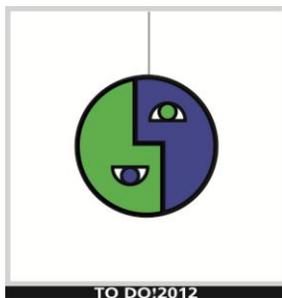


**TO DO! 2012**

**Contest Socially Responsible Tourism**



**Award Winner**

**PEARLS OF UGANDA**

**Represented by:**

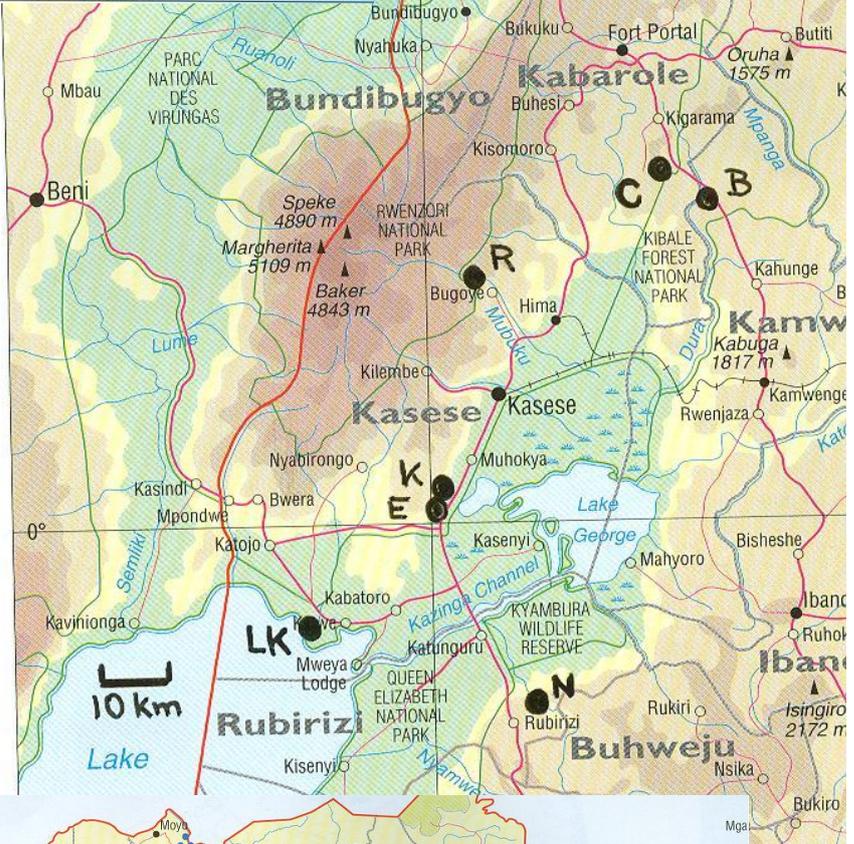
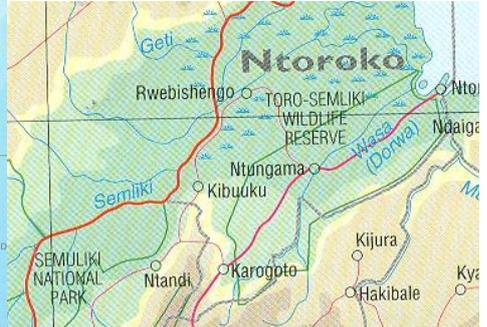
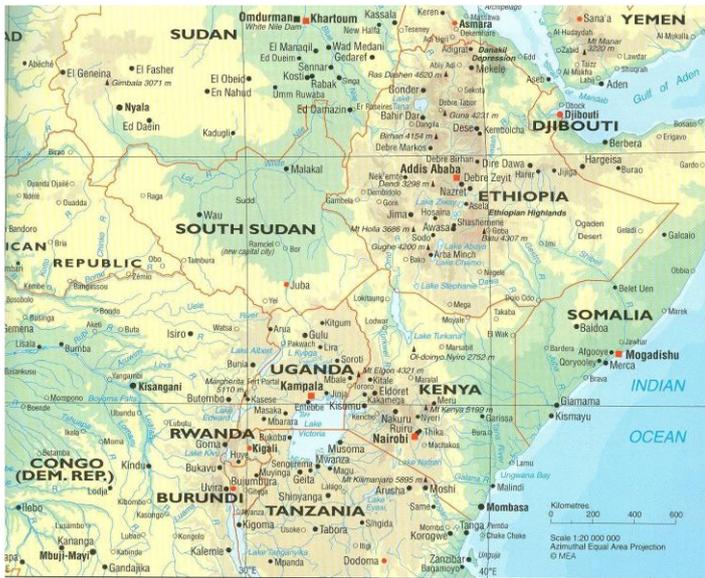
**Felex Kireru Kamalha, Field Officer  
Uganda Community Tourism Association (UCOTA)**

**Kampala  
Uganda**

**Rationale for the Award**

**by**

**Prof. Dr. Ludwig Ellenberg**



Location of places visited during evaluation in the south-west of Uganda

- B Bigodi community
- C Crater Valley Kibale guesthouse
- E Elephant center
- K Kikorongo community
- LK Lake Katwe
- N Nyanziibiri community
- R Ruboni community



Protected Areas in Uganda

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The application of "The Pearls of Uganda" ("Pearls" in the following) for the TO DO! award 2012 was submitted by the Uganda Community Tourism Association (UCOTA) to the Institute for Tourism and Development (Studienkreis für Tourismus und Entwicklung e.V.) and was nominated by the TO DO! jury. Ludwig Ellenberg went to check the "Pearls" from 29/11 to 7/12/2012. The trip led him to Kampala, the administrative headquarters of UCOTA, and to the south-west of Uganda where most of the about 20 "Pearls" are active. The "Pearls" near the Mgahinga Gorilla National Park, the Budongo Forest Reserve and the Murchison Falls National Park had to remain unchecked. The places visited are highlighted in the map showing the south west of Uganda. The trip was conducted together with Felex Kamalha of UCOTA who had organised it. Felex works as a field officer to ensure the links between the rural communities and Kampala. During the field work, Joel Kambale was the driver from Fort Portal. At the end of the trip, the author visited some of the safari enterprises in the capital in order to be able to assess their cooperation with the "Pearls". Furthermore, it was an occasion to speak to Felex Kamalha's colleagues, including Helen Lubowa, Executive Director of UCOTA. At the end, additional information was collected on how UCOTA's work is organised, and on their international tourism marketing.

## **2 BACKGROUND AND SETTING**

Uganda is a tropical country, situated on an equatorial plateau between Kenya, Tanzania, the DR Congo, Rwanda and South Sudan. It encompasses about 240,000 km<sup>2</sup>. The population of currently about 35 million is growing by about three percent per year. The average population density reaches almost 150 inhabitants per square kilometre. Uganda is an agglomeration of many ethnic groups, especially from the Bantu and Nilotic groups. About 40 languages have survived to this date. English is the official language, Swahili also since 2005. 80 percent of the population are Christians, Catholic and Protestant nearly in equal shares. Half of the population is below 15 years of age, and only 2.5 percent are above 65. Over the past few years, the threat of HIV/Aids has been addressed in an exemplary manner. During the last decade, Uganda has managed to dramatically reduce its HIV/Aids infection rate. Today, there are still one million Ugandans who are considered infected. The gross national product per capita reaches about 1/100 of the German GSP. In the United Nations' list of 194 states, Uganda ranks at 170. With a Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.47 at rank 161, Uganda has achieved only very little.

### **2.1 Political History**

Uganda is one of the cradles of mankind. Early civilisations were active here. As early as 10,000 years ago, the area was fully inhabited by Bantus. Initially, they lived as hunters and gatherers, soon also as herdsmen and tillers. Nilotic groups migrated into Uganda from around 300 B.C. From the 14th century, well-structured kingdoms evolved. Particularly influential ones were those of Buganda, Bunyoro and Toro. Arab traders and slave hunters moved into Uganda from 1840. European colonisation began late. After Belgian and German interventions, Uganda became a British protectorate in 1894. This colonial rule lasted for 68 years. Since 1962, Uganda has been independent. The 50th anniversary celebrations of independence were just over at the time the author visited.

While there was progress regarding land use and infrastructure, the post-colonial era was overshadowed by two harrowing dictatorships. From 1971 to 1979, Idi Amin reigned as an erratic despot. He had about 300,000 opposition members killed, and he expelled the Indian trader population living in the urban centres from Uganda. He removed Milton Obote from office, who then came back to power in 1980, which he exercised till 1986. During his second term, Milton Obote was similarly despotic and had entire population groups persecuted. The victims are estimated at 100,000. Only in the past 26 years under Yoweri Museveni did democratic structures develop. There are obstacles to a prospering economy and social security for the people, including rapid population growth, a high percentage of very young people, an almost purely agricultural economy, limited possibilities for economic diversification, very vulnerable infrastructure, rural-urban migration and the rapid growth of Kampala and other cities, the threat of HIV/Aids, the situation of a land-locked country in between politically and economically weak states, high public debt, and for the past few years clearly extended dry periods in the North of the country. Uganda continues to be one of the poor and vulnerable countries in Africa. Nevertheless, the current development perspectives are generally viewed rather optimistically.

## **2.2 Geographical Features**

Uganda lies between the Eastern and Western Rift Valley at about 1,000 metres above sea level and its scenery in the tectonically active zones on the Eastern border to Kenya and the Western border to the DR Congo is the most diverse and the most attractive. Only in small parts of the country is the median annual rainfall less than 750 mm; in many places it is more than 1,000 mm, and in one third of the country it exceeds 1,250 mm. The soil is fertile, especially in the rift systems. Limitations to farming exist due to stagnant moisture and dumps, rocky ground and steep slopes as well as dense forest.

Uganda became an agricultural country at an early stage and continues to be one. About 80 percent of the population live in agricultural structures and produce their own supplies of plantain, cassava, beans and rice in subsistence agriculture. The most important agricultural export products are coffee, tea, cotton, tobacco, and tilapia (known as "Lake Victoria perch"). What is new is the production of organic food with high growth rates. Copper, cobalt, nickel and rock salt are becoming increasingly important as mining products. Hydropower may become exportable and in 2009 oil and gas reserves of at least 700 million barrels were prospected. Less than half of the workforce is secure in formal jobs. The informal sector with partly deplorable survival strategies is huge, especially in the cities.

The biodiversity of Uganda is breathtaking and as far as small animals are concerned, it is largely unknown. Protected areas have existed for almost 100 years. Today's ten national parks encompass 11,200 km<sup>2</sup> (five percent of the country), the 13 wildlife reserves cover 9,440 km<sup>2</sup> (four percent of the country). They are world famous especially because of their diversity in mammals. Big savannah wildlife and populations of chimpanzees, gorillas and other primates dominate the image of the Ugandan protected areas. About 1,000 species of birds can be observed in the country.

In 1909, Winston Churchill affectionately called Uganda "The Pearl of Africa", for its combination of fertile valleys, glittering lakes, high mountains, balanced warm climate. The friendly, ethnically diverse people, however, were not what he was focussing on. Tourism started early, and in the 1960s Uganda was one of the most important tourist destinations in Africa, with 85,000 international arrivals in 1970. When Idi Amin came to power, tourism collapsed and did not recover until the mid 1980s. It is a very slow process. There were several setbacks, due to internal turbulences, the far-reaching impacts of disastrous conflicts in the DR Congo and Rwanda, and the massacre of tourists at Bwindi Impenetrable National Park in 1999. After all, Uganda was highlighted as worth seeing by Lonely Planet in 2009, and by National Geographic in 2012.

Close to one million tourist arrivals visit Uganda per year. The Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) estimates that 250,000 foreign tourists visited the national parks and wildlife reserves in 2012, more than half of them from Europe and the United States. Despite the large potential, there is hardly any hunting tourism in Uganda. Most of the tourists who are attractive for Uganda – who bring in a lot of foreign exchange – are interested in the protected areas of the country, in observing wildlife, in enjoying the scenery, in trekking, and mountain climbing. The interest in village and urban life, agricultural land use, every day culture and ethnic diversity, however, has remained low – so far!

### **3 UCOTA AND PEARLS**

UCOTA is the only Ugandan organisation that works nationally to promote community based tourism. Since the beginning of 2011, "Pearls" has been built up as a marketing programme by UCOTA in order to expand Uganda's tourism products beyond traditional safaris to include travel experiences that are focussed on everyday culture, which will facilitate a direct income from international tourism for local communities.

#### **3.1 UCOTA**

UCOTA was founded in 1998 with the objective of strengthening sustainable development in rural communities in Uganda. This objective is to be achieved by developing community based tourism which leaves the planning, decision making and realisation to the village communities and empowers them. Small areas of activity, involvement of many members, cultural products and handicrafts are typical for this kind of tourism. As much income as possible should directly benefit the villages. UCOTA has grown slowly and has involved more and more accommodation providers and restaurants. Besides, there are guided tours in the village and its surroundings, handicraft items can be bought or even produced, there are music and dance performances, insights into the history of the community and the daily agricultural work. UCOTA currently has about 60 members, spread all over Uganda. More than two thirds are located in the south-west of Uganda.

UCOTA's vision is that people in Uganda will become an attraction for foreign visitors and that rural communities will directly benefit from the tourists' interest in economic terms. UCOTA's vision: "To spearhead sustainable community-based tourism through capacity building, marketing, networking, advocacy and enterprise development in collaboration with stakeholders aiming at increasing community benefits, promoting quality standards, ownership and conservation of natural and cultural resources for better livelihoods."

To become a member of UCOTA, an application has to be submitted. For the application to be approved, six conditions need to be fulfilled:

1. The tourism products already developed and planned in the future must have the support of the community and must be targeted at improving the living situation of the community.
2. All activities are to be designed in an environmentally sustainable manner.
3. Profit must not go to a few individual organisers or players only, but must be shared with the entire community, and this should happen in a transparent manner.
4. Only if the community is located near a protected area and stands a chance that tourists will visit, membership will be approved.
5. The community must be ready to participate in training programmes on community based tourism.
6. The community must at the same time register with the respective county.

The number of villagers actively working with the 60 members of UCOTA by the end of 2012 was almost 4,500. About two third of them are women. The UCOTA members usually finance projects within their own communities and concentrate on social sectors, education and infrastructure; for example health posts, community centres, schools, adult literacy programmes, orphanages, waste management plants, structures for sources of drinking water supply, and improvement of roads/footpaths.

UCOTA is being coordinated in Kampala. The office at the eastern end of the city centre employs the director, Helen Lubowa, an accountant, two field officers and sometimes trainees or exchange staff of the Federation for Community Based Tourism of Kenya, the Kenya Community Based Tourism Network and the Tanzania Association of Cultural Tourism Organizers. These three organisations have a similar structure as UCOTA. All four of them keep each other informed about methods, training and international networking. There is no basic funding for the office in Kampala. The salaries of the staff in Kampala are being acquired through projects.

UCOTA is logistically and financially being supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Sustainable Tourism in the Albertine Rift (STAR), while the latter organisation is implemented by Solimar International and the United States Forest Service. For all the infrastructure improvement and training programmes, sufficient funds were provided. USAID and STAR are reliable partners of UCOTA.

### **3.2 Pearls**

Institutions can become members of UCOTA by applying for membership themselves. All they have to do is fulfil the six conditions mentioned. The "Pearls" are a different matter. They represent the "higher credentials" of UCOTA, an inner circle, a qualitative category that singles them out. Apart from the explicit declaration of wanting to realize (nature) protection and community development, a high quality tourism product must be offered which provides visitors with a unique experience. The desirable status of "Pearls" furthermore requires a readiness for community engagement and further training. Only after successful participation in many training courses will this label be awarded. Even

accommodation that has already been tagged in many other ways, such as the Crater Valley Kibale Resort of Pelusi Ruyooka, are not just adopted by the "Pearls" family, but must go through at least three steps of the training programme offered by UCOTA.

UCOTA reduces the speed of extending the "Pearls" list and pushes for a high intensity of network building and training, exchange and outreach in order to keep the title "Pearls" worth striving for and to develop it into a shining label. With funding from USAID the newspaper "Pearls of Uganda Post" is being produced, which reports on progress, points out events, mentions and describes potential future "Pearls", thanks supporters and gives a sense of corporate identity. The first issue was published in 2011, the second one in 2012.

All the "Pearls" have to be seen in context with the Ugandan protected areas. They are situated near their borders, the Katwe settlement even – as a Ugandan exception – inside Queen Elizabeth National Park. International tourism has always targeted these outstanding mountain, savannah, forest and marsh lands, concentrating on wildlife watching, safari romanticism, trekking and mountain climbing. Rural populations are usually being displaced from protected areas without compensation and have no connection to tourism, except as personnel in safari lodges. Some places see dangerous encroachments by wildlife. All the villages close to borders of protected areas lose part of their crops to elephants, baboons or other wildlife that cannot be prevented from entering the fields. There are no stable fences around the national parks and guarding the corn fields is time-consuming and patchy. There is no compensation for local people who refrain from using or limit the use. Therefore, the acceptance of conservation on the side of the local population near national parks is usually minimal in Uganda and tourists are only perceived as exotic passers-by. For the "Pearls", tourists become sources of income.

Among the 60 members of UCOTA, 25 have at different times since 2011 become "Pearls":

*Queen Elizabeth National Park:* Katwe salt lake, Katwe village walk, Kikorongo craft workshop, Kikorongo cultural performance, Kokirongo drumming workshop

*Rwenzori Mountains National Park:* Ruboni community camp, Ruboni forest walk, Ruboni village walk, Ruboni hill walk to see margarita, Turaco view nature walk, Turaco view campsite, Turaco view village walk

*Bwindi Impenetrable National Park:* Buhoma community camp, Buhoma community walk, Nkuringo cultural centre, Nkuringo community experience, Rubuguri village walk, Nyundo community bandas, Nyundo traditional skills trail, Nyundo water falls trail

*Mgahinga Gorilla National Park:* Batwa trail

*Murchison Falls National Park and Budongo Forest Reserve:*  
Mubako cultural performance, Ziwa rhino ranch, Boomu womens campsite

*Kibale Forest National Park:* Kibale association for rural and environmental development

Tourists find information about the "Pearls" on the internet. In addition, 62 tour operators in Uganda, so-called "pearls supporters", point out the "Pearls". Flyers are being distributed at Kampala's larger hotels. At the Hilton and at the Speke Hotel for example, this happens in an attractive manner in a prominent location in the lobby. UCOTA has not yet been able to sufficiently make use of tourism trade fairs and international travel agencies for this purpose.

The "Pearls" are at the beginning of their development. There are still only a few, and all of them will professionalise their products. Not every "Pearl" has been able to prove its success. Some of them have had little financial success so far, even though they have been conceptualised well. In some cases, there is a lack of continuous tourist demand. But the methodological approach is good, and the intensive management and support by UCOTA is reliable, as well as the determined focus on resource saving and environmentally sustainable community development through locally organised tourism in addition to agriculture.

#### 4. EVALUATION AGAINST THE TODO! CONTEST CRITERIA

Introductory remarks:

In the assessment of the "Pearls", a few uncertainties remain: It was not possible to visit all of them, the visits were brief, in many places there were no tourists at the time the author visited in 12/2012, and not all of the interview partners were fluent in English. Furthermore, it would be too much to expect that during short visits of an European expert in African villages it was possible to realise critical ad-hoc discussions on a basis of trust.

However, the trip was well organised and a lot of background information was provided. Felex Kamalha was indefatigable as far as the duration and intensity of the discussions was concerned. Spontaneous requests with regard to the visits at the "Pearls" were taken up in each and every case. The "Pearls" visited very openly described in detail the small imperfections, lack of infrastructure, very small numbers of visitors, personnel setbacks and financial bottlenecks, and they gave details of all the positive aspects in an eloquent manner. Where Felex Kamalha turned up, people received him with joy, respect and familiarity. The support by UCOTA in Kampala and their successful cooperation with Ugandan safari operators is being presented as ideal.

Comparing the activities of "The Pearls of Uganda" with the **TODO! contest criteria** leads to the following assessment:

##### 4.1 Taking into account the different interests and needs of the local people through participation

The initiators of community based tourism approaches are mainly volunteers of the US Peace Corps. They talked about possibilities of participating in tourism without having to migrate or to seek employment in the lodges or camp sites. They encouraged ideas to set up accommodation facilities in the villages, to offer food and drinks, to show how meals are being prepared, to grow medicinal plants not only in order to use them, but also to present them in gardens, to produce handicraft and to organise small workshops to teach tourists the production of textiles, baskets, pottery and carvings, to stage village myths and stories as drama, to intensify and to teach traditional music, and to fascinate the tourists by giving dance performances. UCOTA facilitates the sharing of these ideas, the influence of experiences from Kenya and Tanzania and the marketing of rural products and services.

A combination of three objectives is being pursued: Firstly, to generate income from tourism. Secondly, to enhance the communities and reduce migration. Thirdly, to derive success from the location at the edge of a national park, where crop losses are common – but where tourists are a chance. In all the "Pearls" there may be particularly active planners and charismatic convincers, but the social structure allows for the involvement and participation of villagers, though to varying degrees. Despite hierarchical structures and differences in capabilities, cooperation among community members is possible and is being pursued. In discussions the community and the improvement of living conditions of the entire group are being emphasized. Participation with regard to visions for the future, first planning stages, development of tourism

infrastructure, refinement of community based tourism, selection of local guides and staff in restaurants, accommodation and information centres seems to be in place. A dominance of UCOTA is not mentioned as a problem. Rather, there is convincing praise for the provision of information and networking by UCOTA. The cooperation when building accommodation, improving local (earth) roads, practicing for dance performances, and developing handicraft courses does not seem to be imposed, but is in line with the self-conception of the village communities. It seems that no individual remuneration is expected, but profits should benefit the entire community. It is surprising how the preparation of activities of community based tourism in the different "Pearls" is being described in very similar ways and how planning and doing, instructing and implementing, observing and participating seem to be interwoven. Women are particularly actively involved, but in all the "Pearls" men are also involved in the planning and implementation. There are both quite young and elderly supporters of the new community development.

#### **4.2 Enhancing the awareness of the local people with regard to the chances and risks of tourism development in their everyday economic, social and cultural lives**

During meetings with the organisers of the "Pearls", the opportunities for economic improvement in the communities are mentioned without hesitation and are being described in detail. In view of the rather small numbers of visitors and the large time gaps in between tourists' presence, these descriptions seem to be slightly too optimistic. However, since there was hardly any money generated earlier, since the community only sold their agricultural surplus once in a while, or community members who had migrated brought money home, even small amounts generated in the village are new, pleasant and motivating. So far, almost all the money is being reinvested. The "Pearls" are in the process of being built up. Typical "juvenile characteristics" of this form of organisation are strength, flexibility, trust, modesty, creativity, enthusiasm, tenacity, and community spirit.

Dependence on tourism is not seen as a danger in the near future. However, discussions during the training programmes (chapter 4.4) raise this concern in detail. Asked about it, the people mention sections from the training programmes which described the potential dependence from tourism as a "monoculture". So far, only the opportunities for an improvement of the daily social life are obvious, e.g. in the purchase of seeds, upgrading of school buildings, better equipment for health posts, repairing of access paths. The dangers of change are not yet an issue, at least not in terms of concerns raised by the villagers.

The cultural values of rural communities are not being described as marginalised by tourism, but to the contrary, they are being enhanced and appreciated by the visitors. The tourists' interest in handicraft, medicinal plants, cooking, music, dance, and myths is recognized as a potential for economic development. The respective formulations are realistic, hardly ever euphorically exaggerated. In many places, community based tourism is gratefully being seen as an almost surprising and very pleasant vision!

It is raised as an issue that within the village communities there are hardly any possibilities to increase the number of tourist visits. The dependence on Kampala and the marketing done by

UCOTA are mentioned in meetings and in the "Pearls" it is being discussed that tourists react sensitively if Uganda gets into more political turbulences than experienced during the past few years. Especially the players near the Congolese border are conscious of that.

#### **4.3 Participation of broad local population strata in the positive economic, social and cultural effects of tourism**

All the "Pearls" have lovingly designed guest books and meticulously kept lists of visitors. These show that tourists come irregularly, that they come in very small groups and that in between the visits there are slack periods of several days. While this is being commented on, it is not mentioned as a serious problem. The new sources of economic improvement in the communities are absolutely positive news. The "Pearls" are pioneers in community based tourism in Uganda and not at all "pampered". Prices of US\$ 35 for a couple's accommodation and breakfast at Ruboni community camp, a village tour at Boomu women's campsite for US\$ 10 per person, a training in basket weaving for US\$ 100 for a larger group at the Rubona basket weavers association and an abseiling action at Robs rolling rock for US\$ 50 are currently an almost utopian income for the organisers. As the income is re-invested in building up the "Pearls", the profit is directly visible. In this way, the "Pearls" are – despite their low turnover – an economic success story.

In social terms, an increasingly relaxed relationship with foreign visitors is evolving. More and more youths and adults have the courage to get in touch with strangers. They are self-confident in talking with tourists. The cultural aspects of the village and its scenic attractions are presented with pride. It is certainly also thanks to the tourists that the contact is so pleasant. Most people visiting Uganda are experienced in travelling. When they buy community based tourism products and services, it is a conscious decision, it does not happen by chance and it is not a less-than-ideal solution. The visitors come with curiosity, respect, and pleasant anticipation. They are in direct contact and when taking photos, they take time and behave respectfully. In some of the "Pearls" there are colourful walls decorated with photos and post cards which tourists sent after their visits. Personal connections often emerge. Some of the "Pearls" are being visited by the same tourists several times. So far, the culture of every day village life is being strengthened in this manner, not questioned.

#### **4.4 Guarantee of the attractiveness of jobs in tourism for the local people by improving working conditions relative to payment, social security, working hours as well as education and training**

Migration to Kampala and other urban centres or making use of the limited agricultural opportunities – these are usually the only options in rural Uganda. All the members of UCOTA have added the tourism vision and for the "Pearls" this is a reality. Not many of the villagers are qualified for the tour "village walks", for they need to know good English, they need to enjoy giving explanations, they need to speak clearly, they need to respond to questions, they need to have a sense of the visitors' wishes and preferences. For attractions such as the Bigodi Wetland Sanctuary which is rich in birds and primates, or the "forest walk" on the edge of the Rwenzori

National Park at the Ruboni community camp, or story telling in the Kikorongo community, there is a need for specialists. But for cooking, dancing, music, basket weaving, gardening, etc., there is a need to involve many people. That's the way it is usually done. The increasingly diverse job opportunities are seen as an improvement of the community situation. So far, individual remuneration, limitations of working hours, improvement of social security have not been issues for internal discussion in the communities concerned, or among the UCOTA representatives from Kampala.

The training by UCOTA, which is a condition for achieving the "Pearl" status, happens in three phases. The first phase of the training starts by inviting all villagers, informing them in a public space in the community about UCOTA and "Pearls", and showing the demands of the organisers and possibilities for committed individuals to get involved. The second phase is at the individual level. It is about working oneself through the training materials and answering all the questions asked therein, and about formulating one's own statements on how to develop the "Pearls". The third phase is the most intensive one, but only a maximum of two persons of each potential Pearl participates in it, so that the total number of participants in these courses will not exceed 50 persons. Mostly there are around 30. In two to five days, individual issues are being discussed in more detail and consolidated. Especially the third phase is very stimulating. Felex Kamalha is the main instructor, supported by several teachers on specific aspects. With regard to the structure and procedure of the training, all the comments are full of praise. The respective documents have been made available to the Institute for Tourism and Development. The most important modules are the following:

community tourism - general outlines	tourism industry in Uganda
enterprise development	concerns of foreign tourists
community needs	responsible tourism policy
conservation threats	interpretation skills: story telling
management of protected areas	tourism development - stages, chances and challenges
buffer zone management	guiding tips
conservation strategies and tourism	
primary tourist markets of Uganda	

#### **4.5 Strengthening the local culture and the cultural identity of people living in tourism destination areas**

It is very clear that community based tourism strengthens the local culture, offering the usual of daily life – which is unusual for tourists! Trekking tourism and tourism to national parks is much further away from Ugandan every day life and is exotic from the perspective of the people living here.

#### **4.6 Avoiding and minimising any social and cultural damage caused by tourism in tourism destination areas**

Tourism-related damage has not been a major issue in Uganda and should first be discussed, if at all, in relation to national parks, e.g. at wildlife watering holes or on trekking routes. The "Pearls" have so far not seen any damage due to tourism, but compete for more tourist visits.

The enthusiastic and skilful marketing of every day culture currently contributes to strengthening cultural values and traditional processes and enhances common and familiar activities.

#### **4.7 Environmental compatibility**

The buffer zone management is good if the affected local population working in the area accepts the protected area, respects its borders, refrains from using the area inside the national park or wildlife reserve but does not feel significant restrictions. The buffer zone management is brilliant if the local communities living next to the protected area welcome it and benefit from it, without ecosystems suffering. This is the case with all the "Pearls", at least with the ones checked during the expert's visit. The "Pearls" get opportunities to attract tourists because they are within eyeshot of the protected areas and could partly divert the visitor flow targeting these areas towards themselves. Remote communities partly have a similar potential for community based tourism, but cannot make use of it, due to a lack of tourists who might be ready to visit. Ugandan rural communities have proven their environmental sustainability over the centuries. Until recently, they worked within carrying capacity. Village communities with traditional economic practices could possibly sustain themselves. It was only due to a reduction of agricultural area because of the designation of protected areas, a recent increase in the number of inhabitants in the settlements and an emerging covetousness to sell agricultural products that degradation started and that land use has become environmentally damaging. The "Pearls" are reducing the pressure on their agricultural land thanks to tourism-related economic diversification.

#### **4.8 Gender Justice**

In the village communities of the "Pearls", men and women regard themselves as partners, according to the author's impression. There is a gender-specific division of labour, which is traditional and one can ask the people about it with regard to almost all the work in the village and in the fields. However, there is no understanding for questions related to male dominance or the possibility of women being overworked. The situation of women in the "Pearls" could be a little more comfortable than in communities without community based tourism, as in handicrafts, cooking and dance women are at the forefront and do most of the work. This applies to the activities, not to the income, as the latter benefits the community as a whole.

#### **4.9 Measures which guarantee the economic and institutional sustainability of the project**

The economic sustainability will be at stake if the flow of visitors runs dry. This may most likely happen in cases of political crises. Tourist would then turn away from Uganda and towards other East African countries. Economically, the "Pearls" would only be a success if their number remains manageable and if there is no ruinous competition. The "Pearls" are isolated solutions and cannot become a nationwide boon for Uganda.

In terms of ecological sustainability, the number of visitors may well be increased. Social sustainability is more vulnerable, but this is rather a time-related process than determined by the number of visitors alone.

Institutional sustainability cannot be guaranteed in community based tourism. The constellation is always to some degree uncertain. The current cooperation between the staff of UCOTA in Kampala and the "Pearls" is regarded as exemplary. For each of the existing "Pearls", community based tourism offers hope and a new opportunity.

### **5. CONCLUSION**

The author recommends awarding "Pearls of Uganda" a TO DO! 2012.

The assessment had begun with some scepticism. The situation, as it was found, has dissolved the concerns. The TO DO! award 2012 for the "Pearls of Uganda" goes to a socially responsible tourism initiative which has been working very responsibly to date, and which achieves good, though still rather modest results.

### **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended to continue the work of UCOTA. Securing funding for the office in Kampala should become a short-term objective. Increasing the number of "Pearls" should be handled with caution in order to maintain the quality of the inspiring beginning.

# Jury Members TO DO! 2012

**Dr. Christian Adler**  
Ethologist

**Anke Biedenkapp**  
Free Lance Consultant

**Klaus Betz**  
Studienkreis für Tourismus und Entwicklung, Free Lance Journalist

**Prof. Dr. Ludwig Ellenberg**  
Free Lance Consultant

**Rika Jean-François**  
Messe Berlin/ ITB Corporate Social Responsibility

**Wolfgang Köster**  
Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

**Peter-Mario Kubsch**  
Studiosus Reisen München GmbH

**Andreas Müseler**  
REWE Touristik Gesellschaft mbH

**Elena Obreschkow**  
Swiss Foundation for Solidarity in Tourism (SST)

**Sally Rahusen**  
Forum anders reisen

**Armin Vielhaber**  
Studienkreis für Tourismus und Entwicklung e.V.

**Prof. Dr. Harald Zeiss**  
TUI Deutschland – Environmental Management

## Award Winner's Contact:

Helen Lubowa, Felex Kamalha  
Palm Courts, Plot 7 A  
Lugogo Bypass  
P.O.Box 27159  
Kampala  
UGANDA

[www.pearlsofuganda.org](http://www.pearlsofuganda.org)

[info@pearlsofuganda.org](mailto:info@pearlsofuganda.org)

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## Organiser of the TO DO! 2012 – Contest Socially Responsible Tourism:

STUDIENKREIS FÜR TOURISMUS  UND ENTWICKLUNG e.V.

**Institute for Tourism and Development  
(Studienkreis für Tourismus und Entwicklung e.V.)  
Bahnhofstraße 8, 82229 Seefeld, Germany  
Phone +49-(0)8152-999010, Fax: +49-(0)8152-9990166  
E-Mail: [info@studienkreis.org](mailto:info@studienkreis.org)  
[www.studienkreis.org](http://www.studienkreis.org)  
[www.to-do-contest.org](http://www.to-do-contest.org)**

### In Cooperation with:

BMZ  Bundesministerium für  
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