Supporting local communities around protected areas with a One Health approach

**VSF International’s actions to integrate sustainable livelihoods and conservation goals**

M. Gomarasca 1, A. Rondeau 1, G. Hellow 2, K. Mihese 3, L. Ilou 1, M. Miller 4

1 VSF International; 2 VSF Suisse; 3 VSF Belgium; 4 AVSF

**CHALLENGES FACED BY POOR COMMUNITIES SURROUNDING BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOTS SUCH AS PROTECTED AREAS:**

- Lack of income, food insecurity, lack of access to services, leading to negative coping strategies:
  - Hunting and bushmeat consumption and sales
  - Clearing of forests for crop/livestock production and/or sales of wood
  - Charcoal production
  - Poaching
- Expropriation of land for conservation purposes, conflictual relationships with local authorities
- Wildlife/Human conflict (competition for fodder and habitat)

★ Human, agricultural and animal pressure on a limited territory leading to habitat fragmentation and loss

Loss of biodiversity and risk of spillover of zoonotic diseases

**HOW TO FACE THESE CHALLENGES? Need for a holistic One Health Approach**

VSF International members and their partners implement **bottom-up strategies** to develop sustainable livelihoods opportunities for local communities, reconciling biodiversity conservation goals with social and economic goals. Through **multisectoral interventions and partnerships**, we tackle:

- Economic factors: income generation and diversification to avoid negative coping strategies
- Food security: promoting sustainable livestock and crop production to access nutritious and diversified diets
- Health: integrated animal/human health services delivery
- Land access: securing land tenure and governance for the direct benefit of local populations
- Awareness raising on natural resource and biodiversity conservation

**TOGO:** Fazao-Malfakassa National Park, Abdoulaye Forest and other community forests. [small-scale farmers and pastoralists]

[Projects MiKaGo and API A - VSF Suisse]

**SOUTH SUDAN:** Boma National Park and Badingilo wildlife migration corridor. [Pastoralist communities]

[Projects SERACAF, EKITS, ELVETS & CCLERP, VSF Suisse]

**ZAMBIAS:** Kafue National Park. **Crop farmers, small-scale livestock keepers**

[Project “Semer la coexistence” – AVSF & Melindika]

**DRC:** Kahuzi Biega National Park. **Small-scale farmers and livestock keepers**

[Project PNKB-OH, VSF Belgium & Médecins du Monde]

**Mitigation of Elephant/Human conflicts:**

- Beehive fences (bees as bio-acoustic deterrent for elephants)
- Buffer zone with a deterrent culture around crops to avoid crop-raiding from elephants
- Establishment of ecological corridor to secure wildlife movements

**Local veterinary services for livestock** (to limit bushmeat consumption and poaching, and as an alternative livelihood strategy to crop production).

★ Integrated wildlife conservation and rural development

★ Improved prevention, detection and response to diseases

★ Sustainable, healthy and productive use of natural resources

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VSF International is a network of 13 non-profit organisations working in the field of agriculture and livestock production, animal health and animal welfare, to support small-scale farmers and pastoralists. The members of VSF International are active in more than 40 countries in Africa, Asia, America and the Pacifics.