2020 TOP 100 GOOD PRACTICE STORY

Title of the Story:  

Destination Name: (include any state, province or region)
VOLCANOES NATIONAL PARK
Country: RWANDA

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Position: Founder

Nomination Category: (Please check the boxes that indicate the focus of your story)

☒ Culture & Communities
☐ Environment & Climate
☐ Nature & Ecotourism
☐ Islands & Seaside
☐ Immediate responses in dealing with the COVID-19
☐ Post COVID-19 recovery
☐ One of the 17 SDGs* (if yes, which one) Click or tap to choose

*The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030. The 17 SDGs are integrated—that is, they recognize that action in one area will affect outcomes in others, and that development must balance social, economic and environmental sustainability. What are the Sustainable Development Goals? 

For further information on Tourism for SDGs: http://tourism4sdgs.org/

Find detailed instructions for submitting good practices here
DESCRIBE YOUR GOOD PRACTICE STORY

Address each aspect of your good practice story in the different sections being specific including relevant quantitative and qualitative information.

**Issues faced**
The main threats to Volcanoes National Park is from the high human population densities surrounding the park which reach as high as 1000 inhabitants per km2 in some areas. Food insecurity is a driver of dependency on forest resources, with poor households supplementing their subsistence livelihoods by harvesting water, bushmeat, medicinal plants, bamboo and fuel wood from the park. Wild honey gathering in the forest has also caused devastating accidental forest fires.

**Methods, steps and tools applied**
Creating a direct linkage between the benefits generated by our initiatives and the environment is essential for incentivising communities to become environmental stewards. We put forward the Community benefits which are visible to local people and conservation activities must not interfere with or harm their main sources of livelihood. Our initiatives acted as an incentive to our community they benefit with educational and agricultural programmes which help teach them the economic and non-economic values of biodiversity and the need to conserve it.

**Key success factors**
Promoting environmental sustainability through projects that are "culturally appropriate and take into consideration the impact on all those who will be touched by them. Creating jobs and opportunities for artisans and craftspeople who product artworks for sell to visiting tourists."
Lessons learned

There is a social element gained by linking tourism, conservation and community development projects. Working with community members who encourage to learn from each other once they get started, they see how well friends are doing and want in on it. The model we use also encourages empowerment, as the women have to cover their own expenses for the activities and avoid becoming entirely dependent on Red Rocks as they have to learn how to budget and plan their activities in advance. There may also be additional benefits from interacting with tourists taking part in the activities. It offers a personal exchange between the tourists and the community, it gives the local people an understanding of the wider world and provides motivation when they learn about the lives of international tourists.

Results, achievements and recognitions

In August 2015, we were added to the A-Team for Wildlife ‘Wall of Fame’ for my contribution during their Giving Grid Fundraiser. A-Team is an organization that fights to save endangered species of animals. In 2015, on the occasion of the 36th edition of the International Tourism Fair of Madrid (FITUR), the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), FITUR and Casa Africa jointly organized the 7th edition of the Tourism Investment and Business Forum for Africa (INVESTOUR) on 21 January 2016 in Madrid, Spain. I was invited as a panelist in the second roundtable and shared with the audience my experience on the topic, Africa-The future is now. I have been recognized by several Rwanda based organizations for his efforts in promoting responsible tourism and community development agenda.

In January 2019, at the International Tourism Trade Fair (FITUR) in Madrid, Spain, an event that was organized jointly by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), FITUR and Casa Africa. I was awarded in recognition for Red Rocks Initiatives for Sustainable Development activities to promote tourism, conservation and community development in and around the Volcanoes National Park in northern Rwanda. Recently I was appointed by African Tourism Board to be in their steering committee representing the interest of African members.

Additional references

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=red+rocks+rwanda.