Session 4. Community-centred approaches. Can evidence turn the tide?

Local action for local health. What we can learn from gorillas.

Gladys Kalema-Zikusoka, CEO, Conservation through Public Health, Uganda
Key achievements

Conservation through Public Health. Mountain gorillas in Uganda
Threats to all gorilla subspecies:

Habitat loss and poaching; disease and human/wildlife conflict
One Health in Uganda

Conservation Through Public Health: We keep people, gorillas and other wildlife healthy and their habitats secure
Research update

• Comparative disease investigations between people, wildlife and livestock
• Protects gorillas and helps to monitor and evaluate the impact of our community health programs
Communication materials

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Evolution of Village Health and Conservation Teams

2007: trained 26 community health and conservation workers to conduct home visits and group talks
Village health and conservation teams

2023: Recognized Ministry of Health structure. 270 teams communicate about behaviour change in 44 villages in 6 parishes with high human and gorilla conflict, reaching 40,000 people in 7,000 households:

- How to prevent and control Infectious disease (scabies, HIV, TB and other respiratory diseases, diarrheal diseases, COVID-19
- Good hygiene and sanitation
- Voluntary Family planning
- Nutrition
- Sustainable agriculture
- Report homes visited by gorillas
- Awareness on zoonotic diseases
- Gorilla and forest conservation
- Ecotourism
COVID-19 management in Bwindi

- Local people educated about risk of COVID-19 cross over between humans and gorillas
- Gorillas as well as people tested for COVID-19
- IUCN Great Ape viewing regulations upgraded in March 2020
Progress update

- Gorillas are now protected in community land
- Three to seven-fold increase in homes with hand washing facilities from 10% to 75%
- Reduced human related disease outbreaks in the gorillas (scabies) and exposure to human and livestock diseases (giardia)
- Increase from 22% to 67% women on family planning, above national average in rural areas increase from 30% to 45%
- Reduced gender disparities: Women are more involved in conservation and men in family planning
- Prevented the spread of COVID-19 amongst people and between people and gorillas
Future research priorities
Future research priorities

Assess the impact of community-led health and conservation models in reducing the impact of zoonotic disease transmission between wildlife, people and livestock
Big Research Idea
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How can community-led One Health approaches build resilience against outbreaks and pandemics?

• Conduct routine surveillance on the diseases at human-wildlife-livestock interface
• Assess the impact of community health and conservation interventions on health outcomes