NGOs working in the region: some wanted strict conservation measures put in place, without compromise, while others were concerned with the rights of the people living there. In particular, the Rainforest Foundation was lobbying with its local NGO partners to degazette the reserve and work on a new legal document while WWF and WCS were more inclined to work with the local communities to modify the decree.

4. **Misotshi-Kabogo:** Biodiversity surveys by WCS, the Field Museum of Chicago and WWF in 2007 found that this massif was very biodiverse. Six new vertebrate species were discovered during the survey, with more discoveries expected in the future.

This project piloted a conflict-sensitive approach for the creation of a new protected area that aimed to be proactive and foresee potential areas of conflict and aim to minimize these before they occur. Effectively it aimed to try the conflict-sensitive approaches developed by IISD (Hammill & Brown, 2007; IISD, 2009) to a situation before major conflict occurred.

Note: This region has also been known as Kabobo but this is not a name recognized locally; until a name is agreed for the region, we have been using Misotshi-Kabogo.

The locations of these four sites are shown in Figure 1.
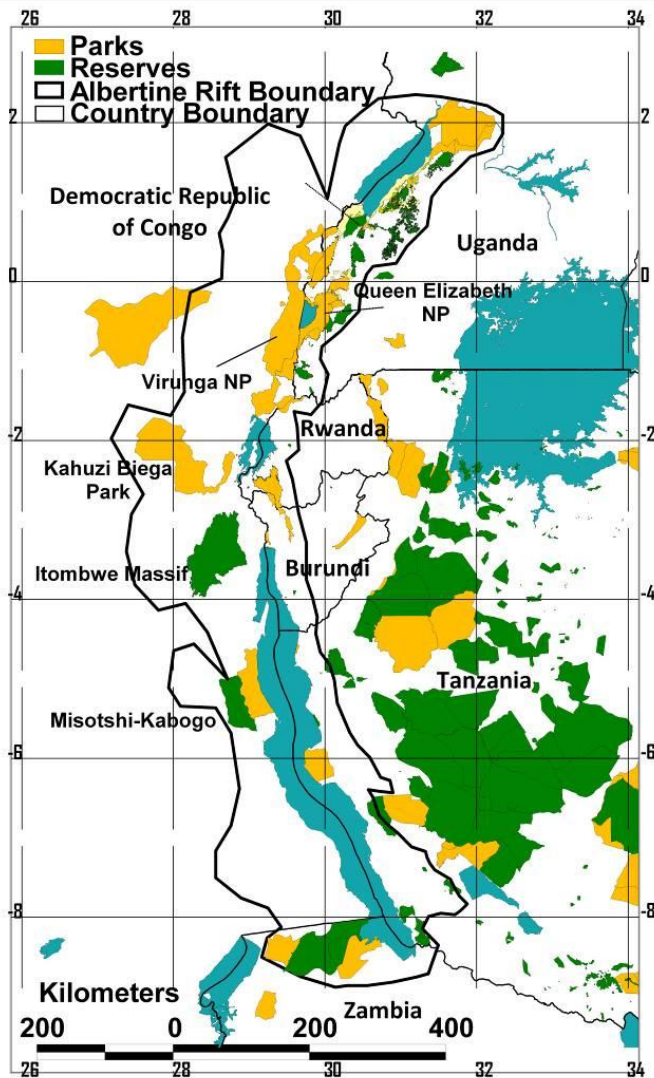
Figure 1. Location of the four sites where conflict-sensitive approaches to conservation were piloted, showing locations of protected areas in the Albertine Rift.

This report summarizes the work undertaken during the project, the approaches used to identify and map conflicts at the four sites, and the CSC activities that were subsequently implemented. IISD and WCS monitored the impacts, and used the findings to evaluate the pilot projects in PNVi and PNKB during the 27-month project. Lessons learned from the process were then further integrated into the CSC approach. These lessons and the evaluation are documented in this report.

Conflict-Sensitive Approach to Conservation Management

Conflict-sensitive conservation process

In 2006, the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) developed the conflict-sensitive conservation (CSC) process, with input from various conservation partners. The CSC process involves two main components. The first guides practitioners through a series of steps on how to make their organizations more conflict-sensitive; in other words, how to ensure that the CSC principles are integrated into an organization's culture, operational practice and throughout the project cycle.

The second component focuses on making specific conservation activities more sensitive to conflict dynamics. It does so through the analysis of conflicts, and uses this analysis to design, implement and monitor CSC solutions to ensure their continued conflict sensitivity. Conflicts are analyzed and strategies implemented with the involvement of a broad variety of affected stakeholders. The CSC approach has been laid out in a Practitioners' Manual, and can also be accessed online at www.csconservation.org). The main steps for the second component of the CSC process are (Hammill *et al.,* 2009):

  i.   Analyze the conflict
    a.   Identify conflict(s) affecting the target area through a brainstorming exercise with relevant stakeholders.
    b.   Prioritize the identified conflicts based on their human and conservation impacts.
    c.   Select the conflict(s) you will focus on, taking into account the feasibility of addressing the conflict(s).
    d.   Analyze the selected conflict(s), using a range of conflict analysis tools (e.g., conflict tree, conflict map, stakeholder profiles) to understand the causes, effects, actors and dynamics of the conflict(s). Compare the results of these analyses against a conservation strategy/activity to identify how it contributes to conflict and/or peacebuilding.

  ii. Design, implement and monitor CSC solutions
    a)   Design or modify your activities to make your work conflict-sensitive—i.e., help ensure they don't contribute to conflict factors, look for opportunities to contribute to peacebuilding—using the results of the conflict analysis. Conflict-resolution/management intervention strategies can be applied differently depending on the stakeholders involved. These include:
        i.   *consultation* (where interested stakeholders give their views to facilitators and the latter plan for a wrap-up session with all parties as the final step of consultations),
        ii.   *dialogue* where stakeholders are encouraged to have a direct communication on conflicts and decide ways forward,

     iii.   *negotiation* which involves interactions between parties, and

     iv.   *mediation* where a third party intervenes to facilitate discussions between parties.

Once the conflict to be addressed has been identified by stakeholders, activities are developed; actors, funding and strategies identified; a detailed strategy document is developed; and then actions implemented on the ground.

b) Implement CSC activities, maintaining a collaborative, transparent and flexible approach to the identification of sites and partners, as well as the negotiation of contracts, and procurement of resources.

c) Monitor your work, the conflict and its impact on other sectors assessed to avoid a resurgence of other conflict.

Description of sites and context of the conflicts

Virunga National Park

Description of the site

Virunga National Park is among the most diverse protected areas in Africa, ranging from afromontane forest (4,500 m a.s.l.) in the southern sector, through the savannas and lowland forest in the central and northern areas (750–1,000 m a.s.l.) to alpine habitats on the Rwenzori Mountains in the north (5,119 m a.s.l.). It supports at least 196 species of mammals, 706 birds and 2,077 plants, of which 21 mammals, 23 birds and 230 plants are endemic to the Albertine Rift (Plumptre *et al.*, 2007).

Apart from the terrestrial habitats, Virunga includes lakes, rivers and marshes with about 74 per cent of Lake Edward occurring inside the park's boundaries, fed by three large rivers (Rivers Ishasha, Rutshuru and Rwindi) and various tributaries. Three "legal" fishing villages are found within the park boundaries, each on Lake Edward: Kyavinyonge, Vitshumbi and Nyakakoma (the first two are legally permitted to be within the park; the presence of the third is tolerated by the authorities, though not strictly legal). Instability and insecurity within and around the park has meant that since the early 1990s, up to 10 illegal settlements have been founded, primarily along the lake's western coast. These villages have added enormous pressure on the park's natural resource base, have effectively doubled the human population around Lake Edward, and have blocked the migratory corridor linking the northern and central sectors of the park, creating problems for its wildlife (Languy & Kujirakwinja, 2006).

General context of the conflict

Virunga is located in one of the most highly populated areas in the DRC, with about 300 people per km^2, characterized by small farmers with limited access to land and other resources, and large household sizes. About half of the population is under 20 years of age. Apart from the human density around the park, there are more than 40,000 people living within the park boundaries making a living from fishing. With the decline of fisheries, people living in fishing villages have switched to extracting other resources either illegally (poaching and timber collection) or with agreements with the protected area managers (firewood and grasses) based on specific terms of use and conditions of harvest (Languy & Kujirakwinja, 2006; Nele, 2008).

PNVi is one of the parks to have suffered most from armed conflicts and political instability in the eastern DRC since the mid-1990s, due to its geographical position and the origin of most of the rebel groups that have invaded or fought the government. In the late 1990s, the management of the park was polarized, with different regions of the park falling under the leadership of different factions of rebel groups managing the eastern DRC. For instance, the Congolese Rally for

Democracy (RCD-Goma) controlled much of the southern part of the park while the RCD-KML controlled the northern part. This division had major consequences for the conservation of wildlife populations and their habitats, and led to major encroachment of the boundaries of the park and the unsustainable use of natural resources (Kalpers & Mushenzi, 2006).

The involvement of multiple stakeholders in the illegal exploitation of resources from the park is understood to be a result of weak institutional capacity and the absence of law enforcement agencies, inadequate salaries for public servants (including soldiers and rangers), and of economic benefits derived from the illegal exploitation of the park's natural resources. ICCN has addressed these issues primarily through increased law enforcement in the park, with more ranger patrols resulting in arrests and the fining of offenders.

This strategy had had some success in reducing illegal activities, but has had little impact in restoring biodiversity or minimizing threats to the park, especially in areas where communities rely more on natural resources for their livelihoods or where armed conflict is present (Languy & Kujirakwinja, 2006; Plumptre *et al.,* 2008b). ICCN's conservation approach was identified by stakeholders as one of the important sources of conflict between protected area authorities and local communities living in and around the park. Specifically, conservation strategies focusing on strict resource protection and excluding communities from management decisions—i.e., non-participatory "fines and fences" approaches—are unlikely to succeed in securing the natural resource base in densely populated areas.

Conflict analysis and strategies

Conflicts over natural resources can severely limit the effectiveness of conservation efforts. As such, they must be addressed with conflict-sensitive conservation strategies, to ensure that the conservationists are aware of the context in which they are working and design their interventions accordingly. Under the initial U.S. State Department grant, WCS and IISD developed a conflict strategy for the fishing village of Nyakakoma, using the CSC process.

<div style="border:1px solid #000; background:#d9d9d9; padding:1em;">

Box 1. Conflict analysis of Virunga Park (2008)

Identified conflict categories

Intra- and inter-institutional conflicts: Conflicts within ICCN or between ICCN and its partners (NGOs and other government agencies) over a range of issues, including overlapping mandates, perceived interference in management decisions and field activities.

Human-wildlife conflicts: Conflicts involving protected area managers and park-adjacent communities over human and economic losses associated with wildlife that leave the park and invade agricultural lands and homesteads (e.g., loss of crops to elephants, loss of crops to gorillas, no compensation for injury, loss of crops and livestock).

Access to park resources: Conflicts between ICCN and local populations over exploitation of resources from the park and unequal revenue-sharing relating to the natural and financial resources associated with the park. Specific examples included: illegal exploitation of resources (e.g., fishing, poaching, charcoal making), deforestation and encroachment into the park for cultivation, and illegal human settlement within the park.

Priority conflicts

Illegal fishing on Lake Edward: There is a strong need to address recent increases in the number of non-authorized fishers and fishing boats, as well as the use of illegal fishing practices (e.g., using nets with small mesh sizes, fishing in breeding grounds, using trenches to divert water to catch fish, etc.) on Lake Edward.

Access to park resources: People living outside of the park boundaries enter the park illegally to cultivate land, poach wildlife and extract other resources from the park (e.g., western coast of Lake Edward, Kongo). This problem is more pronounced around the park.

Presence of two fishing committees: This conflict is related to the first and arose from the poor organizational power of fishery stakeholders, and exacerbated by the armed conflicts within the park. The creation of parallel committees to govern the fishery was supported by both politicians and local leaders to increase their influence on the fisheries; both received support from some soldiers from the Congolese army. Tribalism was reinforced and acts of sabotage (e.g., damage to boats, theft) among fishers were committed as a result.

Military involvement in illegal activities: Military personnel stationed in the park have been involved in poaching (particularly of hippos) and illegal fishing activities to supplement their meagre salaries. Because they are better equipped and armed, their activities go unchallenged. In some cases, they collaborate with members of ICCN and the local population to organize illegal activities.

</div>

Illegal fishing was identified as one of the priority conflicts in Nyakakoma (Box 1), and the causes and effects of this conflict were elaborated using a conflict tree, which is pictured below (Figure 2).

Theft of fishing materials

Creation of armed groups

Low production for fisheries

Presence of illegal fishers

Effects

Illegal fishing

Conflict

Lack of adequate fishing material

Corruption

Poverty

Weak management of fisheries

Lack of job opportunities

No salaries for public servants

Weak collaboration among services

No law enforcement efforts

Causes

Figure 2. Conflict tree for analyzing the conflict of illegal fishing in Virunga.

For the *Healing the Rift* project, the conflict strategy that was developed in 2006 for Nyakakoma was revisited with the various stakeholders through field consultations. No major changes were identified or made to the conflict analysis and strategies, but the conflict-resolution pilot project was expanded to include Kyavinyonge and Vitshumbi fishing villages (in addition to Nyakakoma) at the request of these villages. Although these villages had similar problems, the extent and number of stakeholders involved were different and the activities implemented differed as a result.

During consultations with representatives from conservation groups, civil society, universities and local and provincial governments, illegal fishing was also identified as one of the main problems affecting Kyavinyonge and Vitshumbi. To ground-truth the situation and develop strategies in accordance with the reality on the ground, local consultations were undertaken in the three legal fishing villages to analyze the various conflicts identified and develop strategies and activities that complied with local realities.
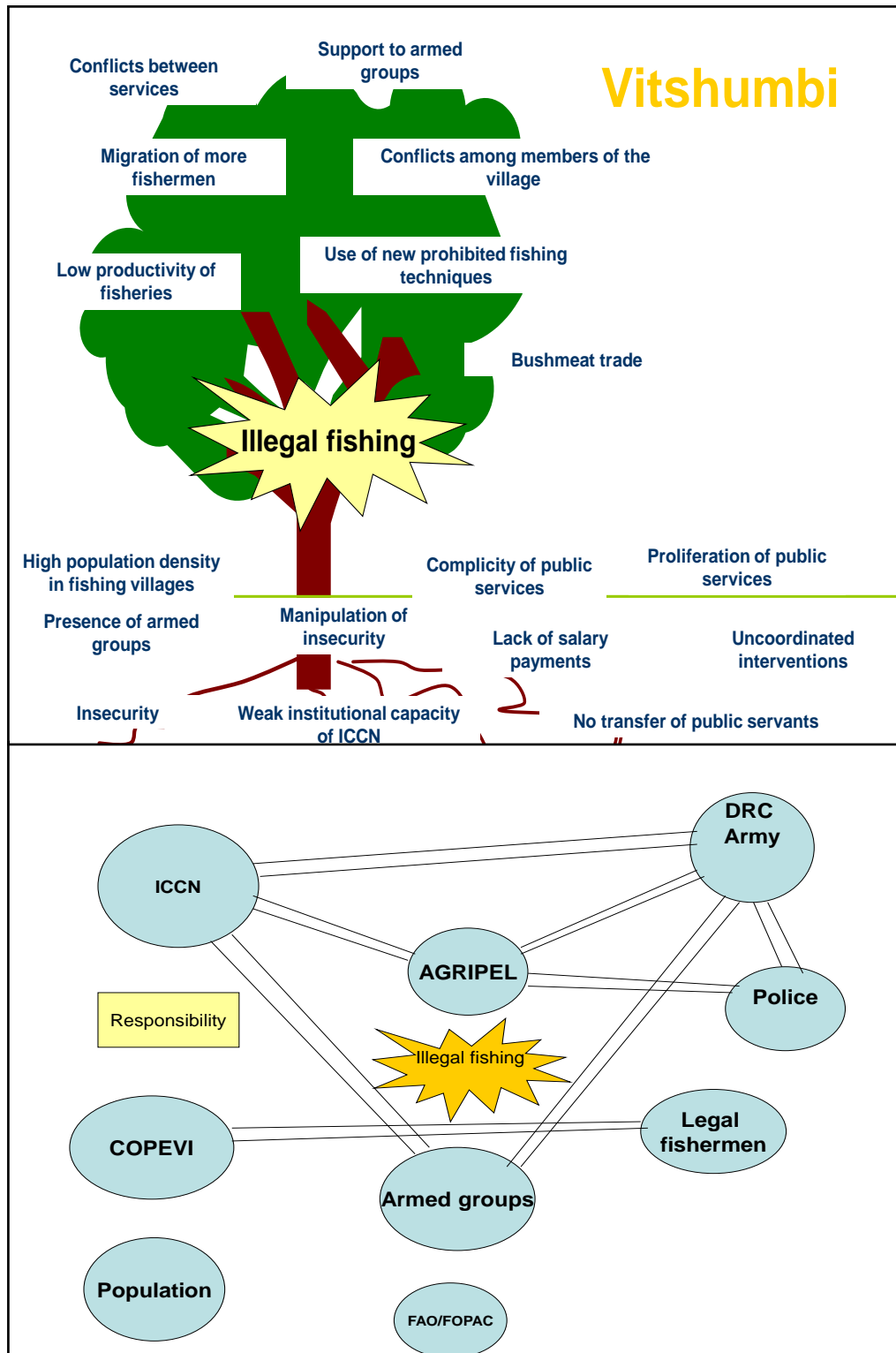
Figure 3. Conflict tree and stakeholders analysis related to illegal fishing in Vitshumbi fishing village.

It was quickly discovered that one conflict analysis could not be applied across Vitshumbi, Kyavinyonge and Nyakakoma. For example, analyzing the problem of illegal fishing in Vitshumbi yielded different causes and effects compared to those in Kyavinyonge. Moreover, although the stakeholders involved in the conflicts were similar, relationships among them differed across the three villages (Figure 3).

These differences were very important to understand before the design and implementation of strategies and actions on the ground (Figure 3). Therefore, to design and implement conservation activities addressing the conflicts associated with illegal fishing, the CSC approach was carried out by the project team in each of the three legal fishing villages.

Kahuzi-Biega National Park

Brief description of the site

Kahuzi-Biega National Park (PNKB) is located in South Kivu, just west of Bukavu and Lake Kivu. It was established in 1970, and is named for the two mountain peaks (Mt. Kahuzi and Mt. Biega) that dominate its topography. The park was created to protect the resident Grauer's gorilla (*Gorilla beringei graueri*) population (about 250 animals in 1996 and currently about 200 individuals), and was the first park in the DRC to develop a gorilla tourism program (in the 1970s). It was classified as a World Heritage Site in 1980, but in 1997 was listed as a World Heritage Site in Danger.

The park area and its surrounding forests contained an estimated 86 per cent of the Grauer's gorilla population in the mid-1990s. The park is among the three most biodiverse protected areas in the Albertine Rift, with 136 species of large mammals (15 endemics to the Albertine Rift region), 335 birds with 29 endemics, 69 reptiles with 7 endemic species, 44 amphibians with 13 endemic species, and 1,171 plants with 218 endemic species (Plumptre *et al.,* 2007). Insecurity in the park has increased since the start of the Congolese civil war, and during the period of the project it became impossible to work in the lowland sector of the park, as the Congolese Army (FARDC) tried to remove rebel groups from the park (these groups included the *Interahamwe*, who were responsible for the genocide in Rwanda). Armed conflict and the expansion of mining and agriculture in the park have led to significant encroachment and large-scale poaching.

General context of conflicts in Kahuzi-Biega

Like Virunga, PNKB is surrounded by a high population density, with 300–600 people/km². The park is facing several threats related to extraction of resources by different stakeholders (mining, timber exploitation, poaching and farming) with a considerable impact on both the wildlife and their habitats, but also on the capacity of protected area authorities. Apart from conflicts related to illegal access to resources, the presence of villages within the park boundaries and continued conflicts

stemming from the park's creation are major issues. When the park was established in 1970, some people were evicted or displaced without compensation, while other communities were compensated; the process and the targeted groups have been questioned by different stakeholders.

Surrounding communities have limited access to land and forest resources. Thus, the Kahuzi-Biega NP is the only area that can supply local communities with firewood, charcoal, bamboo and timber for construction and handcrafts. These competing claims on the park's resources have created conflicts between ICCN and local communities on the one hand, and ICCN and powerful stakeholders (politicians and businessmen) on the other. The main conflicts in PNKB were identified using the CSC process (Hammill *et al.*, 2009).

Conflict analysis and strategies

The CSC approach was used to analyze conflicts in PNKB and develop strategies to address them. A conflict analysis workshop was held where conflicts were identified and analyzed (Box 2) and stakeholders identified with their respective roles in September 2008. This was followed by a training workshop and pilot project implementation.

Box 2. Conflict analysis of Kahuzi-Biega National Park in 2008

Three main conflicts were identified by stakeholders in the conflict-analysis workshop:

1. CONFLICTS OVER THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF PARK
   a. Demarcation of park boundaries in 1970 without consultation and support.
   b. Evacuation of pygmies without alternative re-settlement measures.
   c. Poorly defined revenue-sharing schemes.
   d. Lack of alternative livelihood activities for park-adjacent. communities who cannot access natural resources in the park.

2. CONFLICTS OVER ACCESS TO NATURAL RESOURCES WITHIN THE PARK
   a. Cutting trees.
   b. Mining.
   c. Wildlife poaching.
   d. Gorilla killing for the infant trade.
   e. Fishing.
   f. Grazing in Nindja corridor.

3. INTRA- AND INTER-INSTITUTIONAL CONFLICTS
   a. Presence of armed groups and armed pastoralists within park.
   b. Political interference in park management.
   c. Public services involved in the development of pasture land in the lowland sector of the park.
   d. Involvement of ICCN staff in illegal activities.

After the conflict analysis workshop and development of response strategies, a series of consultations were carried out to ground-truth the findings and planned interventions. The results from these consultations were used to update the conflict-sensitive strategies during a training workshop. The major conflicts identified by ICCN staff, civil society members and Batwa pygmies are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Conflicts identified by ICCN staff, civil society members and Batwa households.

Conflicts	Stakeholders	Strategies or Recommendations
Divergent interest and opinion within tribal clans in the lowland area	Local clans (Bakano, Bakongo and the Banibamasi)	The support to the conflict-resolution committee (CRC) could minimize conflicts and improve dialogue
Scepticism of local population of Nzovu regarding park issues	Local communities of Nzovu	Support existing CRC and CCC
Inter-institutional conflicts	Provincial divisions of agriculture, land and mining	Improve cooperation among services
Human-wildlife conflict	ICCN and local communities	Design and implement crop-raiding mitigation techniques with local communities
Invasion of eucalyptus into the park	ICCN and local communities	Promote tree plantations using indigenous and agroforestry species
Illegal wildlife trafficking	Unknown	Implement monitoring program
Conflict related to Nindja corridor	Farmers, politicians and businessmen	Develop a negotiation process
Conflict of interest between CCC and local population	Members of CCC and the local population	Support CCCs by facilitating a dialogue among partners and reinforce their negotiation skills; Plan for pre-conflict activities in Punia

Itombwe Massif

Brief description of the site

The Itombwe Massif, to the south of Kahuzi-Biega, is probably the most biodiverse site in the Albertine Rift region with the highest number of endemic species, many of which exist nowhere else. The biological importance of the region has been recognized for many years, but until recently there were no concerted surveys to identify where a protected area should be created (Ilambu *et al.,* 1999). In 2006. Itombwe was recognized for its global conservation importance and gazetted as a reserve by the Minister of the Environment in the DRC. The civil war and resulting insecurity in the DRC has made it difficult to visit the site and also led to many people moving into the massif to escape the insecurity. The *Interahamwe* have also settled in the massif and contributed to continuing insecurity there. During the period of this project, the FARDC moved into the massif to try to remove the *Interahamwe* and it became difficult for the project team to operate there.

General context of conflicts in Itombwe

The creation of the reserve by ministerial decree led to a major conflict over the existence of the protected area, as the decision was made with no consultation with the local communities. As a result, people found themselves living within the boundaries of a soon-to-be gazetted park. The gazettement document also did not clearly specify the limits of the reserve so that it was difficult to

know where the boundaries were located. As a result of this opaque process, civil society NGOs started to lobby against the creation of the reserve and formed alliances with some large international NGOs, particularly the Rainforest Foundation, who are strong advocates for human rights in conservation. There were calls to degazette the reserve and annul the legal document that created it. ICCN and other international NGOs recognized that the reserve had been created in the worst possible way, but wanted to find a way to work with the communities to ensure the reserve's biodiversity was conserved, but in a way that benefitted and met the needs of the local communities. Conflicts therefore arose between the international NGOs as well as between ICCN (and the government) and the local communities.

Conflict analysis and strategies

No analysis was undertaken with the stakeholders on conflicts relating to specific conservation activities, as the identified conflicts were first and foremost over the existence of the protected area; it did not make sense to tackle other, smaller conflicts before the reserve's existence was accepted. WCS therefore worked on the two main conflicts that existed over the creation of the reserve: a) the conflict between international NGOs over which conservation strategy to adopt for the massif; and b) the conflict between the local community and ICCN/government over the existence of the reserve.

Misotshi-Kabogo

Brief description of the site

Misotshi-Kabogo lies to the south of Itombwe Massif. It is made up of an isolated forest on the escarpment above Lake Tanganyika in the south-eastern DRC. It suffered from conflict and the presence of rebel groups from 1960 until the mid-2000s and, as a result, little was known about the place. In 2007, WCS led a survey with the Chicago Field Museum and WWF to investigate the biodiversity of the site (Plumptre *et al.,* 2008a). In a period of six weeks, six new vertebrate species were discovered, and several potential new plant species. The presence of Prigogine's colobus (*Colobus angolensis prigoginei*), a subspecies of Angolan colobus, was confirmed for the massif, as was the presence of the Kabobo Apalis bird (*Apalis kaboboensis*), which is also endemic to the massif. It was clear that this site was globally important for conservation and that a protected area of some sort was needed here. Historically known as Kabobo, this name is not recognized in the region and, as such, Misotshi-Kabogo (named after two culturally significant peaks in the massif) is being used until an agreement on the name can be reached with the local communities living there.

General context of conflicts in Misotshi-Kabogo

The project described below to work with the local communities around Misotshi-Kabogo to create a new protected area was different from the projects at the other sites because it aimed to use a

conflict-sensitive approach focusing on conflict prevention, whereby the aim would be to proactively avoid new conflicts rather than tackling existing conflicts. It aimed to show that if conservation managers are conflict-aware and think about the potential impacts of their actions, then they can avoid creating situations that lead to conflict and threaten conservation goals.

Conflict analysis and strategies

The main strategy used here was to use a method that would avoid the conflict that had been created in the Itombwe Massif over the creation of a reserve there. Following the biodiversity surveys and findings that the Misotshi-Kabogo area was of global conservation importance, it was decided that a socioeconomic survey of the people living around the site would be useful to better understand their needs as well as to ask for their input into the idea of creating some form of protected area.

Pilot projects

We here describe the seven pilot projects that were undertaken to assess and resolve specific conflicts in the four sites. During most of these pilot projects an introduction to conflict analysis was given to help put the project in context as well as train people, particularly ICCN staff, in the conflict-sensitive conservation approach developed by IISD and its partners.

1.0   Developing strategies to tackle illegal fishing on Lake Edward

Three pilot projects dealt with the illegal fishing on Lake Edward. This conflict was selected in 2006 as a priority conflict given its importance to livelihoods and its impact on wildlife and other resources of Virunga National Park. Results from the Nyakakoma pilot project during the 18-month U.S. State Department project were positive and there was a request to expand the conflict-resolution activities to Vitshumbi and Kyavinyonge fishing villages. The selection of illegal fishing as the priority conflict upon which to focus the pilot projects was based on criteria such as the feasibility of tackling the conflict, the accessibility and scope of funding, the urgency of action requested by stakeholders, and the impact on both livelihoods and biodiversity.

The implementation of conflict-resolution strategies related to illegal fishing involved a multi-stakeholder approach that engaged ICCN rangers and wardens, army, local NGOs, legal and illegal fishers, other public services, fisheries department and COPEVI (the cooperative established in 1948 to manage the fisheries on Lake Edward). These stakeholders were selected either because fishing is their primary source of revenue, or because they receive a share of fishing revenues from legal and/or illegal fishing activities, or because they have the legal mandate to regulate fisheries in the DRC.

Strategies were developed for each fishing village using a similar process, although some specific issues and activities were tackled differently at each site. The main steps used to develop the strategies were:

1.1   Conflict analysis

1.1.1   *Workshop to analyze conflicts and devise conflict-resolution strategies*

Stakeholder workshops were held for each fishing village (Nyakakoma, September 2007 and 2008; Vitshumbi & Kyavinyonge, September 2008) to analyze conflicts (causes and effects, and a stakeholder analysis) and identify strategies that could mitigate the conflicts. Different stakeholders were involved including conservation actors (NGOs, local communities' representatives and ICCN), development agencies and civil society, and administration and local political authorities. Through a

series of brainstorming sessions, participants went through the CSC steps (described in the previous section of this report) to identify activities and strategies to be implemented. From these workshops, conflict trees and maps were developed for each fishing village and strategies defined.

1.1.2 *Meetings to ground-truth the analysis and proposed strategies*

Following these stakeholder workshops, a series of consultation meetings (2007 for Nyakakoma, and 2008 for all the three villages) were held in the three fishing villages to ground-truth the analyzed conflicts and associated conflict-resolution strategies. These involved two sets of meetings: the first consisted of a round of separate meetings with professional groups (e.g., security personnel, conservation actors, fisheries committees, civil society groups, women's groups and administration) to avoid the frustrations and self-censorship that can arise in larger group meetings. These were then followed-up by a broader, more inclusive wrap-up meeting that involved members from all of the consulted groups; the purpose of the meeting was to present an overview of the findings (without ascribing information to particular sources.)

Although results from stakeholder workshops were similar for all three fishing villages (e.g., see Box 3 for the causes and effects of illegal fishing in Nyakakoma, which are applicable also to Vitshumbi and Kavinyonge), the ground-truthing consultations allowed for a more site-specific understand of the conflict. There were specific situations for each village that might have been missed if we had considered only the results from the stakeholder workshop. For example, while in Nyakakoma and Vitshumbi the illegal fishing was supported by the soldiers and other public servants, in Kyavinyonge it was not the case and most of the stakeholders were keen to protect the lake (Box 4).

1.2 Implementation of conflict-resolution strategies

Results from the stakeholder workshops and consultations were used in the planning meetings that were held later in October 2008 for the three fishing villages. Fishers, fisheries department officers, soldiers in the naval forces on the lake, and local authorities were involved in the planning exercise as they were the main stakeholders driving the illegal fishing but also as they needed to be the main actors involved in the resolution process. Through this process, a set of activities were planned and implemented to tackle illegal fishing and involve most of stakeholders:

- *Public awareness and sensitization*

Sensitization sessions were carried out in the three fishing villages to educate communities about the effects of illegal fishing using prohibited techniques and fishing nets, the importance of law enforcement agencies and possible interventions from the local monitoring committee. The sensitization sessions were conducted by different stakeholders (army and police commanders, local authorities, pastors and civil society leaders) to different social groups (fishers, women's groups,

small traders). For example, after a meeting of stakeholders identified as "educators," the army commander and local political administrator led discussions on issues related to fisheries with women's groups and fishers. As a result, fishers are conducting a self-monitoring of offenders, in all of the fishing villages and they have all accepted to use fishing nets with a legal mesh size (4.5 inches). Radio broadcasts were also used to inform people in the fishing villages about the conflict-resolution process and the need to manage the fisheries sustainably for the long-term benefit of their community as well as the need to conserve the Virunga Park for future generations. A total of 123 radio broadcasts were made during the period of this project.

- *Law enforcement activities*

Law enforcement, particularly arresting and penalizing illegal fishers, was identified as an important activity to follow-up the sensitization process. This involved different law enforcement agencies such as ICCN (rangers), police, army, fishers and fishing communities. Marine patrols prohibited fishing in breeding areas, as well as the use of illegal fishing materials and techniques such as small fishing nets, baskets, and digging channels or trenches that attract spawning female tilapia. Patrols were planned by the monitoring committees and local fishers contributed fuel and equipment (i.e., boats and outboard engines).

Box 3. Conflict analysis for illegal fishing on Lake Edward (Nyakakoma)

There are multiple, mutually-reinforcing **causes** and enabling conditions that contribute to the conflict related to illegal fishing, including:

- **Lack of alternative livelihood options / employment**: Since it is forbidden to undertake other income-generating activities in fishing villages, fishers are forced to maximize their returns from fishing activities alone, especially in the short-term, using whatever means necessary (legal or illegal).
- **Poverty**: Fishers (legal and illegal) do not have the materials needed to undertake more sustainable fishing practices—e.g., legal nets are much more expensive. Legal fishers are also encouraged to rent their boats to illegal fishers for extra income.
- **Insecurity:** While the war is almost over, insecurity in the region persists. The presence of armed groups such as the Mai Mai and FDLR (*Interahamwe*) has led to attacks on villages and clashes with the army. People fleeing insecurity often settle in areas close to natural resources—i.e., fishing villages. The subsequent increase in population increases pressure on and competition for natural resources.
- **Weakness and corruption in ICCN:** ICCN guards are underpaid, under-resourced and working in very difficult conditions (insecurity, poor living conditions). Morale is low, undermining their sense of loyalty to their conservation mission. When faced with an opportunity to earn additional income, whether it is from conducting illegal activities (e.g., running an illegal fishing operation) or facilitating them (for a fee), it can be difficult to turn down.
- **Weak collaboration among services**: Due to confusion over their respective roles and mandates, as well as differential power dynamics (i.e., the army has more resources, fire power and authority than ICCN guards for example), there is little cooperation between the different services. Instead of combining forces and working together to stem illegal fishing activities, the different services can end up undermining each other's authority and therefore overall control of the fisheries.
- **No application of the law:** With persistent insecurity, institutional corruption and weak collaboration between the different services, the fisheries law is not being applied or enforced in fishing villages.
- **Lack of organization of fishery:** In addition to the reasons listed above, the absence of an effective, well-organized, and respected local fishing committee has left the fisheries at Nyakakoma disorganized and unregulated. This allows illegal fishing practices to continue, further diminishing the resources and increasing competition, and exacerbating conflicts between the different actors.

The **consequences and effects** of illegal fisheries included:

- **Presence of clandestine fishers:** The presence and growth of illegal fishing activities in Nyakakoma has attracted in-migrants, leading to a permanent (or at least semi-permanent) presence of non-authorized fishers in the area.
- **Reduced/weak productivity of fisheries:** The increased pressure on the fish stock, both in terms of numbers of fishers/boats and fishing in restricted areas such as breeding areas, has led to the decline on fisheries productivity. This has been observed both in terms of the average size of fish (more, smaller fish per kilo of catch) and the quantity of fish available.
- **Theft of fishing materials**: Illegal fishing activities have increased competition over a decreasing resource base, creating tensions and conflict. This has been manifested through sabotage and theft of fishing materials, which further compounds conflict and poverty (one of the drivers of illegal fishing).
- **Formation of armed groups:** Different armed groups recruit young people from the surrounding villages and some of them have come out and started fishing illegally.

Box 4. Conflicts and actors involved in illegal fishing by fishing village

1. Nyakakoma

a. Conflicts

- Use of prohibited fishing nets and fishing in spawning grounds
- Involvement of ICCN rangers and other public officers in illegal activities (fishing, woodcutting and poaching)
- Lack of cooperation among services

- Demographic pressure in fishing villages
- Insecurity
- Low productivity of fisheries
- Fishing by Ugandans on the DRC side of the lake
- Poor management of fisheries

b. Actors involved

– ICCN
– Army
– Local political authorities

– Civil society
– Local NGOs
– Public services

2. Kyavinyonge

a. Conflicts

- Use of prohibited fishing nets and fishing in spawning grounds
- Involvement of ICCN rangers and other public officers in illegal activities (fishing, woodcutting and poaching)
- Demographic pressure in fishing villages

- Insecurity
- Low productivity of fisheries
- Fishing by Ugandans on the DRC side of the lake
- Poor management of fisheries
- No clear boundaries for spawning grounds

b. Actors involved

– ICCN
– COPEVI
– Illegal fishers
– Legal fishers

– Fisheries department
– Marine forces
– Local communities
– Migrants

3. Vitshumbi

a. Conflicts

- Use of prohibited fishing nets and fishing in spawning grounds
- Illegal fishing by marine forces in complicity with armed groups (PARECO)
- Involvement of ICCN rangers and other public officers in illegal activities (fishing, woodcutting and poaching)
- Demographic pressure in fishing villages
- Manipulation of insecurity by the army
- Low operational capacity of ICCN rangers

- Presence of dual fishers structures (fishing committees and structure created by the Nile Basin Initiative)
- Low productivity of fisheries
- Poaching and bushmeat trade facilitated by illegal fishers
- Poor management of the fishing villages and boats
- Presence of social infrastructures in the fishing village (high school and university)

b. Actors involved

– Marine forces
– ICCN
– Fisheries department
– Police

– Armed groups
– Illegal fishers
– COPEVI
– Legal fishers
– Local communities
– FAO and FOPAC

Figure 4. Channels or trenches are made by illegal fishers to catch fish regardless of their size. Most of the trenches have been closed by the community.

- Empowering local stakeholders through dialogue

Different stakeholders living in the fishing villages have different perceptions of how the fisheries should be managed, leading to conflicts over issues such as revenue distribution. This has led to tense or broken relationships within and between law enforcement agencies and local groups (fishers and local traders). One of the achievements of this project was to re-establish dialogue and cooperation between these stakeholders through the creation of three monitoring committees, which meet to discuss and address fisheries-related problems on a monthly basis. These committees also work with the government agencies mandated to manage the fisheries (i.e., fisheries department and wildlife agency) to monitor the effectiveness of law enforcement activities on a quarterly basis. The local committees have now been legally established by the provincial governor by a decree and are also legally allowed to deal with most of the fisheries issues.

- Political involvement

Given the political context and fragility of the eastern DRC, the involvement of local, provincial and national politicians and authorities was important to the success of conflict-resolution strategies. The preliminary positive results of the monitoring committees' activities prompted the provincial governor to provide financial support to them and establish a special funding mechanism to sustain the process. About US$13,000 was given by the provincial government to the committees and afterwards, the committees were authorized to collect and use a tax on the fisheries industry.

1.3   Challenges with implementing the conflict-resolution activities

During the implementation phase, there were problems associated with illegal fishers bribing soldiers and ICCN staff. This led to a lack of respect on the part of local communities—particularly the members of the monitoring committee—for the ICCN warden, as he was supposed to be part of the conflict-resolution process but was supporting illegal fishers. Through dialogue and consultation with the regional authorities, the warden was transferred and relations improved between members of the committee and ICCN.

2.0   Reducing illegal resource extraction in Kahuzi-Biega National Park

The two pilot projects selected for Kahuzi-Biega aimed to deal with the conflicts between community conservation committees (CCCs), which were created by ICCN, and the local community. The CCCs were established to act as a forum for addressing conservation-related issues and enhance dialogue between ICCN and local communities. In areas where the CCCs were absent, ICCN worked with communities to establish conflict-resolution committees (CRCs) to represent communities in the participatory boundary demarcation of the lowland sector.

One CCC and one CRC were selected as pilot projects. The CCC in Bugobe was selected as a pilot project from among 14 CCCs that exist around Kahuzi-Biega, and Nzovu CRC was selected as a pilot project in the lowland sector. Unfortunately, due to security issues in the area, only one consultation meeting was held as a preliminary contact with the Nzovu communities before it became impossible to visit the site. We therefore focused our activities in Kahuzi-Biega on the Bugobe CCC and expanded our support to Misotshi-Kabogo.

2.1   Conflict analysis

A conflict analysis workshop that involved provincial leaders and park management officers was organized in August 2007 by IISD (under a grant from the MacArthur Foundation). A series of consultations and a follow-up workshop were held in September 2008 to update the conflict analysis for Kahuzi-Biega, develop strategies to tackle prioritized conflicts and choose the pilot projects for *Healing the Rift*.

Separate consultations were undertaken with ICCN, pygmy community members, CCCs in Bugobe and Ikoma (in the highland sector of the park), and the civil society union for South Kivu. The range of conflict issues identified in these consultations were reflected in the conflict analysis workshop, in which participants prioritized and analyzed conflicts over: the absence of revenue-sharing, the lack

of development impacts/benefits of conservation strategies for park-adjacent communities, crop raiding by wildlife, and restricted/prohibited access to key livelihood resources.

In discussing the last conflict—specifically, conflicts over illegal woodcutting by local communities—the CCCs were identified as important actors for implementing conflict-resolution strategies, as they are able to mobilize local communities involved in the extraction of natural resources. However, consultations in the Bugobe area (or groupement) revealed that since the creation of the CCC there, the local community—some of whom were involved in illegal extraction of resources from the park—viewed members of the CCC as spies working for ICCN, while ICCN perceived the CCC as an ineffective partner. This situation created additional conflicts between community and CCC members, as well as between community members and ICCN. As such, the strategy for addressing conflicts related to illegal woodcutting required both a revitalization of the CCCs and a re-sensitization of the community regarding the exact roles and functions of the CCCs.

2.2   Implementation of conflict-resolution strategies

After the conflict analyses, the following activities were identified and implemented to address the illegal woodcutting conflict in Kahuzi-Biega:

- Participatory planning

Conflict-resolution activities were developed in a participatory manner with CCC members, which reinforced their involvement in the implementation of these activities. A workplan was developed for the CCC every quarter and an internal evaluation carried out. Some office costs for the CCC (i.e., telephone charges and paper), were also covered.

Figure 5. Meeting of Bugobe CCC committee to develop a workplan.

- *Capacity building in conflict management*

Given that low conflict management capacity was identified as a reason for the weakness and limited effectiveness of the CCC, two training sessions were held for the CCC members: one on group dynamics (i.e., leadership skills and managing conflicts within groups); and another on negotiation techniques (i.e., understanding the causes of conflicts and strategies to solve them).

- *Sensitization and awareness-raising campaigns*

Sensitization and awareness-raising was undertaken through meetings and publicity campaigns targeting different groups extracting resources from the park, such as bamboo harvesters and woodcutters, charcoal makers and traders, and timber harvesters. The campaigns were led by CCC members and ICCN community rangers and highlighted the importance of biodiversity and the advantages of the park, the negative consequences of resources extraction, and strategies to build better relationships between ICCN and the local communities surrounding the park. Radio broadcasts (47 programs) were used regularly throughout the project to inform local communities about the conflict-resolution work and the importance of the conservation of the national park.

- *Empowering local community*

Regular meetings and dialogue between CCC members, local community representatives and ICCN built trust between park authorities and local communities. Today CCC members are seen as part of the community rather than spies for the park.

2.3   Overall impact of the project

As a result of the activities implemented through this project, the CCC has gained credibility as a liaison between local communities and park authorities. Project activities also increased the level of understanding of park laws among local communities, led to the abandonment of illegal activities by 50 woodcutters, and established a mechanism of dialogue between ICCN and local community around Bugobe, mainly with wood and bamboo harvesters, and charcoal makers. There is a need to work on ways to give the people who have given up harvesting wood and other forest products alternative livelihood options in order to prevent them from reverting to illegal activities.

3.0   Resolving conflicts over the creation of Itombwe Reserve

As noted above, the legal gazettement of Itombwe Reserve was undertaken with limited community consultation. As a result, a number of conflicts between ICCN and the local community, as well as between some of the large NGOs (see more detail above), transpired. WCS and ICCN felt it was essential to address these conflicts over the existence of the reserve before other tackling conservation-related conflicts. Two main conflicts over the creation of the reserve were identified:

(a) Conflict between NGOs (both international and local), with some supporting the existence of the reserve and wanting it legally recognized, and others wanting to annul the legal document and protect the rights of the people living in the area; and

(b) Conflict between ICCN and the local community over the existence of the reserve.

3.1   Conflict-management strategies

Some efforts were made locally to try to address these two conflicts prior to this project, but results were not satisfactory as none of the stakeholders wanted to talk to each other.

- *Dialogue process between conflict parties*

With support from the *Healing the Rift* project, WCS initiated a dialogue process in which the international conservation NGOs and ICCN met to discuss issues related to the creation of the reserve. In particular these meetings provided a forum where both sides could express their concerns and also hear the real (as opposed to perceived) views of the other stakeholders. In

particular the Rainforest Foundation and African Capacity wanted to make sure that the rights of the people living inside the reserve were respected and wanted to annul the "*arrêté*" (gazettement document) that created the reserve. WWF and WCS were opposed to the way in which the reserve had been created, with no consultation, but were also concerned that annulling the *arrêté* would potentially mean that the opportunity to create a protected area in the massif would be lost. Thus none of these NGOs were happy with the way in which the reserve had been gazetted and all of them thought it was an infringement of the rights of the people living in the massif. A meeting was held in London in March 2009 between the Rainforest Foundation and WCS where positions were shared and at which it was agreed that a meeting near Itombwe should take place to discuss the issue and agree on a way forward. An agreed terms of reference was created among the four NGOs named above to articulate the aims of a planning meeting and joint mission to the field that would take place in July 2009 and present the ideas of using participatory mapping to identify zones for the reserve. An initial meeting was held between the four NGOs and ICCN in Bukavu in July 2009 to reach agreement on what each party would like to see. A second meeting was then held in Bukavu in July 2009 to bring together the major stakeholders from Itombwe to discuss the problem, to share the various positions about the *arrêté*, and to decide on a way forward that could be acceptable to everyone. Finally, a larger meeting was held to bring together a wider group of stakeholders and plan together for the Itombwe process.

- *Joint work planning among conflict actors for the peaceful gazetting of Itombwe*

As a result of the meetings described above, all parties agreed to support the protection of Itombwe, review the arrêté with more local participation and ensure that local communities are consulted at each stage so that their concerns are taken into account. An action plan was developed and the roles of the different stakeholders agreed. Specific actions included:

- An agreed joint mission to the field to meet with local community leaders to obtain their inputs into the idea of zoning the reserve participatively,
- Gathering existing biological and socioeconomic data and assessing gaps in data needs,
- Develop a joint workplan that ensures local participation and protection of biodiversity,
- Produce a baseline map of the reserve from which discussions can be undertaken with the local communities,
- Obtain feedback and views from local communities about the workplan and activities to be implemented,
- Get the provincial government on board so that they can support field activities, as far politics are concerned,
- Work with communities to zone the potential reserve, and
- Look for funds to support conservation and development projects.

The four NGOs also agreed to share data that had been gathered in the reserve and use them in establishing a baseline for zoning of the reserve (zoning being a process of land allocation to different land use zones.) The zones will be defined based on biodiversity data, as well as existing settlements with associated development zones. The agreed upon zones for the reserve will represent three types of land use: a) conservation zone with no human use; b) multiple-use zone with limited human use with sustainable harvesting of resources; and c) a development zone where development projects would be encouraged and supported in villages.

Challenges with implementing conflict-resolution activities

A joint mission did take place to some villages around the massif in August 2009 but insecurity in the massif prevented this mission visiting all the main settlements in there. Military operations between FARDC and the Interahamwe started at about this time and up to the present time it has been impossible to visit the massif to continue the process. We look forward to strengthening the collaboration that now exists though, once security is resumed, develop a mutually acceptable gazettement document with zoning of the reserve, and work together to establish the reserve and bring development projects to the areas zoned for development.

4.0 Proactively avoiding conflict over the creation of Misotshi-Kabogo

This pilot project aimed to proactively use a conflict-sensitive approach to the creation of a new protected area in the Misotshi-Kabogo Massif following biological surveys that identified its global importance for conservation (Plumptre *et al.,* 2008a). In order to minimize conflicts that might arise, we conducted a series of activities that aimed to get community participation in the whole process from an early stage.

4.1 Conflict-prevention strategies

- Socioeconomic survey

A socioeconomic study was conducted to assess local communities' attitudes towards any attempt of protecting the forest and identify possible areas that could create conflicts once the area was nominated (Plumptre *et al.,* 2009). Samples of villages were surveyed (14 villages along the road and 24 along the lake). People interviewed included chiefs of the villages and their committee members separately, as well as heads of households. In total, WCS visited 38 villages and results showed that 88 per cent of village's chiefs and 65 per cent of households interviewed wanted to see the forest protected, though results of the study also showed that people depend on the forest for their

livelihoods. It was estimated that 32 per cent of spare income (i.e., after basic costs such as education, health and food were removed) came from access to the forest for villages along the lake and 96 per cent for villages along the road separating the area of interest for the Misotshi-Kabogo region and the adjacent LaLuama Hunting Reserve to the west of the road (Figure 6). Most of the interviewees agreed that the protection of the forest should be managed by state-mandated services such as ICCN but that the type of management should allow access to resources and promote local development. Households and traditional chiefs also cautioned that any hidden agenda such as the employment of foreigners (people coming from other provinces) and restrictions on access to the forest for cultural ceremonies should be avoided.
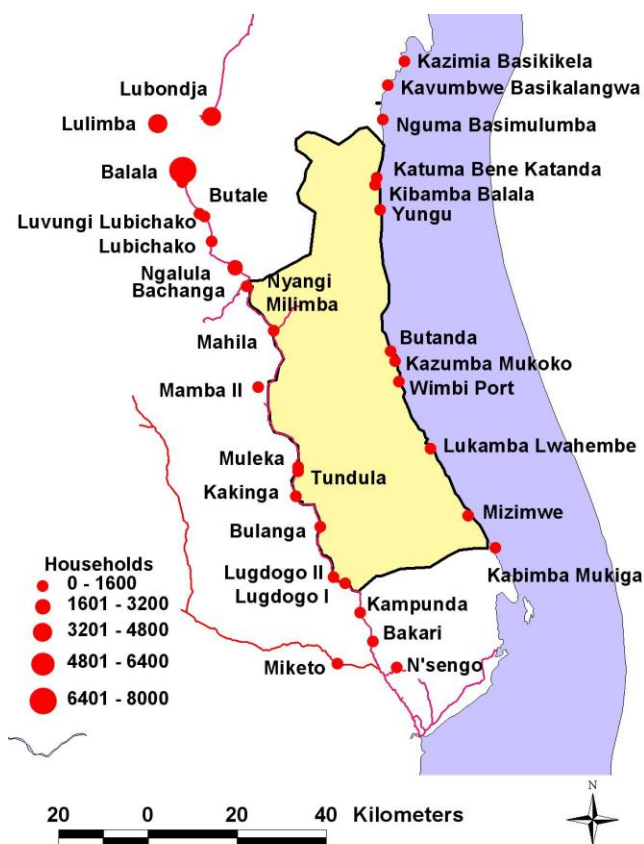
Figure 6. Map of villages surveyed and possible view of Misotshi-Kabogo.

- Multi-stakeholder meetings to discuss creation of protected area

Two meetings with provincial and local authorities were held following the publication of the socioeconomic survey results in July 2009. The aim of these meetings was to report biological and socioeconomic survey results to the traditional chiefs and political authorities in Kalemie and Fizi (district headquarters in Katanga and South Kivu provinces respectively), as well as discuss the

creation of a protected area and the possible types of protected area that could be established. The stakeholders involved in these two meetings included traditional chiefs of villages, political leaders and representatives of the civil society coalitions that exist in each district. Three presentations were made about a) the biological importance of the massif together with a presentation about carbon funding for forests around the world; b) the results of the socioeconomic survey; and c) the different types of protected areas that legally exist in the DRC. Following these presentations participants were asked to split into smaller groups to discuss six key questions:

1. Is there an opportunity to create a protected area in the Misotshi-Kabogo region?
2. If there is, what type of status of protected area would stakeholders want to see?
3. What concerns are there over the creation of a new protected area?
4. What land tenure issues might there be that might affect the creation of a protected area?
5. Which actors should be involved with the management of any protected area?
6. What name could be given to the protected area?

At the two meetings, the stakeholders agreed to create a national park surrounded by a natural reserve in the Misotshi-Kabogo region. A natural reserve will allow access to forest resources legally and sustainably, and while the park will be more restrictive, participants felt it would bring attention to their region of the DRC which has historically been neglected. It is likely the protected area will be called the Ngamika National Park (named after three main regions: Ngandja, Misotshi and Kabogo). The next task recommended by these stakeholders was to work together with them to agree to the limits of any protected area and to hold a regional meeting that could involve provincial governors and provincial services to enable the legal nomination of the area to move ahead.

Figure 7. Representatives at the meeting held in South Kivu at Misisi.

- Participatory mapping and community consultations

Since July 2009, WCS has moved ahead with support from WWF to participatively map the boundaries of the new protected area with each of the villages. Following the community leaders' agreement to create the national park and reserve, WCS visited the villages to give feedback to all members about the biodiversity importance of the region, the results of the socioeconomic survey and of the two meetings held in July 2009. It was important to discuss with them and let them have input into the process and decide where they would like to set the boundaries of the reserve. The process was aimed at raising awareness and promoting discussion about the possibilities of protecting biodiversity without creating conflicts or threatening people's livelihoods. Thus, discussions were held in each village and this was followed by mapping the boundaries of the village, the existing agricultural land and also land that would be needed to allow future expansion of the village for agricultural production. For the areas allocated for future agricultural land, it was suggested they be managed for forest product harvesting by communities initially until they are allocated to future generations for agricultural activities (Campese *et al.,* 2009; Hessel *et al.,* 2009). The map made so far covers 87 villages along the lakeshore of Tanganyika and along the road on the western side of the proposed region of interest (Figure 6). Only two "localités" (parishes) comprising 10 villages have not yet been consulted due to limited access or security constraints (Figure 8).

4.2　Impact of the conflict-resolution activities to date

So far the process has evolved well and due to the participation of all stakeholders, we believe that the protected area will be established with minimal conflict. The process has also led to support for the protected area from both provincial governments, Katanga and South Kivu, because of the consultations. Activities at provincial level have also been initiated, consisting of consultations and meetings with provincial MPs, ministers and the Provincial Coordination Office for Forestry and Conservation. One major threat to the creation of the protected area is the recent issuing of several mining exploration permits in the region and WCS is looking at ways to mitigate this potential conflict. However, we believe the conflict-sensitive approach to the creation of this new national park will be a model that could be applied elsewhere as an approach to protected area creation that involves the support of the local community.
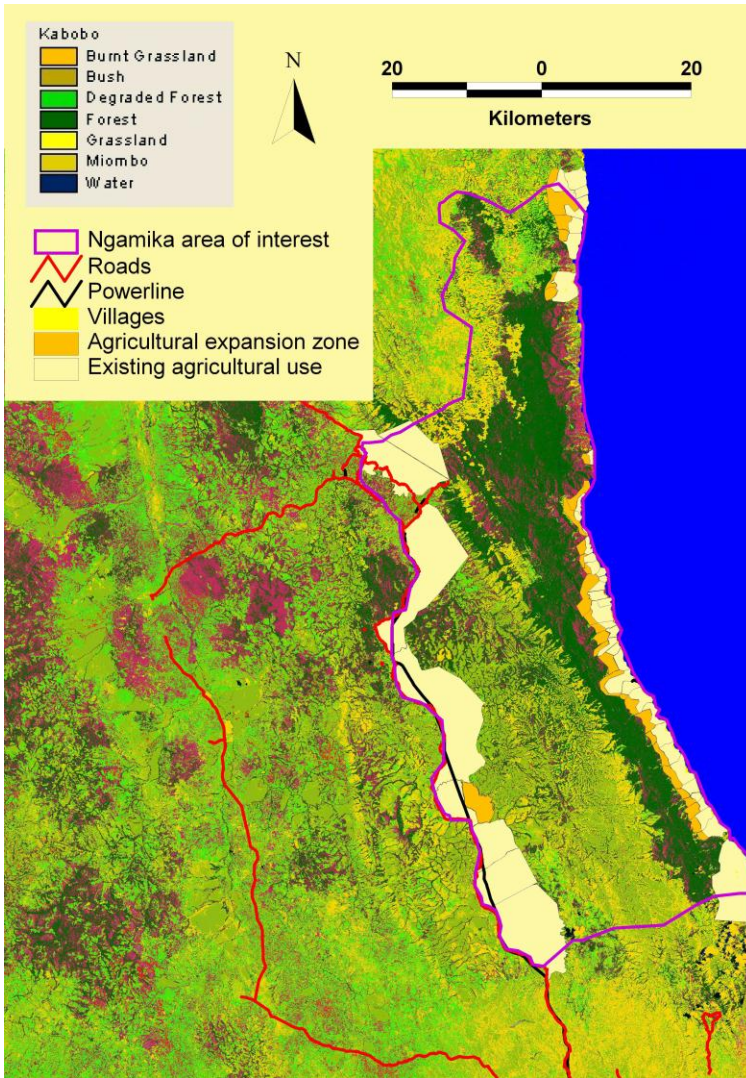
Figure 8. Draft map of proposed village and agricultural zones in the proposed Ngamika National Park.

Capacity building

Throughout the project there has been an emphasis on building the capacity of ICCN staff as well as local community members in conflict-resolution techniques. At the launch of the pilot projects in Virunga and Kahuzi-Biega, and during the evaluation of the conflicts at these sites, an introduction to conflict-analysis and resolution processes and tools, and their application in conservation management, was given. Once the pilot projects were launched, there was a process of training ICCN rangers and wardens "on the job" as they were involved in all of the conflict-resolution meetings and often led these meetings with WCS acting as a neutral facilitator. The philosophy of WCS and IISD was that a hands-on, training-of-trainers approach would be the most useful as the ideas would be more likely to stay with the people trained and it would be less theoretical. During the course of the project, 129 ICCN wardens and rangers were trained in conflict-resolution techniques.

The CSC manual and website tools were also developed and the manual translated into French during the course of this project to also provide the methods and tools to a wider audience. IISD completed the English CSC manual using lessons learned from this project and also developed the website. WCS helped with French translation of the CSC manual. Both are available at www.csconservation.org.

Evaluation of the impact of pilot projects on the peace and conflict contexts

Both the peace and conflict impact indicators and stakeholder consultations point to the fact that the projects in Virunga and Kahuzi-Biega Parks have had a positive overall impact on the peace and conflict context (i.e., they have helped reduce both illegal fishing on Lake Edward and illegal wood cutting in Kahuzi-Biega NP, respectively). However, impacts have not been equally distributed among villages (in Virunga) or equally sustainable.

The monitoring committees are having a positive impact on the reduction of illegal fishing on Lake Edward. Due to the overall security situation, impacts have been greatest in the village of Kyavinyonge (which has been secure longest) and least (though still positive) in Nyakakoma (which only recently became secure). For the second pilot project, while the CCC is having a positive impact on the reduction in illegal woodcutting in Kahuzi-Biega NP, there is a risk that without action on identifying alternative livelihoods for woodcutters who have given up the practice, any gains and goodwill could be lost. Therefore establishing a dialogue between ICCN and the woodcutters is only the first step; more must be done to offer a sustainable solution to the conflict.

This section will outline the updated conflict contexts for both projects, provide evidence supporting each project's impact on local peace and conflict dynamics, and detail any remaining challenges about which the project team must be aware.

1.0   Illegal fishing on Lake Edward, Virunga National Park (PNVi)

Prioritized conflict: Illegal fishing on Lake Edward

Project objectives: To strengthen the institutions that govern the lake and its resources, and to improve collaboration over the fishery among the affected stakeholders within and between the three legal/tolerated villages.

1.1   Update on the broader conflict context on Lake Edward

Security in Virunga has improved considerably since the project's inception. There has been a decrease in the presence of armed groups on Lake Edward and in the park more generally, and ICCN's control over Virunga has increased accordingly. For example, in early 2010, ICCN was able to re-establish control over Nyiragongo volcano in the park's southern sector, which had until recently been controlled by armed rebels. The situation has changed so dramatically that ICCN has

been able to open up the Nyiragongo volcano to trekking and—along with increase tourism in the gorilla sector—has begun to generate a level of valuable tourism revenues.

Illegal fishing has declined. General improvements in the security situation have translated into increased safety for fishers operating on Lake Edward. A key turning point for the fishery was the joint operation carried out by ICCN and the Congolese army (FARDC) in February 2010 to clear the lake's southern spawning grounds of illegal fishers. This operation, deemed a success, was spurred on in part by the lobbying of military and political leaders by WCS and the monitoring committee, and depended on the full cooperation of the military, which until that point had been implicated in both facilitating and participating in illegal fishing. Military complicity in the illegal fishing had restricted the success of the monitoring committees; since the joint operation, however, military support for the illegal fishery has declined. That said, military involvement in illegal fishing has not completely stopped. Low rationing and pay means that local soldiers continue to be faced with challenges to their food security; without the government providing adequate salaries and rations, the military will likely continue to be involved—to some degree—in illegal poaching and fishing.

Population growth in the legal and illegal villages on Lake Edward appears to have slowed. Residents of Kyavinyonge, Vitshumbi and Nyakakoma are now aware of the pressures their numbers are putting on the fishery, and the dangers this holds for their livelihoods. As a result all residents are contributing to efforts at maintaining—if not reducing—current village populations. There have been no changes in the status of the illegal settlements on the lake's western coast. These settlements are believed to be home to 30,000 or so illegal fishers (a formal census cannot been taken), and while there were plans in place to resettle the population to lands outside of the park, these plans were delayed by the conflict, and no action to implement these plans is expected until after the national and provincial elections in 2011.

Overall, the improved security situation has meant that illegal fishing practices are declining and fish yields improving. Local incomes are starting the rise due to improved fishery production and quality. The pervading feelings of fear and distrust are being replaced by a climate of openness and transparency among monitoring committee members and their constituents, and actors increasingly turn to dialogue, collaboration and the sharing of information about the fishery, the lake and the park.

1.2 Impacts of pilot project interventions

As mentioned, project indicators and stakeholder consultations indicated that WCS support for the committees monitoring the Lake Edward fishery has had a positive impact on reducing illegal fishing on the lake. While attributing the change in the conflict context to the specific actions of WCS will always be difficult, qualitative and quantitative indicators do show positive changes in the "big picture": a reduction in illegal fishing since the project's inception and an improvement in the fishery's production and quality.

Ecological impact
- Fish quality is improving at all three fisheries, particularly at Kyavinyonge.

Indicator: there has been an increase in average fish weight from 750g–900g (November 2007) to 900g–1,600g (March 2010).

Indicator: Species previously thought fished-out have returned to Kyavinyonge.

Peace and conflict impact
- Coordination among stakeholders and villages has increased significantly. Conflicts between stakeholder groups have decreased, and overall political and financial power has increased through the consolidated influence and representation of the monitoring committees.

Indicator: Number of stakeholder meetings to address conflicts (community and lake-wide meetings, patrol meetings, transboundary meetings) from November 2007 to March 2010:
  - Kyavinyonge: 20
  - Vitshumbi: 16
  - Nyakakoma: 16

Indicator: Households were asked if ICCN's role in the fishery and the community changed (from November 2007 to March 2010).
  - Kyavinyonge: No change; good level of cooperation between ICCN and the community
  - Vitshumbi: From "implicated in illegal fishing" to "regained authority and control over spawning grounds to decrease illegal fishing"
  - Nyakakoma: From "implicated in illegal fishing" to "regained authority and control over spawning grounds to decrease illegal fishing"

- Awareness-raising campaigns and committee members working with their constituents have successfully increased community understanding of the fishery, its laws and conservation. This has contributed to the continued destruction of illegal nets and the arrest of illegal fishers.

Indicator: Households were asked if community members have a good understanding of the laws of the fishery and the park (change from November 2007 to March 2010).
  - Kyavinyonge: From "good understanding" to "very good understanding"
  - Vitshumbi: From "vague understanding" to "full commitment to the laws of the park"
  - Nyakakoma: From "vague understanding" to "cooperation with authorities on clearing the spawning grounds, respecting law"

41

Indicator: Number of illegal nets confiscated (from November 2007 to March 2010):
- o Kyavinyonge: 1,342
- o Vitshumbi: 1,420
- o Nyakakoma: 458

- Military and political lobbying by WCS and the monitoring committees has been effective, as increased lobbying from both contributed to the joint ICCN-FARDC action in February 2010 to clear spawning grounds.

Indicator: Households were asked if military complicity in the illegal fishery changed (from November 2007 to March 2010).
- o Kyavinyonge: From "some complicity" to "no complicity"
- o Vitshumbi: From "full complicity" to "full cooperation with ICCN to regain state control"
- o Nyakakoma: From "full complicity" to "full cooperation with ICCN to regain state control"

Indicator: Households were asked if the level of political support for the fight against illegal fishing changed (from November 2007 to March 2010).
- o Kyavinyonge: From "some support" to "full support"
- o Vitshumbi: From "weak levels of support, some complicity in the illegal fishery" to "full support for all stakeholders"
- o Nyakakoma: From "weak levels of support, some complicity in the illegal fishery" to "full support for all stakeholders"

- Increased collaboration with neighbouring Ugandan fishers to try to reduce cross-border illegal fishing (Kyavinyonge and Nyakakoma).

Indicator: Number of transboundary meetings with Ugandan fishers from November 2007 to March 2010:
- o Kyavinyonge: 5
- o Nyakakoma: 2

- All three community consultations found that the capacity of the committee to address and manage conflict has increased, primarily through increased collaboration across stakeholder groups. All three monitoring committees also believe that mixed patrols have been an effective collaboration mechanism.

These positive impacts can be illustrated on the conflict trees and conflict maps created by the project team for the villages of Kyavinyonge and Vitshumbi during the conflict analysis exercise in November 2007. These conflict analysis tools formed the basis upon which the project team designed WCS's support for the monitoring committees, and were used to develop the project's peace and conflict indicators. Red circles indicate the conflict causes, effects and relationships that the project team was trying to positively influence, and the checkmarks show those for which a

positive impact was measured. The relative size of the checkmark indicates the degree of influence that the project has had on addressing the identified cause, effect or relationship (Figures 9–12).

Figure 9. Conflict tree, Kyavinyonge.
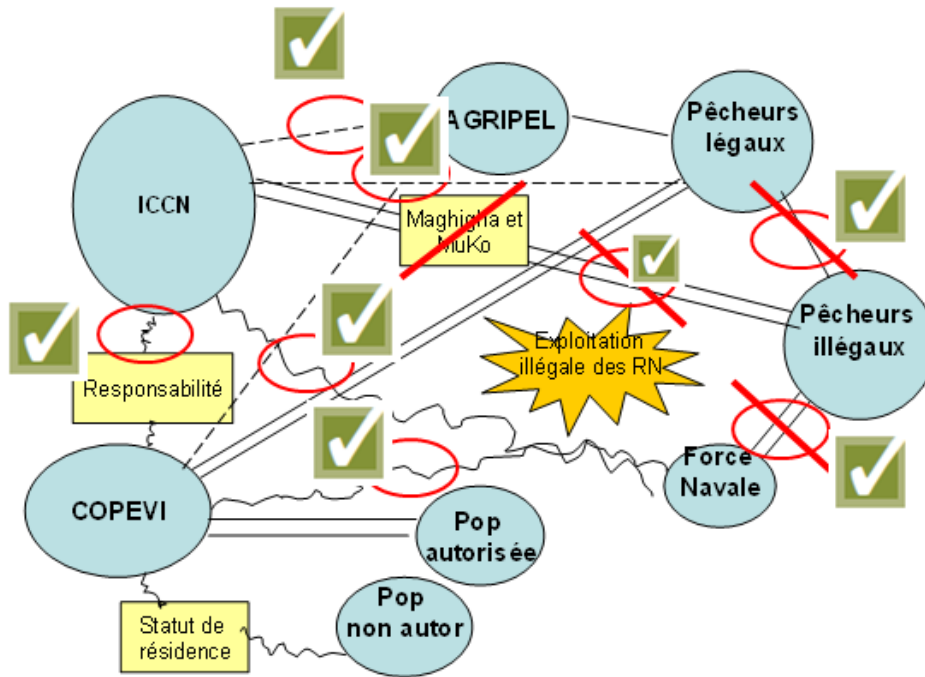
Figure 10. Conflict map, Kyavinyonge.

Figure 11. Conflict tree, Vitshumbi.
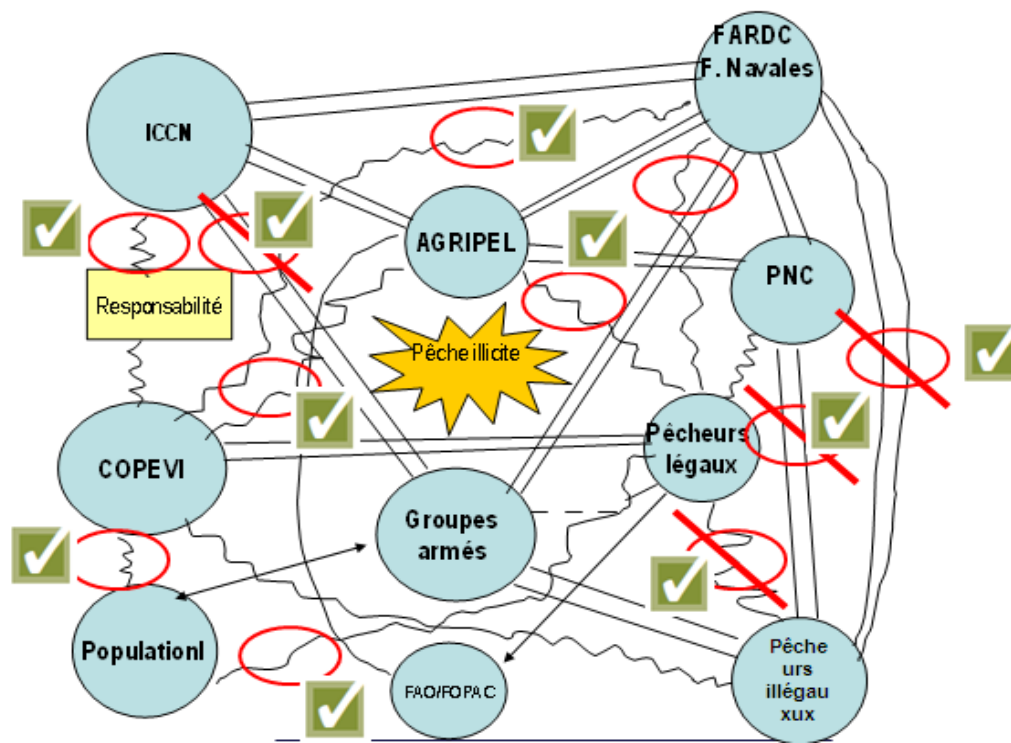
Figure 12. Conflict map, Vitshumbi.

In conclusion, the project has been quite successful in addressing illegal fishing and moving stakeholders from a context of conflict to one of increased peace through environmental collaboration (see Figure 13). It has done so by effectively using a number of different tools: by building dialogue among parties (through the meetings of the monitoring communities within and across villages); by promoting the sharing of information (on fishery laws, fishery statistics, shared ways of addressing the challenge); by facilitating joint assessments (through the coordinated generation of statistics on the fishery across villages); and by jointly managing shared natural resources (through joint patrols, committee member rotations across villages, and the formal acceptance of a common problem and need for a coordinated solution).

Monitoring – **Evaluation** – Action

Joint patrols
Rotating committee members across villages
Formal acceptance of common problem, need
for coordinated solution (creation of CDS)

Generating statistics across stakeholders and
villages (COPEVI, SYDIP, fishers, APECO, ICCN,
AGRIPEL)

Awareness-raising programs
Statistics – size, weight, **price** at market. Arrests.
Approaches to tackle problems across villages

Meetings between stakeholders, villages through
CDS
Political and military lobbying

Peacebuilding

Joint management

Joint assessment

Info sharing

Dialogue

Conflict

Collaboration

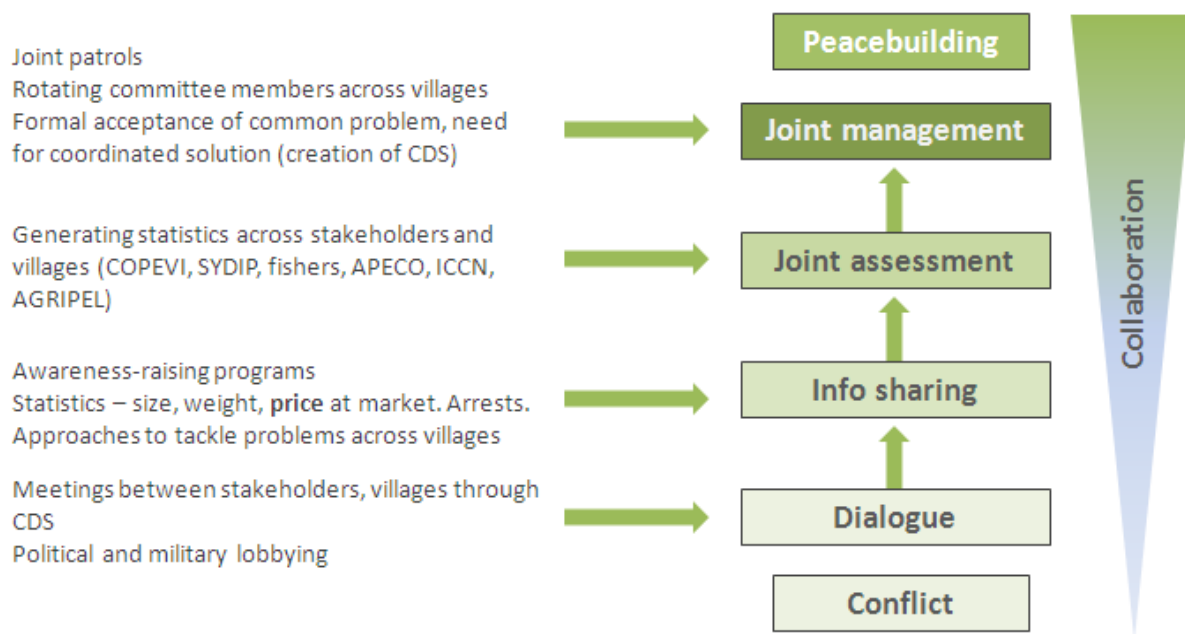**Figure 13. Moving from conflict to peacebuilding through environmental collaboration on Lake Edward (adapted from UNEP & IISD, forthcoming).**

1.3   Remaining challenges

Despite the success the project has achieved, a number of challenges remain. The project team should be aware of them all as it continues to implement the project and considers how it might modify its program of support for the Lake Edward monitoring committees to reflect the changing conflict context.

Financing: The monitoring committees do not have enough money or equipment to independently carry out the full suite of activities they would like to. A local tax on sales of imported salted fish (the FDP tax) offers some financial support to the committees, but not enough to sustain the program. The committees therefore continue to rely on the support of WCS. While it is unlikely that the withdrawal of WCS support from the program would lead to a suspension of committee operations, it will further constrain their capacity to address illegal fishing. WCS and the committees

themselves should look into ways of addressing this challenge to the program's long-term viability; perhaps fishers, as the principal beneficiaries of improved fish quality and yields, could increase their contributions to the committee's operating budget.

Western coast settlements: There will be no action to resettle the population of illegal villages on the lake's western coast until after the national and provincial elections in 2011. These communities—with an estimated combined population of more than 30,000—have (ironically) approached the monitoring committee in Kyavinyonge for help to raise awareness of fishery laws in their villages. While they continue fishing on the lake it will be difficult to ensure a sustainable fisheries industry.

Military rationing: Military salaries and rationing remain low. In the past, soldiers compensated for this—in part—by participating in the illegal fishery. Blocked access to this source of income and food by ICCN, without corresponding improvements in pay or rations, could lead to increased tensions between the military and other stakeholders. One potential solution is community support for military rations.

ICCN rationing: Ranger salaries and rations also remain low. With ICCN control re-established throughout the fishery—particularly in the spawning grounds—it will be a challenge to ensure that ICCN personnel continue to support the legal fishery and do not turn to illegal fishing. The Kyavinyonge monitoring committee reported that ICCN staff are currently complicit in illegal fishing on the Semuliki River along the northern shore of the lake, and upon which mixed patrols are difficult (given the current equipment). Avoiding further complicity will require vigilance from ICCN management, and could require more frequent guard rotations to avoid the entrenchment of illegal activities.

Security: Legal fishers still face some insecurity on the lake, many from evicted, illegal fishers.

Roles and responsibilities: There are some minimal tensions within the monitoring committees regarding the roles and responsibilities of each member group. There is a need to ensure that all members contribute equally; for example, participating staff from the naval forces are paid for their time, while fishers must give up fishing time to participate. There is also some confusion regarding chains of command within the committee: committee members expect naval and police personnel participating in the committee to report to them, whereas within each of those organizations there are defined chains of command that cannot be overridden by the wishes of the monitoring committee.

Demarcation: Committee members stressed the need for improved demarcation in the spawning grounds and at the international border. For the former, a buoy system 500m from the coast was the suggested solution.

Population: There is a need to ensure that improved fishing conditions do not lead to migration into Kyavinyonge, Vitshumbi and Nyakakoma (as well as the illegal settlements on the west coast), and a subsequent expansion of the villages. Efforts should focus on continued census-taking and self-policing among villagers to control population numbers.

Fishery survey: With improved security and a reduction in illegal fishing, there is a need to evaluate and establish sustainable fishing levels for all three legal/tolerated villages. This will require a fishery survey, and could be carried out by WCS.

Illegal fishing practices: Awareness-raising campaigns and improved law enforcement have not yet eradicated the use of illegal fishing nets by a minority of fishers. At times this is through no fault of the fishers themselves; merchants looking to reduce their own stockpiles of illegal nets simply mislabel them and sell them to unsuspecting fishers. Potential actions to address this issue include: a net exchange program, in which illegal nets are exchanged for legal nets; targeting the outside organizations providing illegal equipment; targeting merchants selling the illegal equipment; and monitoring catches for small fish and infractions through single entry and exit points in each village.

Impunity: Villagers complain that arrested fishers are often simply released without punishment. There are no strong incentives to stop illegal fishing. Lobbying efforts must therefore continue to target the judicial system for increased support for the work of the monitoring committee. Local communities should also increase their own capacity to resolve conflicts at the local level before having to escalate them to the judiciary.

2.0   Illegal woodcutting in Kahuzi-Biega National Park (PNKB)

Prioritized conflict: Illegal woodcutting in Kahuzi-Biega National Park.

Project objectives: To support the activities of the community conservation committee (CCC) in Bugobe; to increase the effectiveness of the CCC; to reduce tensions between ICCN and the community; and to ensure that the committee is seen as a neutral mediator of conflicts between ICCN and the community, as well as a facilitator of development projects in the village.

2.1   Update on the broader conflict context for illegal woodcutting in Kahuzi-Biega

The broader security situation is starting to improve in Kahuzi-Biega. Fear is no longer governing the actions of the (non-armed) stakeholders. ICCN increasingly has access to the park; for example, in May 2010 ICCN launched a research trip (with WCS) into the western edge of the low-altitude

sector near Kasese, the first time in 20 years that the parks authority has had access to that part of the park. Communities have returned to the Kasese area on the edge of the park—a strong indication that the security situation has improved considerably. ICCN plans to expand its presence in this sector of the park.

Mining activities within the park—and FARDC complicity in those activities—are reported to be decreasing (the struggle to control the region's mineral resources being one of the chief drivers of conflict in the area). FARDC complicity in illegal natural resource exploitation has not stopped altogether, though; soldiers remain complicit, as they continue to charge the local population for access to and transport of park-based natural resources such as timber.

Another source of instability is the presence of farms in the Nindja corridor connecting the park's low- and high-altitude sectors. The resettlement of these farms outside of the park boundaries remains a challenge, given the political influence of many of the landholders in Kinshasa and Bukavu. Many farm owners continue to employ community members as farmhands and for land clearance, and some continue to employ private militias to protect their interests. However a dialogue has been opened among ICCN, the landholders and the state, and early indications point to the fact that the farmers are willing to begin discussions on resettlements outside of Kahuzi-Biega (with compensation). A declaration of intent has been signed by the chief stakeholders to re-establish ICCN's authority in the corridor and UNESCO has imposed targeted travel bans on illegally-settled Nindja-corridor landholders.

So far, efforts to reduce illegal woodcutting have shown positive results: awareness-raising campaigns have effectively increase local knowledge of the park and its laws, and stakeholder dialogues have included community members in conservation efforts. As a result, a number of community members have abandoned the practice. The absence of long-term alternative livelihoods for woodcutters, however, will continue to challenge the sustainability of this strategy.

2.2   Impacts of pilot project interventions in Kahuzi-Biega

As mentioned, the community conservation committee (CCC) has initially had a positive impact on the reduction of illegal woodcutting in Kahuzi-Biega NP. The project team has already seen positive returns on their efforts to establish constructive dialogue between previously hostile parties, and awareness-raising campaigns have effectively increased the level of understanding of park laws among local stakeholders. There is a risk, however, that without action on identifying alternative livelihoods for woodcutters who have given up the practice, any gains or goodwill could be lost. Establishing a dialogue between ICCN and the woodcutters and implementing awareness-raising campaigns will not be enough to solve the conflict.

Peace and conflict impact

- Stakeholders from the CCC, from the village of Bugobe and from the woodcutters group themselves claim that illegal woodcutting inside the park has declined, as a number of woodcutters and charcoal makers have abandoned the practice.
  Indicator: 522 woodcutters from the Bugobe area are reported to have abandoned cutting wood illegally within the park boundaries (November 2007 – March 2010).
  Indicator: Conflicts around deforestation are reported to have significantly decreased over the course of the project.

- Dialogue between CCC stakeholder groups (particularly the woodcutters) and ICCN has increased significantly. Before the project was implemented, it was impossible for the two groups to sit down for constructive dialogue on park conservation. Now the woodcutters are regularly meeting with ICCN representatives to speak freely about their activities in the park (which they acknowledge as being illegal) and the alternative livelihoods that may be provided to them. Prior to the establishment of this forum of trust and cooperation between stakeholder groups, these groups tended to view each other with hostility due to their competing claims over the area's natural resources.
  Indicator: 12 formal and informal meetings were held between Bugobe community members and the CCC (including ICCN) from November 2007 to March 2010.

- The credibility of the CCC has been restored among Bugobe stakeholders. The neutral support offered by WCS has changed community perceptions for the better; previously, many stakeholders viewed the CCC simply as an agent of ICCN, and by extension they were seen as a committee working against community needs with regards to natural resources.
  Indicator: Do the CCCs represent community needs? From "To a degree" in May 2008, to "Yes" in March 2010.
  Indicator: Does the structure of the CCC create problems within the community? From "Yes, as the CCC is seen as an agent of PNKB/ICCN" in November 2007, to "No, due to varied stakeholder engagement in the process" in March 2010.
  Indicator: Due to awareness-raising campaigns, the CCC is increasingly seen as an effective mechanism for mediating community-conservation disputes.

- Awareness-raising campaigns have successfully increased community understanding of the park laws, and the corresponding punishments for infractions. This has had a strong influence among cutters on their decisions to abandon illegal activities in the park. An increased understanding of the laws of the park and the importance of conservation has led to more self-policing within the communities themselves: where community members actively control access to the park and intervene when there are infractions on conservation laws. This ensures that when a woodcutter abandons the practice, they are not replaced by another member of the community, or someone from outside of Bugobe.
  Indicator: Awareness-raising campaigns have undertaken the following: one workshop on conflict resolution; two trainings on negotiation methods and group dynamics; and eight radio broadcasts.

Indicator: The community's understanding of the laws governing natural resources and the park has "significantly increased" over the lifespan of the project.

In conclusion, WCS support for the Bugobe CCC has succeeded in opening dialogue between the various stakeholder groups in the region, and in raising awareness among community members of the importance of respecting the park's natural resources and its laws. This has temporarily led to a decrease in the amount of illegal logging in the park near Bugobe, and has greatly improved relations between ICCN and the community members (Figure 14).

Despite these advances, poverty remains a central driver of illegal woodcutting in Bugobe, and without offering woodcutters an alternate means of generating income, it is unlikely that the gains realized thus far will last. Woodcutters stressed that without some other means of supporting their families, they would likely return to extracting park resources, regardless of the penalties and risks. Therefore, the project team—in consultation with stakeholder groups—must identify concrete ways of moving further along the continuum from conflict to peacebuilding, by jointly assessing options for alternative livelihoods and then working together to ensure that these are sustainable solutions.
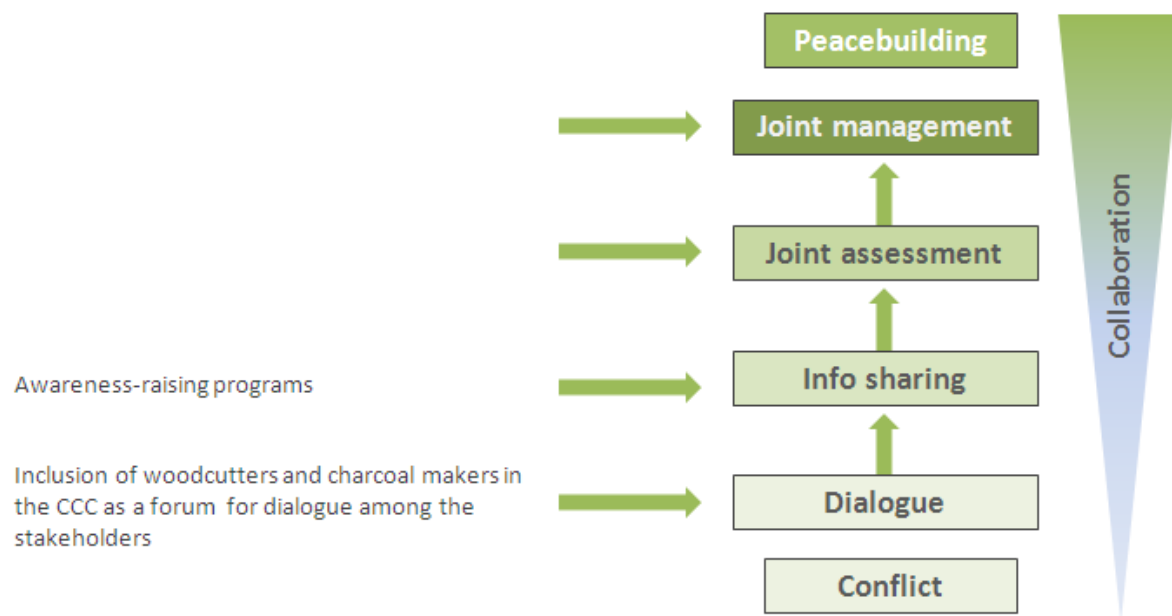

Figure 14. Moving from conflict to peacebuilding through environmental collaboration in Bugobe.

2.3 Remaining challenges

Despite preliminary successes, the project team will continue to face a number of challenges as they work to tackle the problem of illegal woodcutting in Bugobe. Where necessary and possible, these should be integrated into project design moving forward to better ensure the sustainability of the project.

Alternative livelihoods: As mentioned, there is a strong need to provide (or facilitate) alternative livelihoods for woodcutters who have abandoned cutting wood illegally. Without other means of generating income, woodcutters will see incomes drop, and they will likely return to woodcutting in order to support their families, regardless of the cost or punishment. ICCN and the CCC have not yet been able to suggest or provide viable alternatives, which could lead to the loss of the goodwill that has been built up over the project's life cycle. Alternatives suggested during the consultation include support for farming (with the provision of extension services for better yields), livestock (with zero grazing), small business (via rotating micro-credit), food-for-work schemes (e.g., for road repair), agro-forestry, transportation services and woodworking. Each alternative would have to be fully analyzed to gauge which groups benefit, what potential drawbacks might arise and how to ensure that alternative livelihoods do not adversely impact the park.

Demarcation: Community members request that ICCN and WCS increase visible park demarcation, so that they know where the park begins and ends. For example, the Nindja corridor does not appear to be in the park due to its extensive farm cover.

Funding: Funding remains a challenge. The CCC would like more funding to invest in committee operations (from activities to infrastructure like office space and computers). As a local NGO, they could apply for funding independently; investments should be made to build their capacity to do so. Funding cannot come from ICCN itself, or the CCC would simply be seen as an agent of the parks authority again.

Community perceptions: ICCN is frequently seen as punishing the 'small fish' community members while not going after the "big fish"—i.e., the Nindja farmers and the military. This leads to perceptions of ICCN complicity, powerlessness and unfairness.

Military complicity: Though relations with the military have improved, certain groups within the institution continue to facilitate the exploitation of natural resources. To correct this could require increased military and political lobbying, and the replacement of military checkpoints with ICCN checkpoints.

Stakeholder perspectives: The CCC and the woodcutters seem to have very different perspectives regarding certain issues. For example, the CCC believes that they are thought of as working towards the needs of the community, whereas the woodcutters are very clear in the fact that their needs (i.e.,

alternative livelihoods) are not being met. The CCC also reported that the woodcutters, upon giving up illegal activities in the park, have more time to spend farming and with their families. The cutters, meanwhile, report that without alternative livelihood options, poverty has increased with the decision to abandon cutting, and that this will eventually drive them back into the park. ICCN, as a first step, should meet with the cutters as a larger group, and not just with their CCC representative, to discuss livelihood options and strategies.

Oversight organization: There are talks of establishing an umbrella organization to manage all of the PNKB CCCs. While coordination could be quite helpful, the strategy could also be problematic, and perceived as a loss of local ownership over the process.

Micro-credit: During the consultation with Bugobe woodcutters, a group of women expressed interest in WCS supporting an interest-free, rotating micro-credit scheme to provide capital for women in the community to address the livelihood problem. WCS should study the feasibility of this kind of approach, and analyze it thoroughly to ensure that the flow of benefits will not create tensions in the community and that any money provided is not used to accelerate natural resource exploitation in the park.

Lessons learned using the conflict-sensitive conservation approach

IISD helped WCS develop monitoring indicators to evaluate the impact of the conflict-sensitive conservation pilot projects and also derived lessons-learned from the projects in Virunga and Kahuzi-Biega Parks. The lessons learned and evaluation of the project by IISD are presented here. Using an outside group with experience in conflict and conservation means that the following lessons learned and evaluation of the project are relatively independent of the project's implementation.

1.0 Lessons-learned during the *Healing the Rift* project that were incorporated into the CSC Manual

The *Conflict-Sensitive Conservation Practitioners' Manual* was launched in September 2009 (Figure 15). Delays in the completion of the manual meant that the lessons learned during the initial stages of the *Healing the Rift* project could be integrated into the CSC approach before the publication was finalized. The main component that was refined thanks to the Healing the Rift grant was the conflict-screening section of the manual, described below.
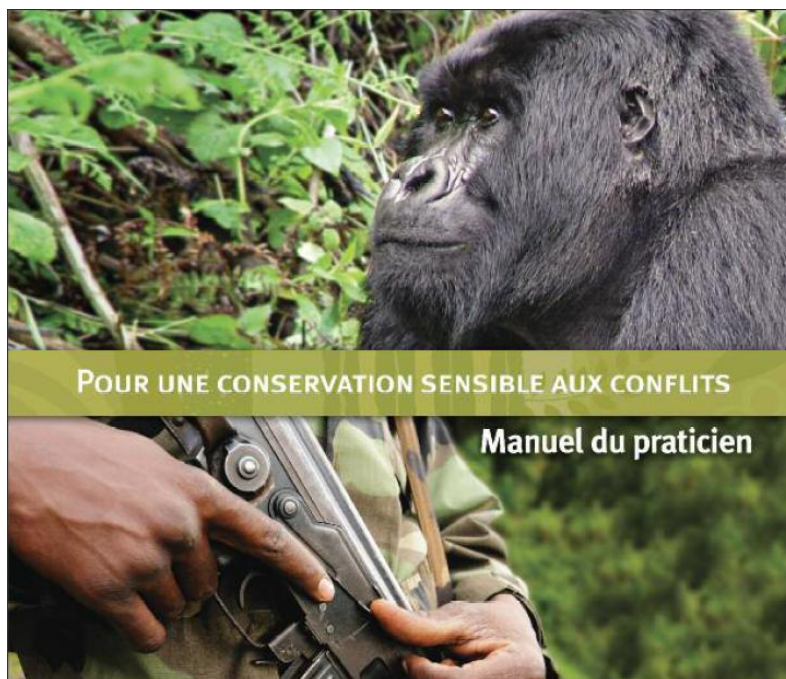

Figure 15. French version of the *Conflict-Sensitive Conservation Practitioners' Manual* that was produced by this project and used to train ICCN staff.

1.1   The CSC approach to conflict screening

The penultimate draft of the CSC manual tried to incorporate a "conflict-screening" step, whereby users would assess how a particular conservation intervention's inputs, outputs and impacts might affect the conflict context both positively and negatively. While simple in theory, the screening process introduced more questions than answers. This was confirmed after its piloting with the WCS team, where the example of the community conservation committees around Kahuzi-Biega National Park was used in the screening process.

While the discussions around the process were fruitful, confusion over terminology and how exactly this screening built on the preceding conflict analysis made it clear that it would detract from the overall CSC process rather than add to it. The manual's authors therefore decided to capture elements of the conflict screening in other aspects of the CSC process—i.e., sections on "Linking the analysis to your work." The CSC manual is seen as a living document, open to future revisions, and as such, the project team continues to improve the approach based on their experiences and lessons learned in the field. Field visits in the second half of the *Healing the Rift* project concentrated on improving the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms presented in the manual, and described below.

1.2   The CSC approach to monitoring and evaluation

One of the principal objectives of the second and third field visits was to develop a set of indicators to measure the impact of the *Healing the Rift* pilot projects in Virunga and Kahuzi-Biega on the peace and conflict context. The indicators were developed through consultations with stakeholders and internal discussions among the project team. Qualitative and quantitative indicators were developed based—in part—on the conflict analyses undertaken at each pilot project's inception.

The indicators—particularly the qualitative indicators—were found to have been useful in measuring the peace and conflict impacts of the Lake Edward monitoring committees and the community conservation committee in Bugobe. That said, a number of lessons were learned with regards to the methodology used to develop the indicators, the collection of indicators and the quality of the final data:

- It is important to develop peace and conflict indicators when a project is first implemented; adjustments can be made over time, however an early adoption of peace and conflict indicators helps systematize the generation and collection of data.
- For the evaluation, qualitative indicators have been a more reliable measure of impacts than quantitative indicators due to data gaps and inconsistencies. These will have to be addressed.
- Attribution remains a challenge, but the indicators do provide a "big picture" view of the direction in which the conflict is moving.

- Verification by outside stakeholders is important, as all stakeholders have vested interests in portraying the project—and its achievements and shortcomings—in a certain light.
- It is important to establish baselines where possible, against which to measure trends in the peace and conflict indicators.
- It would be helpful—where possible—to generate data ranges, averages and medians to get a deeper understanding of the trends and identify any potential outliers.
- Indicators should be accompanied by a conflict narrative (or timeline) to help explain trend movements and key dates to those not familiar with the evolving conflict context (see Figure 16).
- These lessons on developing and using peace and conflict indicators to monitor and evaluate CSC projects will be integrated into future editions of the manual.

2.0   Lessons learned during the project evaluation

As mentioned, the second and third field visits focused, in part, on refining the methodology for evaluating each CSC project's impact on the peace and conflict context. These evaluations, carried out using the peace and conflict impact indicators and a number of stakeholder consultations, resulted in a number of lessons learned regarding the projects and their eventual success.
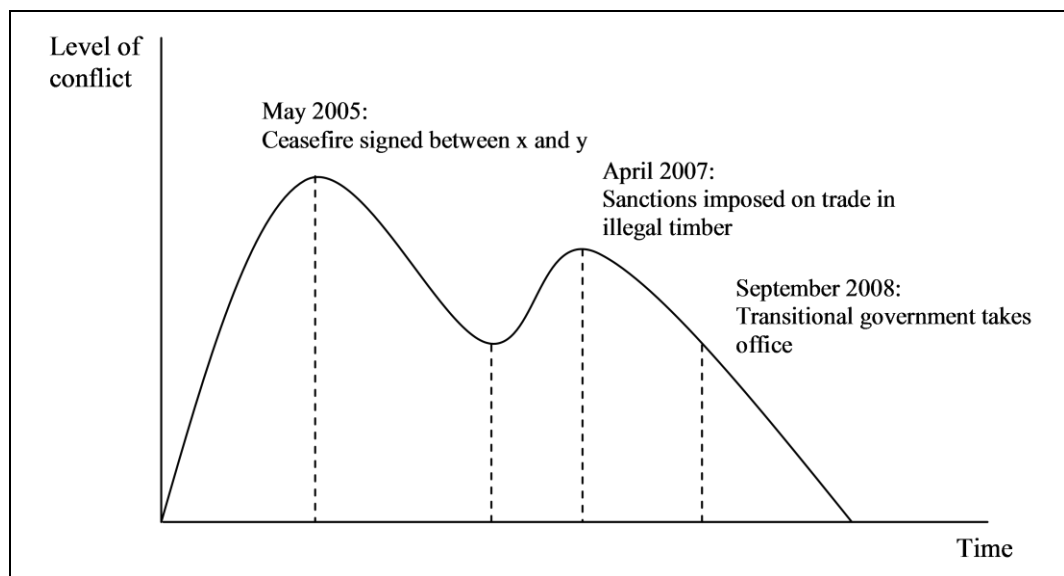

Figure 16. Sample conflict timeline.

2.1   The broader conflict context is central to a project's success or failure

For both CSC projects in Virunga and Kahuzi-Biega, improvements in the broader security context were integral in each project's success. Security at both sites has improved considerably since the

project's inception. In Virunga, there has been a decrease in the presence of armed groups on Lake Edward and in the park more generally, and ICCN's control over the park has increased accordingly. There is a seemingly direct correlation between improved security and project impacts; impacts have been greatest in the village of Kyavinyonge (which has been secure longest) and least (though still positive) in Nyakakoma (which only recently became secure). The broader security situation is also starting to improve in Kahuzi-Biega, and ICCN is now finally able to start planning an expansion of its activities in the park.

As a result of these broader trends, in both parks the pervading feelings of fear and distrust are being replaced by a climate of openness and transparency among stakeholders, and actors increasingly turn to dialogue, collaboration and the sharing of information about the park and their natural resources. Conversely, continued instability in Itombwe Community Reserve meant that the scope for CSC activities to influence matters was very limited in that region.

2.2   Sustainable, long-term planning and financing are important

The long-term sustainability of both CSC projects remains uncertain due primarily to continued funding constraints. The Lake Edward monitoring committees continue to rely on the support of WCS. While it is unlikely that the withdrawal of WCS support from the program would lead to a suspension of committee operations, it will further constrain their capacity to address illegal fishing. However it is encouraging that there was recognition of the usefulness of the committees by the Governor of Goma and the financial support that he gave to the process will help make it less dependent on WCS over time. The same challenges of continued financial support apply to the work of the CCC in Bugobe.

WCS and the committees themselves should look into ways of addressing this challenge to the long-term viability of both programs. For Lake Edward, some tax revenue is being generated to support the monitoring committee, however the fishers, as the principal beneficiaries of improved fish quality and yields, could increase their contributions to the committee's operating budget. In Bugobe, as a local NGO the CCC could apply for funding independently; investments should be made to build their capacity to do so. For both projects, funding shortfalls and a dependence on WCS will continue to constrain activities and, as such, efforts should be made to develop a sustainable financial model for both projects that does not depend upon WCS's continued involvement.

2.3   To be sustainable, CSC projects must address the root causes of conflict

In Bugobe, WCS support has succeeded in opening dialogue among the various stakeholder groups in the region, and in raising awareness among community members of the importance of respecting the park's natural resources and its laws. This has temporarily led to a decrease in the amount of

illegal logging in the park near Bugobe, and has greatly improved relations between ICCN and the community members.

Despite these advances, poverty remains a central driver of the prioritized conflict in Bugobe (illegal woodcutting), and without offering woodcutters an alternate means of generating income, it is unlikely that the gains realized thus far will last. Woodcutters stressed that without some other means of supporting their families, they would likely return to extracting park resources, regardless of the penalties and risks. Therefore the project team—in consultation with stakeholder groups— must identify concrete ways of working with stakeholders to jointly assess options for alternative livelihoods and then work together to ensure that these are sustainable solutions.

2.4   Promoting dialogue and raising awareness are good first steps – but often not enough

Awareness-raising campaigns and the establishment of platforms for dialogue by the project team have successfully increased community understanding of the parks, their laws and conservation, and have contributed to addressing the prioritized conflicts through changed behaviour in both locations (illegal fishing in Virunga, illegal woodcutting in Kahuzi-Biega). However, as mentioned above, the support of the monitoring committees on Lake Edward is a more sustainable project in the long-term, as here the project team has moved beyond initial dialogue and awareness-raising efforts towards facilitating joint assessments and joint management of shared natural resources. In Bugobe, while dialogue between stakeholder groups and ICCN has increased significantly, there is a risk that without action on identifying alternative livelihoods for woodcutters who have given up the practice, any gains or goodwill could be lost. It is recognized that establishing dialogue between ICCN and the woodcutters and implementing awareness-raising campaigns will not be enough to solve the problem of illegal woodcutting.

2.5   Political and military support will strengthen any initiative

A lack of political support and military complicity in the illegal exploitation of natural resources (fishing and woodcutting) has been a key contributor to the ongoing conflicts in both parks. Lobbying efforts by WCS and other project stakeholders (for example, members of the monitoring committees) has proven to be an effective means of influencing the conflict. For Lake Edward, military complicity in the illegal fishing had restricted the success of the monitoring committees. Lobbying efforts eventually led to a joint operation carried out by ICCN and the Congolese army (FARDC) in February 2010 to clear the lake's southern spawning grounds of illegal fishers. This operation, deemed a success, has restored credibility to ICCN among many of the lake's stakeholders, and has greatly reduced military support for the illegal fishery. In Kahuzi-Biega, military support for illegal resource extraction in the park has declined—though not disappeared—

and political lobbying has led to positive steps forward in ICCN's efforts to re-settle illegal farmers outside of the Nindja corridor (between the park's high- and low-altitude sectors). Further lobbying of the judiciary could address what many stakeholders believe to be widespread impunity for those responsible for breaking park laws.

2.6   The neutrality of a third party is a strong asset

The neutrality of WCS and the project team was a strong asset in both parks. Without its demonstrated neutrality, it would have been difficult for WCS to establish dialogue between stakeholder groups, build confidence between these groups involved, deliver trusted messages to raise awareness of park laws and conservation, and broker joint activities between previously hostile groups. This neutrality was particularly important for the work in Bugobe; the CCC in that region had previously failed due to community perceptions that the committee was simply an agent of ICCN, and by extension it was a committee working against community needs with regards to natural resources. By acting as a neutral facilitator between hostile groups, WCS was able to help restore the credibility of the CCC and ICCN among Bugobe stakeholders, and change community perceptions for the better.

Expanding the conflict-sensitive approach

We have written this report as an overview of the approach we have used since 2006 with the aim that it will be more widely read and can be used to inform conservation practitioners about the approach and the lessons we have learned by piloting it. We will make it freely available on the CSC and WCS websites so that it is easily accessible. We have also been presenting the approach at a variety of fora including presentations at USAID in Washington. The approach has also been written about by the BBC (http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/science/nature/8835791.stm).

Using various media groups, websites and conservation fora we aim to inform people about the value of the approach and to encourage its implementation elsewhere in the world. The Virunga conflict project has been used as a case study by the World Bank in their study on *Renewable Natural Resources: Practical Lessons for Conflict-Sensitive Development* available at: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/Resources/244362-1164107274725/RNR_PRS.pdf.

In the Albertine Rift region we will continue to use the approach WCS and IISD have developed. We are also encouraged to see that it is formally being taken up at several sites by various conservation practitioners. For example, ICCN has adopted conflict resolution as one of the two main strategies to use in community conservation in and around the Kahuzi-Biega National Park and they have written this into their 10-year management plan. As such it will receive material support from the various partners of ICCN. Fauna and Flora International has expressed an interest in supporting the approach with other CCCs around Kahuzi-Biega as a result.

In the past two years, the management of Virunga Park has changed dramatically. An expatriate chief park warden was appointed by ICCN to manage the park and the focus of his work has been to try and regain control of the park for ICCN. This has naturally led to increased conflict between ICCN staff and local communities as rangers have cracked down on illegal activities taking place in the park. Sometimes conflict is necessary to regain control and authority where it is needed, and not all conflict is necessarily a bad thing, however given the results we have been seeing we believe there is a need to balance the stance that has been taken with an approach to resolving conflicts, particularly between ICCN and the military as well as between ICCN and people who have encroached on the park. The chief park warden has recognized the benefits of the conflict-sensitive approach in the fishing villages in Virunga, which gave them the local community support to remove illegal fishers from the lake and, as a result, wants to see this type of work continue in the park.

WCS is moving ahead with the local communities to establish the new park in the Misotshi-Kabogo Massif. As the participatory mapping is nearing completion we are initiating a formal gazettement process which will use the boundaries that have been agreed with the communities as the boundaries of the natural reserve and national park.

Insecurity in Itombwe is still present and is making it difficult to move ahead with the participatory mapping and agreements on the delimitation of the Itombwe Reserve. However, the political support at both provincial and local level is still there and as soon as security can allow activities to take place on the ground we will move ahead with all the partners to participatively map the reserve and then formally alter the existing gazettement document.

A growing potential source of conflict in the eastern DRC is the movement of several mining companies to the region who have been given concessions that overlap people's land as well as some of the protected areas. For instance, the BANRO mining company has a concession for gold mining that lies between Kahuzi-Biega and Itombwe and partially overlaps the potential reserve boundary as well as overlapping many farmers' lands. In Virunga Park a concession has recently been granted to Dominion Oil to explore for oil under Lake Edward. This company already has activities in Uganda and has been undertaking seismic exploration in Queen Elizabeth National Park and has undertaken one test drill in the park but without finding oil. Finally, KAMECO (Katanga metal company) has been given the exploration permits for the concession of LEDA Mining Congo in and around Misotshi-Kabogo, and TSM (Tshisangama Siméon), SHARMA, INTER and BANRO also have permits to explore the region for minerals. Several of these concessions overlap with the proposed protected area in this region. Conflicts will arise not only over mining in and close to protected areas but also between local communities and the mining companies as they start to move into these concessions. WCS and IISD want to use the conflict-sensitive approach to conservation to find ways of working with these mining companies to minimize any ecological or social impacts and at the same time minimize any conflicts in the Albertine Rift region. We believe the approach is applicable to working with large companies, although it will require some modification, and intend to work with some of these companies to pilot such an approach.

References

Ali, S.H. (2007). *Peace Parks: Conservation and Conflict Resolution.* The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts. 408 pp.

Balmford, A., Moore, J. L., Brooks, T., Burgess, N. D., Hansen, L. A., Lovett, J. C., Tokumine, S., Williams, P., & Rahbek, C. (2001a). People and biodiversity in Africa. *Science* 293, 1591–1592.

Balmford, A., Moore, J. L., Brooks, T., Burgess, N. D., Hansen, L. A.,Williams, P., & Rahbek, C. (2001b). Conservation conflicts across Africa. *Science* 291, 2616–2619.

Brooks, T., Hoffmann, M., Burgess, N., Plumptre, A., Williams, S., Gereau, R. E., Mittermeier, R. A., & Stuart, S. (2004). Eastern Afromontane,. In R. A. Mittermeier, P. Robles-Gil, M. Hoffmann, J. D. Pilgrim, T. M. Brooks, C. G. Mittermeier, J. L. Lamoreux, & G. Fonseca (Eds.), *Hotspots Revisited: Earth's Biologically Richest and Most Endangered Ecoregions* (pp. 241–242). Second Edition. Cemex, Mexico.

Campese, J. (2009). Rights-based approaches to conservation: an overview of concepts and questions. In J. Campese, T. Sunderland, T. Greiber, & G. Oviedo, G. (Eds.), *Rights-based approaches: exploring issues and opportunities for conservation* (pp. 1–47). CIFOR and IUCN. Bogor, Indonesia

CDC, IISD and Saferworld (2009). *Climate Change and Conflict: Lessons from Community Conservancies in Northern Kenya.* Report by the Conservation and Development Centre, IISD and Saferworld.

Cordeiro, N. J., Burgess, N. D., Dovie, D. B. K., Kaplin, B., Plumptre, A. J., & Marrs, R. (2007). Conservation in areas of high population density in sub-saharan Africa. *Biological Conservation* 134, 155–163.

Hammill, A., & Brown, O. (2006). *Conserving the Peace: Analysing links between Conservation and Conflict in the Albertine Rift.* Report to MacArthur Foundation.

Hammill, A., Crawford, A., Craig, R., Malpas, R., & Matthew, R. (2009). *Conflict-Sensitive Conservation Practitioner's Manual.* IISD, Winnipeg, Canada. 75 pp.

Hessel, R., van den Bergb, J., Kaborec, O., van Kekema, A., Verzandvoorta, S., Dipamad, J.-M., & Dialloe, B. (2009). Linking participatory and GIS-based land use planning methods: a case study from Burkina Faso. *Land Use Policy* 26: 1162–1172.

Ilambu, O., Hart, J. A., Butynski, T. M., Birhashirwa, N. R., Upoki, A., M'Keyo, Y., Bengana, F., Bashonga, M., & Bugurubumwe, N. (1999). The Itombwe Massif, Democratic Republic of Congo: biological surveys and conservation, with an emphasis on Grauer's gorilla and birds endemic to the Albertine Rift. *Oryx* 33, 301–322.

Kalpers, J., & Mushenzi, N. (2006). The crisis years (1992–2006). In M. Languy, & E. de Merode (Eds.), *Virunga: the survival of Africa's first National Park* (pp. 95–104). Lannoo, Tielt, Belgium.

Languy, M., & de Merode, E. (2006. A brief overview of Virunga National Park. In M. Languy, & E. de Merode (Eds.), *Virunga: the survival of Africa's first National Park* (pp. 21–64). Lannoo, Tielt, Belgium.

Languy, M., & Kujirakwinja, D. (2006). The pressure of legal and illegal fisheries on Virunga National Park. In M. Languy, & E. de Merode (Eds.), *Virunga: the survival of Africa's first National Park* (pp. 197–203). Lannoo, Tielt, Belgium.

Nele, A. (2008). La relation entre le Parc National des Virunga et sa population riveraine: analyse socio-économique de la consommation du bois de chauffe à Kyavinyonge (et Vusorongi) (République Démocratique du Congo). Unpubl. Master Thesis, University of Gand, Belgium.

Plumptre, A. J., Davenport, T. R. B., Behangana, M., Kityo, R., Eilu, G., Ssegawa, P., Ewango, C., & Kahindo, C. (2004). *Albertine Rift*. In R. A. Mittermeier, P. Robles-Gil, M. Hoffmann, J. D. Pilgrim, T. M. Brooks, C. G. Mittermeier, J. L. Lamoreux, J. L., & G. Fonseca (Eds.), *Hotspots Revisited: Earth's Biologically Richest and Most Endangered Ecoregions, Second Edition* (pp. 255–262). Cemex, Mexico.

Plumptre, A. J., Davenport, T. R. B., Behangana, M., Kityo, R., Eilu, G., Ssegawa, P., Ewango, C., Meirte, D., Kahindo, C., Herremans, M., Kerbis Peterhans, J., Pilgrim, J., Wilson, M., Languy, M., & Moyer, D. (2007). The Biodiversity of the Albertine Rift. *Biological Conservation* 134, 178–194.

Plumptre, A. J., Kujirakwinja, D., Matunguru, J., Kahindo, C., Kaleme, P., Marks, B., & Huhndorf, M. (2008a). *Biodiversity surveys in the Misotshi-Kabogo and Marungu regions of the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.* Albertine Rift Technical Reports 5**.** 75 pp.

Plumptre, A. J., Kujirakwinja, D., & Nampindo, S. (2008b). Conservation of landscapes in the Albertine Rift. In K. H. Redford, & C. Grippo (Eds.), *Protected areas, governance and scale. Working Paper N-36* (pp. 27–34). Wildlife Conservation Society, Bronx, New York.

Plumptre, A. J., Bamba, A., Shamavu, P., Kujirakwinja, D., & Matunguru, J. (2009). *Socioeconomic surveys around the Misotshi-Kabogo forest in south eastern Democratic Republic of Congo*. Report to USFWS, WWF and MacArthur Foundation, Wildlife Conservation Society.

Rosas, V. (2010). Parks as Peace makers: The Peru-Ecuador Divide. In E. Fearn (Ed.), *State of the Wild 2010–2011: A Global Portrait* (pp. 96–102). Island Press, Washington.

Stenseke, M. (2009). Local participation in cultural landscape maintenance: Lessons from Sweden. *Land Use Policy* 26: 214–223.

UNEP & IISD (forthcoming) Moving from Confrontation to Cooperation: Environmental diplomacy for conflict prevention, conflict management and peacebuilding. UNEP, Geneva

USAID. (2005a). *Conducting a conflict Assessment: A Framework for Strategy and Program Development*. USAID.

USAID. (2005b). *Forests and Conflict: A Toolkit for Intervention*. USAID

USAID. (2005c). *Minerals and Conflict: A Toolkit for Intervention*. USAID

Zahler, P. (2010). Conservation and Governance: Lessons from the Reconstruction Effort in Afghanistan. In E. Fearn (Ed.), *State of the Wild 2010–2011: A Global Portrait* (pp. 72–80). Island Press, Washington.