**Interview 1**

The question of community participation in nature conservation is for me a central question because we can observe that conservation policies in Ivory Coast, despite all the measures taken from the legislative point of view, from an institutional point of view, since the sixties and that are characterized by, in any cases, by a dynamic that can testify of a political will... Most of the conservation measures fail, simply because communities has been very weakly involved in the implementation of these measures or even in their design and, since the years 2000, Ivory Coast is looking for the possibilities to consider communities as the main target of those conservation measures. And this goes on to allow the creation of reserves "natural or voluntary". So these are community reserves that population has today the possibility to create. Beyond this, even for the management of state controlled protected areas state such as national parks and reserves, it is at the agenda that the community plays a more and more important role and we worked a lot on this thematic, especially at the level of community management of protected areas, with community as the official manager. This is a topic on which we work since 2006 and we can say that we carried out quite a few important things that allowed us to win some prices, especially the princess Anne of England and we won another price in relation with our commitment to save forests against the programmed destruction by an agroindustrial firm, and that is 50 000 euros.

**Interview 2**

In fact, community participation it's really that communities can be integrated to protected areas management, be trained, give assistance for the collection of data, for the different existing projects. For example in Taï national park, there are communities that participate to the monitoring and this allows to have people that are really convinced of the importance to protect this protected area. When coming back to the village, there is often transmission of what they saw, why they saw it, why it is important, that chimpanzees are close to humans, etc. So, on one hand it means supplying an activity, a training to populations, but also the capacity to have the population support to conservation, that they know what's going on in the park, how we do, why it is important to protect the park.

**Interview 3**

Thank you, in the name of the director, the colonel Abdoulaye Diarrassouba, director of Taï national park, I would like to thank you for the distance you have traveled. And it must be said that for me, local community must be involved in the management of every protected area, especially as we, managers, cannot be present at every square meter, and it's their heritage, we have to explain them, it's their heritage. And they must help us to manage this park that is Taï national park. It must be said that Taï national park contains on itself 50 percent of West African dense forests. It is the biggest forested area we have, we don't have the choice to manage it and only us, as managers, we cannot, we must associate the community, the local population for the management. It's not ours, it is everybody's heritage, it is a heritage. Today, we observe that agriculture, the greatest production, the greatest area that produce all of the cacao and coffee are all from Taï national park, and we don't have the choice, that's what we explain to them all the time, we don't have the choice but to protect, and this is my point of view, without the local population, it is not possible. This is why we try to unify a little bit all the functions of management programs, sensitization, and for protection sometimes a few projects, big projects.

**Interview 4**

Thank you Ruppert, as the question is really for me to come today and to express myself more or less. The population, the community living around the park today, this community must really stop all these acts which really, these illegal acts that endanger Taï forest because this forest is really the last one in Ivory Coast. Firstly, what should be done? To stop poaching, stop, then to stop killing the reserve that are around this park. It is the mission that every young person that leaves in the surroundings of this park, it's really the act that must be set down, it must be stopped, everything that we do in selling that lead us today to the disappearance of this forest. It is, these are the two main acts that must be set down to preserve this forest. Since the advent of cereal crops, all the population is really looking for the forest because at first, it was towards the east that our brothers from the CDAO went to cultivate cacao, coffee and all. And after some time, the eastern forest disappeared, crops took its place, there towards the west, it was the west that wasn't yet totally invaded. Then, they decided to really come to the west to sack this forest that was there. People arrived, they took all the villagers plots, all the forest that was around the village. Now there is nothing left, only the reserve and the park remain. Then, they started to invade the reserve, it is the reserve that is really suffering from this fate.

**Interview 5**

It is primordial that we associate human populations to the park's conservation and in a masterpiece in a good collaboration between forestry agents and the residents. The stakes, it's that we cannot succeed to lift up what is said and done in conservation without involving those who are in the surroundings of national parks. They really are conservationist in power. And all the strategies we make, we rely on them for making these strategies. All the strategies we set, we rely on them, it means that it is them that are the support. We do the conservation for development but if we do the development without them, it is as if we do nothing.

**Interview 6**

The principles are first of all to take decisions together, to execute them together and if possible to evaluate them together. It is really participation, an involvement to decide for them at the level that we can exist together, execute together and even if possible evaluate together because in reality it is first of all their protected area. This is the idea, we have to get to this level because we are the facilitators yes, that is really the ideal scenario. It means monitoring and all of this, it is a gift to them and we are here to facilitate things, this is really the ideal scenario.

**Interview 7**

For me, local communities participation is a fundamental point for me because today the management of our protected areas, according to the orientations that we have from our direction, it must be participative and this implies that every stakeholder in principle must be, that are in collaboration with us in the management of protected areas must have their word to say. And it is in this way that mainly the resident populations participate to the big meetings on Taï national park's management and I would also say of all those protected areas that are leaded by the OIPR. I mean, for instance the local management board that meets every three months, there is always a resident that is there to spread residents' voices. There are many other occasions such as the operations assessment plan in which there is always the resident population participating. Beyond the populations, there is also the administrative dimension which is not necessarily daily brought to the park's management but that manage other issues, but that are also associated in order that the management is as participative as possible. It is something that is really important and we cannot avoid it because our legal texts force us to involve the local population and every stakeholder that must have their word to say in our management.

**Interview 8**

Here we are in a strongly agricultural area with a lot of economic migrants that left their original place to come to search for lands to make agriculture. They were looking here for most of them. For us, the participation of the communities living in the surroundings should be structured firstly around the respect of our heritage, here, the respect of our heritage is that it is conscious that the protected area's conservation is a necessity because to come to there, to understand that all the Taï national park conservation is a necessity. At this time, there are aggressive acts against the park so either individually or collectively, we must not be aggressive towards the park. They must be able to avoid that some persons or acts assault the park, not only by awareness but also by denunciation, the denunciation because if someone enters, you don't have the capacity to prevent them from entering but you can at least take your phone to say “managers of Tai national park, there are people that entered the park in this area”. Many of them doesn't do it, many doesn't do it, poachers enters villages and people doesn't signal them so the system that we put in place is really to preserve anonymity of the persons who give us the information to the extent that I never asked to one of my agents “who gave you this information?” What I ask is “is the information true? Is this information precise?” In order to precise the information, we go, we check and if it is proved, at least we have the proof that the information that the person gave is true and based on that, we give the information bonus that goes back to the person. So this is it, and also developing some activities, developing a sustainable agriculture, it means an activity that doesn't demand that we have recourse to a new forest to make a crop. There are no more, no more forests, no more forests, what does it means? It means that we must work on the fallow lands that exist and that we have to develop a sustainable agriculture for being less dependent to extensive agriculture consuming forests. I think that yet, the park does well to associate, improve the participation of this population in the Taï national park management. They are stakeholders in some decision organs and in orientation organs but also there is a direct participation of those communities in many activities of management of the park. I take for example the interviews, the arrangement activities and others are conciliated to some organizations of those populations. At the monitoring level, there are members of the population that intervene directly with us. Of course, they won't arrest but at least, by the fact that they bring food, that they cook... We have two auxiliaries in all missions. We think that it's already more participation than nothing. Maybe it doesn't push the person to be aware of nature conservation but at least we know that by doing this, he does not assault nature.

**Interview 9**

Anyway, local community needs nature, I think that it is inscribed in the collective vision of national parks in a general way when it comes to involve community into the management of those protected areas. We think that the more they will be involved, the more they will see the interests of this park, of this protected area. We are convinced that, at our level, in terms of ways of involvement means, it can be done at several levels: at the level of the activities that we will advise them to do and at the level that they carry out their own initiatives. But for us, we stay convinced that we will not be able to satisfy them at every moment but always attract their attention on the interest and also on the importance of the protected area such they can understand the thing by themselves. For the moment, we don't do much at our level here, we work with 30 auxiliaries that are located all around the park, they are 30 in total. For the law enforcement monitoring, we use people that are involved in other activities but it always stays insignificant compared to the whole community.

**Interview 10**

The challenge is that we would like that local populations perceive Taï national park as their good that offers them huge and undeniable ecosystem services. They must get involved in its conservation and this must be expressed by a new behavior rather than assaulting the Taï park by activities that do not seek to reconcile the two interests, rather than not perceiving the park as being a heritage, I say it and I repeat it, as a good that offers services. The services that it offers them is the rain, it is the enhancement of their living environment, these are issues that they must really really understand and get involve more through the organization all around the park, their initiatives of activities for Taï national park's protection, to be able to really preserve this heritage. It is a true challenge that in most of the cases is not, is not truly perceived by populations. All our efforts must go in this direction. We must support, we must supervise them, we must give them the information in real time such that they can really implement self promotion initiatives

**Interview 11**

The most important is that the population is brought to this vision, it is that the population considers the park as their heritage and that we are here to support them, to accompany them in its management. It must be that the population appropriate, it is a real challenge for us and for all stakeholders. Now, we have other challenges that rely on us. It is especially how to stop seeking activities and this movement of populations that come to look for gold. This is another challenge that we must face. The real, real problem that we had at plantations level, that is an old dream. We will finish the plantations plan. Now, it is an environmental monitoring that should be made. Repression, verify that no one is entering down to clear out, this is our daily work, the problem to which we are confronted with today and which starts to really scares us, it is the tracking of lands. It is the same than in the Guyanese forest, we use areas and this is a real problem today.

**Interview 12**

For me, it's firstly a matter of co-management. It means that we must associate local population to everything related to conservation. They must feel involved, they must understand, in fact, that we protect nature not for the managers that we are but more for themselves, such that tomorrow, they can get benefits from it. Everything such as rain, temperature, environmental factors depend on this biodiversity that we maintain, for ourselves and for future generations.

**Interview 13**

Knowledge of nature. Population will conserve when they will know that nature is useful for them and anyway, as long as they don't know that nature is important for us, they will never participate.

**Interview 14**

I think it is really an integration of communities to decision making related to the management of natural resources of protected areas for example. For me, what does it mean to integrate the population? It is really to implement some really participative actions that will really allow taking into account, let's say, the population's situation, their needs and their perception of the issues, or even the questions on which we are dealing with. What are their perceptions on all those resources aspects? We must take them into account in the formulation of our action plans and all of this.

**Interview 15**

For me, it really means that we should involve them into conservation. Why to involve them, because it is their land, before we came and decide it will be a park. They know better this area, they know better than us so that when we involve them into conservation, they must find their interest in return such as their incomes or some activities that generates incomes. Well, it does not necessarily have to be money that we give to them directly, it can be a related activity that will give them incomes. I can take for instance the case of when we do clearing monitoring for example. I just explain the basis but since there are four clearings, I cannot monitoring four clearings at the same time. It is with the local communities that we can better carry this activity and, once the local communities are involved, they can better raise awareness among their brothers regarding the activities of the State against poaching, because they find their interest in the activities they do.

**Interview 16**

I think community participation has a big role to play in our setup, because if you look how the park is structured and how we carried out our activities, we realize that communities which surrounds the national park, we do everything to involve them in the management of the park. You realize that in each activity that we carry out, there are members of the community that are involved. For example when we are controlling the borders of the park, they are involved, they should be the ones who know the limits of the park. And then we look together how communities are spatially distributed, what the people needs. We have an MOU of collaboration where together we map where in the park they can collect non timber products, for their livelihoods. This has been done in the Campo Ma'an national park. And in the park, the new planned micro zone of the park is today in construction. So in the northern part of the park we can see areas where the communities are coming to collect their products, their livelihood. What they can do is acting in our programs of protection of gorillas, about 60 percent of the trackers are made up of pygmies because they have a good knowledge of the forest and this, if I do a rough calculation, for the past 3 or 4 years, we gave to the communities close to 77 millions of FCFA. So they have a great impact in the management of the park.

**Interview 17**

Community participation to nature protection, according to me, is done under several approaches. The first thing, as the law enforcement supervisor, is that populations must contribute to denounce completely all the infiltrations and illegal acts such as poaching in the park which is their heritage. The only good thing is that populations must contribute to the park's security by participating to the different activities implemented in the park : anti poaching patrols, ecological monitoring, ecotourism, and others. That is population participation. Now, the other side is that now, there must be in one way or the other, some outcomes for them. The park, by its activities, can contribute to improve a little the life standards of populations. I take a simple case: when you have 2 helpers that do 10 days in the park and, with a little retribution, someone who earns for example a mean of 50000 francs, it is only 50000 francs by 10 days. It is therefore on a simple way, like this, that I see the park's participation.

**Interview 18**

For me, it is in a way that we put everybody's participation into protection, sustainable resources management, nature's management, using natural resources in a sustainable system, knowing that tomorrow, we can use it, but not use in an abusive way. Personally, I think that everything we do, nature's protection, it is for the benefit of the local population, we do everything for the well being of the local population, to insure its future.

**Interview 19**

Your question is a little bit complex. Indeed local populations are involved into conservation to help us. We involve them, first of all, in order that they understand the usefulness, the usefulness of biodiversity. They must feel involved, that they know that if we do it, it is not for our well being, it is not for the State's well being, but it is for the well being of all the community, of all the population.

**Interview 20**

Involving the communities is the matter for conservation projects. For me, because I'm sure that all the things that we learned when we studied we can't really know really what we can find in the forest or in the field in general. This is an acknowledgement that only local people can help and I think this is the main reason to involve local people.

**Interview 21**

Well, according to me, it means they should be integrated in the protection of nature and here is what has been happen. They are being more active in the protection of the nature, that's they don't look at hunting as in the past, they are more interactive, we are working together with them, and this is the positive things. It helps them to increase their living standards, their standards of living.

**Interview 22**

What I would say first of all, it is that if today we speak about nature conservation, it is first of all for humans. Humans are at the center of everything. So, the local population's involvement to conservation, it is only to remember that everything that we do in terms of conservation is for humans. And human being's interest is the most important. That's the reason why humans must really be involved in conservation.

**Interview 23**

For me, it is that communities must understand that the environment that surrounds them is their vital treasure, everything that they do depends on that forest, their development, their situation and their life conditions, and their future. All their children's future depends on that forest or on that environment that surrounds them. It is important that those communities contribute in a significant manner and join sustainable management.

**Interview 24**

Local communities participation to nature's protection is when populations are concerned, they participate to nature protection for their well being. There are little missions during which they are involved such as ecological monitoring, tourism. They are time to time involved.

**Interview 25**

When we raise their awareness, they participate don't they? They don't do poaching, they participate, they prevent some locals to do poaching, they protect nature, they don't destroy the forest.

**Interview 26**

Communities are at the center of nature protection. We cannot reach significant objectives if those communities don't participate, if those communities are not associated to the definition of strategies, and also to their implementation. The more the communities participate, the more we reach some results. Conservation is made by humans and for humans, and the most complicated problem is that humans lives around those resources.

**Interview 27**

The participation of local populations, for me, it is a development for the Campo national park, for me, that is the local participation. It is for the development of the park in terms of its social and administrative context. It means that local populations must benefit from the park's revenues, and that, at the administrative level, the administration also thinks about local population. They must walk hand in hand. If they do so, there will be a development, there will be a success regarding the social context, in Campo national park. But if it misses, there won't be, the 2 parties must be together.

**Interview 28**

In nature, it is absolutely essential for the sustainability of our conservation work to have the support of local communities. And I believe we have to find more, we need also more innovative methods, approaches towards more intensive, better participation of local communities. Local communities have to become integrated to conservation works, they have to feel that they are part of the conservation team, I believe, and they have to benefit from it. We cannot expect that they do this kind of conservation contribution voluntarily, I think they need to be paid for this, and I believe the main task in the future has to be to also convince our donors to make more funding available, for more intensive community participation in conservation work, such as biomonitoring, such as for the maintenance of parks infrastructures, such as for joint anti poaching patrols and law enforcement and so on. I believe that is one of the most main important future objectives that we should try to achieve.

**Interview 29**

Well it's to make them realizing the richness they have at their disposition such that they can preserve it. There is preserving and also to be able to take advantage of it, in order to feed but also to preserve on the long term.

**Interview 30**

I guess it means being engaged in some forms in protected areas management and that could even be direct or indirect I think through supporting, supporting the conservation by not doing detrimental or illegal activities or actively joining in whether it is just basic employment or through adopting what the message is of conservation and passing that on or somehow integrating into their life.

**Interview 31**

Local communities participation means 1) that the conservation activities don't negatively impact legal, traditional and customary users rights on nature. Accepting that there can be a conflict between traditional users rights and legal restrictions on hunting. 2) that communities can benefit from conservation activities, notability from tourism, nature tourism and 3) that communities can benefit from employment in conservation, whether it's research, monitoring, tourism or even ecoguard activities.

**Interview 32**

So according to me, it means involving people in a direct and indirect way, it means to employ workers that are members of local communities to participate to the park's projects and, in a more indirect way, to do education and to raise awareness in schools, by trying to emphasize communication between villagers that works for the park, that they see what is going on, and concretely what is being done, that they can tell the village a little bit about the park's interest.

**Interview 33**

According to me, it is a way to eradicate a little bit the activities occurring inside the park. And, you know, the community must begin to get involved, to try to palliate to many things that are going on such as poaching, and indeed fraudulent activities and, in every case, if the community is not involved, we cannot succeed, this is why we should definitely hold the interest of the community.

**Interview 34**

The population is less and less sensitized at the national park level, regarding conservation activities. It is just the first step, that people get involved, knowing that the park can generate for them, with population participation, touristic revenues that can help them for other things. The case of local populations of the Lebana Bomon axis that understand better and better that they must not touch to gorillas, that they represent financial resources.

**Interview 35**

It is not easy. Well, first it is something important because those communities live in the forest. Everything that they can find, it is in the forest. And so for them, it is a partnership that we must create in the good management of their resources. But when they are not enough informed, not enough aware, they think that this is a problem. Yet, if they are informed enough, they understand the issues and they are beneficiaries from that issues, nature conservation, because they are at the center. At the heart of conservation it is the communities. If the community is not at the center of conservation, no matter which ways are employed, it won't lead to good results.

**Interview 36**

Well, it's interesting! We cannot do conservation without the population. That's final. We must always associate them. How do we do? We must associate them, we must show them what we can cut down and what we cannot. We must always tell them, inform them this, this, this! But we tried a bit to define the limit between environmental areas and the people. Here, they already know that no, “if I have my gun, I am going to kill my monkey somewhere but I should not cross the limit, otherwise I will already be in the park”, we must also teach them.

**Interview 37**

Community is precisely to me, to my point of view, it is the aim to make the population understanding what it owns as a good: the conservation. You know the community. For me, they have to understand what conservation is, the struggle, a little bit difficult to understand. They are here to raise awareness, to make understand why conservation is needed, the struggle to understand why we should protect animals.

**Interview 38**

It is to make local populations that are in the most remote parks of the country understand that national parks are their only chance to develop, that they are far from the capital, that they are... I would not say... but that the fauna and the park are their only chance to make a difference in their daily life.

**Interview 39**

For me local participation to nature conservation, it is to ensure that we encourage the population to understand the utility of natural resources and protected areas but also to insure that, on the other hand, protected area managers understand the challenges that those populations arise and to assess the possibilities to work together to bring answers both local communities and biodiversity needs.

**Interview 40**

So community participation in my opinion is that they must be, they are stakeholders. It means that they must participate in meetings and give their ideas, points of view, to allow us to work together. They have to feel involved, that they don't endure decisions coming from the park managers, in order to see how we can move forward in the conservation direction. Therefore, it is simple, involving in our meetings their points of view and so forth.

**Interview 41**

So firstly, there is the direct involvement into conservation activities, everything which is recruiting ecoguards, involving them in everything which belongs to ecological monitoring, involving them into erasing poaching which is an intelligence area and then involving them into everything which belongs to the park's valuation. Even if it might not be the case at the moment, this is what it could be. And then the researches, then the activities by which the park can generate revenues.

**Interview 42**

It is a good question, so as I will first tell you, it is essential to raise awareness and to do it a lot, and if they spread, changes must be explained, if we do changes, it is essential to raise the population's awareness. Population must understand the aim of our job. So it is really important because one of our means that appeared to be really effective is to do participative cartography with the communities, to choose together how to manage natural resources, it means, it is to put them, maybe for the first time, in front of the fact that resources are limited therefore that it is essential to share them with the others. So, when we do participative cartography, even if every community has its local lands, there are sources for example, and some forests that are shared, so even if they belong to a community, they must be shared with the others. Therefore the fact that we were able to had the chance to continue this process, it was a great victory for us because it has resolved also some conflicts of rituals of which nobody cares.

**Interview 43**

So for me I call it, clearly, co-management. In co-management there are challenges to face. The first challenge is to preserve the park's integrity and its ecological functions, that is the first challenge. And the first challenge is not enough, to see only the ecological side, we must see, take into account their interests and their preoccupations. So the social level of populations, of communities that live in the park's surroundings. So everyone must participate together to find a consensus. To have a common vision of how we can manage natural resources, this is co-management.

**Interview 44**

It is a very important thing, we cannot do conservation if communities around the park are not taken into account. Finally, they decide that goods continue to exist or that they sabotage resources.

**Interview 45**

Very important question, because everything that we are doing, if we don't associate local community, it is unsuccessful, and we will not win because local communities are firstly the owners and the good guardians of parks and forests. So if you don't associate them, you will see that all the actions that you are going to implement will not have a great success. Therefore, according to me, local population is an integrative part, really essential to the park's management.

**Interview 46**

So, this completely means that they can, you see, understand that they have the duty to keep their natural heritage but as well cultural because by permanently struggling and searching to destroy everything we will have no more reserves! In comparison with what it has been for our ancestors and for us. And, at the same time, we deteriorate the environment in which we live and we won't control things later and we can develop diseases and things like that. So, it would be in the interest of communities to get involved to try to keep what represent the natural instinct of each person.

**Interview 47**

Usually, we work with the communities because they also participate to conservation, we all have the duty to manage in a good way the natural resources, not only for us, but for the future generations, such that the community gets involved for the sustainable management of natural resources.

**Interview 48**

That people understands what it means to loose the forest resources. Then, them being very active into protecting those resources. Because if they don't have... If elephants disappear for example, there will be a change with the trees and this is incredibly useful for oil. So it's very important for population that people understand how important the forest is and that they do something about it.

**Interview 49**

Indeed according to me I think it is important because we cannot manage a protected area without communities, because they are our neighbors, the direct neighbors that have an eye on resources that are in the park so according to me, for a good conservation, we must reconcile both, the nature conservation and the communities.

**Interview 50**

You know that communities always depend on natural resources. So we must involve them into a good management of those resources such that they can gain benefits from those resources, we must manage in a sustainable way.

**Interview 51**

It depends on the way leaders want to integrate them into systems, but in principle, participation can be integrated at all levels, especially at the level of facilitating the access to the forest to the conservation actors because what is often observed is the resistance of the communities such that their participation must be identified through the acceptation of conservation and also integration of the development aspects initiated by the park. So, once all of this is insured, we will feel that they participate. Furthermore, there is the aspect related to governance, which must also integrate them, so once they get involved in the governance, and in everything which is legally established, there is no problem.

**Interview 52**

Participation of the local community well, you know this can often be seen under different approaches. It is also defined differently depending on where you are. When we work in 3 different countries, in 3 different contexts, we realize that this is differently defined. For us, community participation is really about involving it, involving this community in the park's management. The park's management, it doesn't mean that the community is going to manage the money or whatever, no, no, rather that the community understands how this works, that the community understands what can be the benefits, and that the community understand what it can gain from the park and if indeed there is something to win, that it wins it. That is the aim of participation. But obviously, in the area where we work, it is perceived differently, and there are areas where this participation has more progressed than in others. Everywhere, we feel that the park's managers want, that there is a willingness to make participation but until now, there are some places where it doesn't work, but it is also our role.

**Interview 53**

Participation of local communities to protection is what is going to make sustainable this conservation, because we preserve for them, we won't conserve without them. As we conserve for them, we must conserve with them, so that, on the long run, they will understand that everything that we do is in their interest. But if we do it without them, they will think that it's something... They will get disinterested and we won't be in capacity to do conservation, especially for this park that is the biggest, with 400 staffs for 800000 hectares such that if communities are not involved, we cannot be successful.

**Interview 54**

In the conservation, the community is involved in conservation especially in Virunga, the community has been involved in conservation. They are just working, they have some activities based on… there are activities where they work, they have a cooperative, they share ideas even on the importance of the park. They build stuff which they can sell to the visitors and they can get something from the park or from the tourists. And also the incomes of tourism activities provide some benefit for those communities which provides help for development, for doing their activities, to improve their livelihood.

**Interview 55**

Well it's really important because this population is such that they will build inside the park. Poachers comes from this community so if we would not use this community it would be very hard to manage it. Normally, we pay attention to the fact that the population finds its interests in the park, population should not consider conservation agents, guards, tracker as their enemies that comes to track them and to strike and to put them in jail. They must find their interests in the park, it means that the money that the park earns with tourists, we try to give them, let's say 5 percent so they can build schools, hospitals.

**Interview 56**

Yes that is really important for the park, it is to decrease the pressure on the park, and this is why we are currently creating jobs and we always look for lowering the pressure of the population especially with this dam project. This project helps the population to find its interest. We will build agricultural factories, etc. All of this it is to help the population to forget the park. We will focus on cities that consume more coal because it is because of the lack of electricity that we consume too much, and this is why we work on that.

**Interview 57**

Local participation to nature conservation, it means that us, with community conservation, we implement an activity to start working with communities, to show them the importance of conservation, the importance of nature, the importance of animals that we are safeguarding because it is from those animals, from this park, that they will get funds, that they will get money. And this money will not go directly to the community but they will have small micro projects. With these micro projects, they will have developments and it's from these developments that they will know the direct importance of the park.

**Interview 58**

We are working with local communities and they are organized in associations. Associations are supported by the ICCN and those associations work also for the park's interest and they have small supports for their self development. The ICCN gives them support by providing seeds, by community crops. Others are supported with grazing for their own development and furthermore they are necessary for example, to maintain the electrical fence, to maintain, to prevent animals from escaping the park and to go destroying their lands. The park also gives them a material support.

**Interview 59**

The concept of participation in Virunga is that communities intervene, it is that we have communities that we call dialogue committees with who we discuss to be able to find some solutions in what is about the human wildlife issues on one hand and other issues with the park. For instance, we have some committees responsible of electrical fences maintenance. These works that we carry out to protect the population's crops, to protect from depredation by elephants, buffaloes, gorillas. And those are works that require an important investment but also a regular maintenance. So we previously discuss with the communities before doing those works and communities insure the periodical maintenance so that there are no technical breakdowns due to electrical fences functioning. This is a first element, a first option. We also have discussions with fishermen committees about the lakes, they are direct beneficiaries of natural resources so we must discuss with them. The park has the responsibility to do monitoring of the lake, a sustainable monitoring of the lake and fishermen are direct beneficiaries of conservation outputs, such that we must discuss with them to understand how their actions can allow to intervene in a sustainable way in the lake's conservation. We also have discussions with other communities related, for example, to encroachment issues. There are people that invaded the park and we must succeed to get them out and to find solutions out of the park, such that there are some discussions with communities to find answers to real management issues of the park. For now, we have given 30 percents of the touristic yields to development projects of communities. Those development projects are in the first step now. It was the building of social infrastructures within the schools. Have you seen the school at the entrance? Health centers, roads, water supply and then for the issues raised by the communities, we study them together, we find some solutions. But naturally, this places the park at the front-line and communities ask for more than what we are able to do.

**Interview 60**

Yes the community participation to Virunga protection will only be possible with their involvement at every level. It means in planning, monitoring and executing activities related to protection and this can happen through evaluation, planning and meetings and it can also happen through micro projects beneficial for them. If population is active in the execution of micro projects, this can easily help the national park's protection.

**Interview 61**

Well, for the local communities that live in the national park's surroundings, first of all, it is to show the national park's usefulness to local communities, to make them helping us in protecting the park. So, what we do here, in Virunga, is using some of the park's resources, some of the natural resources, especially the green energy to make the park communities evolving, by providing them with electricity. And this electricity brings... is a development factor for all these communities such that the installation of companies means employment. Therefore in terms of employment, people doesn't think about joining armed groups. Therefore it participates to the development and to the improvement of the livelihood of all the communities that live in the park's surroundings.

**Interview 62**

Local communities participation to nature protection, in our context here, it goes pretty well because when we educate them, when we tell them that the park has a value for the community, for example, for employment. Today, we employ a lot of people, they understand easily because they found some jobs.

**Interview 63**

It means to me, I can say, because nature, nature is us. And the community is the forest and the people, all right? The communities are not only people. So I'll say, communities should really walk in hands with the park officers to really serve and protect nature. That is all I can say, because without the people I don't think there will be the forest, that is what I'm saying, and without the forest there will be no people because people will come from different states, different ideas, because of the forest activities like the jobs, then the tourists will come to see the gorillas and so I will say, so many things the people can benefit from the forest.

**Interview 64**

We involve communities in the conservation in the following ways. Most communities living next to the park get direct benefits from the park. Like every enter permit paid to the park, 25% goes to the communities. We also have a program called Gorillalevi where every permit sold for gorilla tracking, 5 dollars goes to the community as well and this money is given to the communities to develop the community projects. They also get jobs in the park like the support staff that helps to carry the bags and also most of the rangers are from the villages around the park.

**Interview 65**

It is a constructive engagement of communities to be able to make decisions that matter most conservation. It means taking part in decision making.

**Interview 66**

To me, first of all these are the communities that put pressure in the park. So if we speak to them about the consequences they have aside, they reduce the pressure. Because there are two approaches: there is the community approach, we talk to them about the benefits of the park, and the use and so on whereas the stubborn ones that don't want to listen are the ones now we look for. We have many, many problems of community conservation now there. We also participate, we tell them, we tell them, we speak to them, we sensitive them. So when they come to the park, meaning that speaking was not enough, now we are there to apply the law, because the rules are very clear. So, to me, community programs are so helpful. If they are not, then all people would be putting pressure and which I can't manage around as a department. So better, we protect or we sensitize on the other side to avoid all that pressure, to reduce that pressure to the park. It is very important.

**Interview 67**

First, when we collect revenues from tourism, the communities take on to 20 percents of the parks inter fees plus 10 dollars for each gorilla permit that we sell. So that money is collected and given to the communities to support incomes and living projects. So as a result the community have a good relation with us and they support conservation. We also have a program for resource access where the community's members get into memorable understanding with us to access certain resources on a regulated manner. Like resources for making craft materials, resources for medicine, local medicine. So they also do monitoring of their harvest, they set the quota together with us, they take part in conservation.

**Interview 68**

To me, it means without, having the neighboring communities participating and supporting the conservation into these national parks, I don't think we can succeed. Because all around to protected area, for example this Bwindi, we have the communities. Having this support from them, to me it shall be all the time conflicting. And conflicting by park, UWA and communities will not lead to any success. So to me I think them being involved and brought on board to support the conservation to make this park staying, so that they look at it as their own resources where than can benefit.

**Interview 69**

Community participation I think it means when they know the value of this forest, and when they have gains as a result of being near the forest. If this forest can help in changing the community livelihood, I think they will be participating, and also if they are willingly cooperating with the park authorities, maybe to report in illegal activities because most of illegal activities come from there. But how are they willing to come and tell us? Can they arrest the individuals? And that's where they come, when they can see an interest value from this forest.

**Interview 70**

It means that communities however you define them, and that could be of course very specific to specific locations, are involved in the discussion, and decisions and management of nature.

**Interview 71**

Well, involving communities, it is only to ensure that they all have their word to say in every kind of development or activities that occurs either in their production site, their living site, and the sites where they go to collect food. They are not deprived of their development.

**Interview 72**

I would say community participation is not just about the rising of awareness and education of local communities but actually importing values. Certainly the model of the mountain gorillas in Rwanda, Uganda and RDC, is a good model because not only communities has been fully engaged in initiation and implementation of conservation projects but the money that has been raised from those initiatives have also founded a lot of community projects. So I think the communities really see the actual tangible value of protecting the wildlife.

**Interview 73**

Well it's obvious I mean. If you don't include the communities how do you protected the area? In many cases the communities either own the forest or they are adjacent to the forest. They need to survive they put pressure on the natural resources. If they are involved that means most likely loosing the resources. And we have been engaged in a number of community's projects. Cahuzi Biega we applied a complete sensitive approach to conservation, we involved communities in participatory boundaries demarcation. We reclaimed a degraded corridor with participation from the communities by offering them an alternative livelihood. In Congo Republic we worked on community tourism and helped to give a lot of structures to govern a community ecological corridor between the Odzala national park and the Lossi reserve. So a number of examples where we have been working very closely with communities and involved them in natural resources management.

**Interview 74**

I think the communities should be more involved in trying to manage their community forests. I don't really see a role for communities to be involved in park management. It is important for NGOs like us to build an awareness, awareness for the communities, that they understand the importance of the park. We also have guided park visits with school kids and it becomes clear that this is very important, that education part of sensitization is there.

**Interview 75**

Now, in terms of community conservation, I have managed to work around the national parks, people around the national parks, they conserve a lot but if you compare with Bwindi, those people been telling us that the officials of the park are so strict. Nobody is allowed in the park. They don't hunt, they don't do fire but there are some areas where they are allowed. So in Bwindi, people conserve a lot that forest.

**Interview 76**

How people in the community help or engage themselves in conserving the environment around them, like planting trees, stopping people who dry rivers, lakes or wetlands, stopping cutting down trees, harassing nature, like animals, bats or other things in that kind.

**Interview 77**

It is well, about engaging the communities, to engage in conserving the existing environment. Especially for example, they have to protect the forest from destruction such as trees cutting, hunting and even any illegal activities by the communities and for example here in the Buhoma, actually the people are conserving as they have seen. They are not allowed to enter the forest, even they don't get some materials to make the hunt.

**Interview 78**

The community participation, it means people are participating, they are interested and they know how to conserve. They conserve, they have social clubs which speaks about conservation, in their places and they told us that they have really gained something from the national parks like from tourists and the tourists come, they gain.

**Interview 79**

The community participation it's mainly about education and the realism that people can change their behavior, change first of all, change their knowledge and then change their behaviors and use their environment in a more sustainable way.

**Interview 80**

Community participation means that local communities, that are adjacent to the area of interest, they are involved in the processes relevant for the regulation of resource use, for land management, for land use in general, conservation in general. In every decision related to the area of interest.

**Interview 81**

Community participation means that communities for example around the protected areas are not only beneficiaries but they are also guides and actors parts of planning, identifying the needs and also managing them. They play an active role and are not only beneficiaries.

**Interview 82**

I think to me it means that in my research I employ a lot of people from the local community to work for us to work in the forest in the national park and by this they have a gain, a financial gain that in one hand they take back in their village, but on the other hand they understand why the national Park needs to be conserved, why it’s important to conserve Chimpanzees, to conserve monkeys. But I think the financial part is as important as the educational part because every worker that works with us feeds in average 3 to 4 families that are closely related to him, so the money that they take out, they distribute it in the local community. For me, this is an important part for the conservation of the park.

**Interview 83**

I think it dictates the success and the variability of a project for anybody interested in conservation. If you don’t have community participation or support, either conservation or research, it goes hand in hand, you won’t succeed. You cannot simply work into a place and expect not to engage people around you. You have to be participating with people and be engaged to set the roots for a project so it can succeed. Community participation is an engagement on both sides, so either NGO or researcher, providing avenues for engaging communities with who you are working. But also assuring those avenues are interesting enough and fruitful enough so that the people wants to participate so that the motivation is inherent. I’s not like dragging somebody by the hand and pull him on this way. Not to say “ok we go this way, we will do this thing this way” but to say “ok, here is an opportunity I can provide you, and to make that attractive enough for people to actually want to engage enough”.

**Interview 84**

For me it is the fact for those communities get involved in management, in the protection of nature, forests. It is to involve them more first of all by raising awareness. For us who went to school and have an intellectual background, by bringing them to understand that nature is good for them, that nature protection brings so much benefits. Then, it is to encourage them to carry out actions to preserve their natural space, their environment such as projects and all of that. For me this is participation, to rise awareness and to make them to carrying out initiatives to protect the environment. Because sometimes those populations have lot of richness but they don’t really know how to deal with it.

**Interview 85**

For me I think the optimal strategy would be a real participation, that communities are really involved in decisions, what does not actually happen.

**Interview 86**

We are including local people in decision making and in the process of conservation. And in terms of listening to them and try to find solutions together.