Brokering Development Assistance in East Africa: A Policy Analysis

Prepared for the Global Livingston Institute

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Foreword

The La Follette School of Public Affairs at the University of Wisconsin–Madison offers a two-year graduate program leading to a Master of Public Affairs or a Master of International Public Affairs degree. In both programs, students develop analytic tools with which to assess policy responses to issues, evaluate implications of policies for efficiency and equity, and interpret and present data relevant to policy considerations.

Students in the Master of International Public Affairs program produced this report for the Global Livingston Institute. The students are enrolled in the Workshop in International Public Affairs, the capstone course in their graduate program. The workshop challenges the students to improve their analytical skills by applying them to an issue with a substantial international component and to contribute useful knowledge and recommendations to their client. It provides them with practical experience applying the tools of analysis acquired during three semesters of prior coursework to actual problems clients face in the public, nongovernmental, and private sectors. Students work in teams to produce carefully crafted policy reports that meet high professional standards. The reports are research-based, analytical, evaluative, and (where relevant) prescriptive responses for real-world clients. This culminating experience is the ideal equivalent of the thesis for the La Follette School degrees in public affairs. While the acquisition of a set of analytical skills is important, it is no substitute for learning by doing.

The opinions and judgments presented in the report do not represent the views, official or unofficial, of the La Follette School or of the client for which the report was prepared.

Melanie Frances Manion
Professor of Public Affairs and Political Science
May 2013
Acknowledgments

We wish to extend our thanks to John Pirkopf and Jamie Van Leeuwen at the Global Livingston Institute for their assistance in understanding the institute’s structure and programs and for their feedback on drafts of this report. They have been excellent partners throughout the writing process. Karen Faster at the La Follette School has been instrumental in bringing this report to the point of publication, and we appreciate her attention to all its aspects, big and small. We also want to thank Kristine Zaballos for her editorial polish and Shirley Smith for her graphic design of the Goals and Alternative Matrix. Most of all, we want to thank Professor Melanie Manion for her ongoing support and guidance in the course of this project. Her mentorship has been invaluable.
Executive Summary

The Global Livingston Institute (GLI) is a nongovernmental organization operating in northern Rwanda and southwestern Uganda, an area where the local population is in desperate need of development assistance. The GLI leads a number of small-scale volunteer travel programs and works in conjunction with other NGOs in the region. Following a needs assessment by two of its volunteers in 2012, the GLI seeks to expand its services and become a broker of development assistance in the region, particularly for the marginalized Batwa community in the Musanze district near Rwanda’s Volcanoes National Park.

This report presents two distinct analyses. First, we examine the GLI’s structure and activities, particularly its funding and current projects. Referring to literature on nonprofit management, we recommend several areas for improvement of the GLI’s internal practices: greater public transparency, institution of mechanisms for program evaluation, and diversified funding. Second, we develop three new policy options for the GLI to consider and qualitatively estimate the impact of each option against a common set of standards. On this basis, we offer a policy recommendation.

Based on our analysis, we recommend the GLI create an interactive online database to facilitate interaction of volunteers and NGOs operating in various target communities of East Africa. We believe this option is the most pertinent and feasible of our policy alternatives. In making our recommendation, we assume that this option will follow improvements in transparency, program evaluation, and funding sources critical to successful adoption of any new policy by the Global Livingston Institute.
Introduction

In 2012, the nonprofit Global Livingston Institute (GLI) sent two graduate students to the Musanze district of northern Rwanda to investigate the conditions of its environment and people. The resulting needs assessment draws attention to the needs of the Batwa people, a forest-dwelling group who have suffered decades of discrimination, disenfranchisement, displacement, and a lower standard of living than other populations in the region. Although the GLI has expressed an interest in continuing its work in Uganda, a country in which most of its current activities take place, it prefers to focus any expanded efforts on providing for the needs of the Musanze district and the Batwa community.

Because of this history of marginalization, many members of the Batwa community struggle to compete in local markets or gain access to basic amenities. Limited access to economic resources further impoverishes the Batwa community, and government intervention has failed to improve their lives. Kesterholt and Vogler’s (2012) needs assessment points to an approach that entails further nongovernmental coordination and collaboration in order to meet the basic needs of target communities like the Batwa, which utilizes the resources of the GLI as well as other nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and public service providers within Rwanda.

The GLI’s stated objective is to become a broker of development assistance for target communities such as the Batwa. In this policy report, we propose three alternatives to the GLI’s structure and operations (i.e., the status quo) as possible means of achieving this objective. First, we propose expanding its planned conference center in Uganda into a multifunctional venue for exchange and collaboration among local NGOs. Second, we propose creating an online database for interaction and skills matching between potential volunteers and the NGO community. Third, we propose using volunteers for on-the-ground data collection on behalf of NGOs and public service providers in East Africa.

We consider how likely each of these policy options is to achieve three goals: efficiency in meeting the development needs of target communities; increased cooperation and communication among NGOs, target communities, and other local stakeholders; and feasible implementation of policies. We break down each goal into impact categories that address specific aspects of that goal. Using a qualitative rating system, we score the policy alternatives’ anticipated success within each impact category. We then total the weighted scores of each policy and recommend the highest-scoring option.
Context

This section presents information necessary to understand the context of our policy analysis. It describes the GLI, including its regular activities and objectives. It also presents the GLI’s response to the commissioned needs assessment of the Musanze district and Batwa people of Rwanda.

The Global Livingston Institute

Founded in 2009 and based in Colorado, the GLI (2013c) states its mission as “[bringing] students and community leaders together to experience East Africa to incubate innovative solutions to poverty by listening, thinking, and then acting...when necessary.” The GLI is a small organization with 2012 revenues of just under $190,000. In addition to the nine-member board of directors, the GLI employs four staff members in the United States. The GLI recently established a short-term position in Uganda, but otherwise maintains no ongoing presence in East Africa (GLI 2013a).

The GLI is primarily a provider of educational travel for American college students and working professionals. Its short-term trips to Uganda and Rwanda are a type of travel known in academic literature as “volunteer tourism,” or vacation trips featuring volunteer work undertaken for philanthropic or environmental purposes (Simpson 2004; Guttentag 2009; McGehee and Andereck 2009; Barbieri et al. 2012; Lyons et al. 2012). The GLI’s volunteer tourism includes a variety of fieldwork, exploration of parks and wildlife, and cultural exchanges with local communities. The GLI emphasizes that its goal is “NOT to fix Africa” (GLI 2013b), but instead to challenge its participants to think critically about solutions to poverty.

The GLI administers 11- to 19-day trips for students and “community leaders,” described as those active in development and other nonprofit work. Participants pay fees of $2,700 to $3,800 (excluding airfare), and the trips are all-inclusive and entirely organized by the GLI. The GLI states that it barely breaks even on its trips, although a portion of the participation fees subsidize an unspecified number of participants (Pirkopf, personal communication, March 18, 2013).

In addition to volunteer travel, the GLI provides financial and resource assistance to schools and students in East Africa. The GLI is also constructing a retreat and resource center on Lake Bunyoni in southwestern Uganda that will include accommodations, dining areas, and a community space managed by a partner NGO, Mindful Markets. The center’s specific function is “not yet clear,” but the GLI plans to host retreats for NGOs and philanthropic interest groups. The GLI hopes to fund the expected $175,000 cost of the center through current financing methods and possibly run the center as a hotel for tourists to bring in additional revenue (Pirkopf, personal communication, March 18, 2013).
In 2012, the GLI posted an income of almost $190,000, with $124,000 devoted to program funding (e.g., scholarships, tuition, community projects, and travel expenses) and $37,500 to personnel costs (GLI 2013a). Donors include a variety of foundations, enterprises, families, nonprofits, colleges, and universities. The GLI neither publicly discloses individual donors nor disaggregates its expenses in its reports. The GLI states that it does not anticipate its funding structure of large one-time donations to be sustainable in the long term (Pirkopf, personal communication, March 18, 2013).

Responding to the Needs Assessment

A needs assessment submitted to the GLI by Adam Kesterholt and Michael Vogler (2012) highlights a number of obstacles to economic development and quality of life in the Musanze district. Areas of need include education, assistance for displaced and disenfranchised peoples, and conservation and wildlife protection. The assessment also observes that other development-based NGOs in the area are “primarily interested in funding opportunities, as opposed to volunteer support” (Kesterholt and Vogler 2012, 3) and suggests that the GLI meet these needs by helping the NGOs locate funding, coordinate donors, and write grants. Other suggested roles include networking and coordination, advocacy, public outreach, and provision of volunteers. We use the Musanze district and Batwa people as an example of the target communities the GLI serves since the needs assessment specifically highlights their current conditions and needs (see Appendix A for further information).

The new roles suggested by Kesterholt and Vogler (2012) would be a change in direction from the GLI’s experiential education model. The GLI is a relative newcomer to the NGO landscape in Rwanda and Uganda and has limited background in development project management. Accordingly, the GLI has expressed an interest in becoming a “broker” of educational and other development services in keeping with their mission of “listening, thinking, and then acting…when necessary” (GLI 2013c). The GLI has commissioned this report to propose policy options that will expand its work in Rwanda, beginning with improving conditions of the impoverished Batwa community. Furthermore, the GLI is interested in bold alternatives that will push the boundaries of the organization’s experience, yet remain within its capabilities.
Areas for Improvement

The GLI has built an active organization in a few short years. It directs a wide array of programs, each aimed at providing new opportunities to explore innovative poverty solutions. Like any organization, the GLI could improve certain elements of its operations. We approach this report as a two-part analysis. This section, the first part of the analysis, highlights standards in nonprofit management and discusses areas for improvement, specifically organizational transparency, program evaluation, and financing. We do not suggest specific mechanisms for improvement, expecting that the GLI, as a young organization, will commit to these “best practices” as it progresses. We present our policy alternatives in the second part of the analysis, assuming that the GLI is well on its way to implementing our recommended internal improvements.

First, the GLI would benefit from greater organizational transparency. Little information about the GLI is publicly available. The GLI’s website primarily shares the images and personal experiences of its trip participants without giving basic program information such as cost, accreditation, or substantive material on trip destinations. The website does not provide official reports or information on non-trip GLI activities such as research and logistical support to local contacts, legal and financial bona fides, strategic plans, or connections to other organizations working in similar target areas or sectors.

Public, nonprofit, and academic literature highlights the importance of transparency. For instance, the Iowa Governor’s Nonprofit Task Force states:

A goal of a charitable nonprofit’s communication should be transparency, which includes:
   a. continually building trust with the public by appropriate financial reporting
   b. communication with the public about significant contributions to the community with the charity’s funds and programs
   c. strongly evident commitment to ethical behavior (Iowa Governor’s Nonprofit Task Force 2011, 33).

Furthermore, the Human Accountability Partnership publishes a widely cited set of nonprofit standards that include “information sharing” as a central point. The Human Accountability Partnership urges humanitarian organizations to “[ensure] that the people it aims to assist and other stakeholders have access to timely, relevant and clear information about the organization and its activities” (Human Accountability Partnership 2010, 12). This is particularly relevant as the GLI operates in countries where corruption is significant and ongoing. Transparency International (2012), an international NGO that monitors political corruption, ranks Rwanda as 50th and Uganda as 130th globally in public transparency. Walsh and Lenihan (2006) point out that many NGOs operate in countries with “weak social structures” while simultaneously maintaining “underdeveloped internal structures” themselves. The GLI has the opportunity to adopt greater
public transparency in an industry and in a part of the world where it is especially important.

Second, the GLI would benefit from rigorous evaluation of its current programs. It is not clear how the GLI assesses the impacts of its programs as a whole. Program evaluation goes hand in hand with increased transparency and enables organizations to deliver higher quality services. The Human Accountability Partnership (2010) encourages program evaluation so that stakeholders and third parties may assess an organization’s internal accountability and the effectiveness of its projects.

Measuring the GLI’s program results will require adequate measurement tools. GLI’s short-term relationship with its trip volunteers, however, is unlikely to allow for rigorous assessments. Even large organizations with well-developed administrative capacity, such as United Nations missions or the Peace Corps, have problems producing consistent, accurate data on volunteer activities (Rehnstrom 2000). The informal nature of volunteer programs and the scarce resources of administrators make data collection difficult, even when such reporting is critical to secure funding. Nevertheless, United Nations and Peace Corps requirements that volunteers give feedback on technical activities, trainings, outreach, partnerships, and cultural learning demonstrate that reporting is possible. Requirements should be flexible but specific enough to glean comparable data from volunteer to volunteer, including baseline and outcome observations (Rehnstrom 2000).

Merely increasing the level of documentation would greatly improve the GLI’s capacity to properly assess program effectiveness (Silvergleid 2003) with little or no additional costs. Volunteer reporting could be standardized and implemented as part of program participation. As the GLI moves forward with any of the policy options assessed below, it will need to collect more relevant information from participants and keep meticulous records at program headquarters. Volunteers could list supervisors, co-workers, and beneficiaries in periodic reports. With more effort, they might also collect baseline data of objective indicators of development to measure overall changes and outcomes in the GLI work. The GLI headquarters might provide examples of data to use in measuring program impact. Providing training to volunteers prior to departure, while more time-consuming, would be possible. For example, the GLI’s Executive Director Jamie Van Leeuwen teaches a service-learning course for graduate students in public health and policy at the University of Colorado Denver and could include such training in the curriculum. Collecting data on indicators of change, listing beneficiaries, and comparing to control groups would constitute a low-cost and high-benefit means of measuring situations before a volunteer arrives and after he or she departs.

Regular reporting of volunteer activities also serves to identify and assess threats, negative and positive encounters, weaknesses in program security, or otherwise uncomfortable circumstances that volunteers encounter while in the field. All are important to maintaining volunteer safety and security and ensuring a positive
experience for both participants and stakeholders. Developing goals and pre-departure consultations regarding what participants hope to accomplish can also improve their experience. Reporting can be a key part of this improvement process. Making the participants responsible for this reporting empowers them as independent agents of change, which not only helps the GLI accomplish its mission, but also to holds participants accountable for meeting their own goals during their visit.

Third, the GLI would benefit from more stable and diverse sources of funding. As discussed above, much of the GLI’s funding comes from foundations and private donors, while its volunteer tourism programs are largely self-sufficient. The GLI states that it plans to diversify its funding, noting that large private donations are not always reliable. The GLI has not pursued grants but plans to do so (Pirkopf, personal communication, March 18, 2013).

With the construction of the retreat center in Uganda, the GLI’s financial obligations are significant. As observed, if private donations fall short it is not clear how the estimated $175,000 cost will be funded. The GLI has not determined the exact function of the center, nor has it devised a specific means to generate revenue from the property. We consider this degree of financial exposure untenable. Therefore, we encourage the GLI to solidify its funding stream before incurring further financial obligations. For purposes of the policy options proposed below, we assume that these funding issues have been addressed and that the GLI is on stable financial footing.

Reinforcement of internal capacities will support the GLI’s aspiration to increase the level of cooperation and coordination among local stakeholders in the Musanze area (Kesterholt and Vogler 2012). An established record of meeting objectives reflects existing institutional capacity, increases its legitimacy in the communities in which it operates, and inspires confidence in the potential effectiveness of resources invested in any partnership effort (Brinkerhoff 2002).
Policy Goals

We assess the GLI’s status quo and three alternatives taking three policy goals into account: the efficient application of resources to meet the basic needs of target communities; increased cooperation and coordination among local NGOs and targeted communities; and the feasibility of implementing these initiatives.

The first goal ensures available resources are efficiently applied to ameliorate the living conditions of target communities. As our key example of a marginalized people, many Batwa lack access to education, water and sanitation, and basic health care, are not represented in local governance, and face discrimination within Rwandan society. Although the GLI emphasizes the importance of thinking about and understanding a community’s needs before taking action, we assume that the GLI sponsors projects with the ultimate goal of effecting positive change within target communities. We define the efficient application of funds as a cost-benefit ratio of project investment.

A second goal is to increase cooperation and coordination among local stakeholders. The NGO management literature shows that formalized relationships and cooperation are critical elements in the process of poverty alleviation. We consider various forms of communication and coordination to evaluate this goal. First, we estimate sustained communication with target communities. Open lines of communication with these communities can inform the GLI and other NGOs about where and how to best apply resources (Brinkerhoff 2002). Next, we estimate the likelihood that the given policy will lead to the development of memoranda of understanding (MOUs) and the implementation of joint projects between the GLI and other stakeholders. While MOUs are not contractual obligations, they nevertheless provide NGOs with an opportunity to detail how they will collaborate to fulfill common goals. Joint project implementation is also vital because it illustrates the extent to which NGOs are willing to set aside differences, work together on a common goal, eliminate redundancy in efforts, and reduce inefficiencies in goal realization. Lastly, communication within the NGO community and among public service providers is critical. As they have grown in number, development-focused NGOs working in Africa have shown little interaction and coordination in efforts to improve the adverse conditions of the targeted communities. Sustained communication with one another would allow NGOs to more easily coordinate joint projects and fulfill the goals outlined in the MOUs (Brinkerhoff 2002; Human Accountability Partnership 2010; Iowa Governor’s Nonprofit Task Force 2011; Rehnstrom 2000).

A third goal recognizes that a policy can only come to fruition if it is technically and politically feasible. The GLI’s activities have not required government support and approval, so we do not evaluate political feasibility. Instead, we evaluate the feasibility of policy options based on the GLI’s ability to finance them and the organization’s ability to mobilize volunteer participation (Rehnstrom 2000). The first consideration is whether the GLI can maintain a level
of funding required for policy implementation and revenue generation. The second aspect of this goal is an assessment of whether GLI has the administrative abilities and project expertise to deploy mission appropriate human resources for each policy alternative.

We assign policy options a score of one to five for each impact category. We define a score of one as low anticipated success in meeting the impact category’s objective and a score of five means high anticipated success. For simplicity, we assign each goal an equal weight (33 percent), with all impact categories under that goal contributing equally to the goal. For instance, Goal One has one impact category; its score contributes 33 percent of the policy’s total score. Goal Two has three impact categories, each contributing 11 percent to the policy’s total score. Goal Three’s two impact categories contribute 16.7 percent each. Because impact categories simply measure aspects of a particular goal, we seek to avoid disproportionate influence from goals with several impact categories. Our evaluation of how well the policies achieve their goals and impact categories are qualitative in nature. The overall outcome of our evaluation is not arbitrary, however, but rather based on examples of successful NGO practices in the field and information regarding the GLI’s resources and capabilities.

Table 1 presents our scored assessment of the status quo and the three policy alternatives. We assign a range of scores where we foresee multiple possible outcomes. The weighted scores for each policy are totaled, yielding an overall score for that policy.
Table 1. Goals and Alternatives Matrix

**Scoring**

1 = policy does not meet goal  
2 = policy meets goal to an unsatisfactory degree  
3 = policy meets goal to a degree of basic functionality  
4 = policy meets goal to a satisfactory degree  
5 = policy meets goal very well

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Impact Category and Percent Weight</th>
<th>Alternatives Weighted Scores</th>
<th>Status Quo</th>
<th>Collaboration Center</th>
<th>Interactive Database</th>
<th>Documentation and Evaluation</th>
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<td>GLI’s resources do NOT provide services to local communities</td>
<td>1 (0.33)</td>
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<td>Low cost of investment could facilitate collaboration on projects, but successful exploitation of database tool is uncertain</td>
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<td>High cost of investment could have indirect, long-term impact but will create local employment</td>
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<td>Low cost of investment could facilitate collaboration on projects, but successful exploitation of database tool is uncertain</td>
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<td>Establish MOUs to formalize working relationships and implement joint projects</td>
<td>11%</td>
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<td>MOUs not necessary; center provides a forum where parties can collaborate on current and future initiatives</td>
<td>3–4 (0.33–0.44)</td>
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<td>Low cost of investment could assist project development, but high level of expertise needed and market for services is unclear</td>
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<td>MOUs necessary; evaluation typically a part of effective project implementation</td>
<td>2–3 (0.22–0.33)</td>
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<td>MOUs not employed; GLI seeks to partner with local NGOs but has not instituted development projects</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Needs assessment established communication but no existing means of continuation</td>
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<td>Low cost of investment could assist project development, but high level of expertise needed and market for services is unclear</td>
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<td>Target community may have limited Internet access</td>
<td>2 (0.22)</td>
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<td>Low cost of investment could assist project development, but high level of expertise needed and market for services is unclear</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Requires extensive interaction for valid measurements</td>
<td>3 (0.33)</td>
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<td>Low cost of investment could assist project development, but high level of expertise needed and market for services is unclear</td>
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<td>Establish MOUs to formalize working relationships and implement joint projects</td>
<td>11%</td>
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<td>Low cost of investment could assist project development, but high level of expertise needed and market for services is unclear</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MOUs not employed; GLI seeks to partner with local NGOs but has not instituted development projects</td>
<td>2–3 (0.22–0.33)</td>
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<td>Low cost of investment could assist project development, but high level of expertise needed and market for services is unclear</td>
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<td>MOUs not necessary; center provides a forum where parties can collaborate on current and future initiatives</td>
<td>3–4 (0.33–0.44)</td>
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<td>Low cost of investment could assist project development, but high level of expertise needed and market for services is unclear</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Needs assessment established communication but no existing means of continuation</td>
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<td>Low cost of investment could assist project development, but high level of expertise needed and market for services is unclear</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Opportunity to interact with target communities at center, but location in Uganda creates distance issue</td>
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<td>Low cost of investment could assist project development, but high level of expertise needed and market for services is unclear</td>
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<td>Target community may have limited Internet access</td>
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<td>Requires extensive interaction for valid measurements</td>
<td>3 (0.33)</td>
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<td>Low cost of investment could assist project development, but high level of expertise needed and market for services is unclear</td>
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<td>Goal</td>
<td>Impact Category and Percent Weight</td>
<td>Status Quo</td>
<td>Collaboration Center</td>
<td>Interactive Database</td>
<td>Documentation and Evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sustained communication within the NGO community and public service providers</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>GLI does not communicate with NGO community at large, but maintains ties to a handful of partners 1–2 (0.11–0.22)</td>
<td>Regular meetings and activities at conference center designed to foster long-term relations amongst local stakeholders 5 (0.55)</td>
<td>NGOs can search and find similar projects, learn from each other, and potentially have further communication 4 (0.44)</td>
<td>Provision of services entails ongoing communication 2–3 (0.22–0.33)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feasible implementation of initiatives</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintenance of adequate funding</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>Fundraising lacks long-term sources, exposing GLI to decreases in giving. 1–2 (0.17–0.33)</td>
<td>Funding inadequate for long-term stays and events at center 1–2 (0.17–0.33)</td>
<td>Estimates unclear on how much NGOs will use this database to generate revenue 2–3 (0.33–0.50)</td>
<td>Funding affected only via increased capacity to add value to target communities 2 (0.33)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deployment of mission-appropriate administrators and program participants</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>Programs staffed to a functional degree by volunteer participation 3 (0.50)</td>
<td>Deployment depends on GLI’s current and future outreach efforts to potential participating organizations 2 (0.33)</td>
<td>Deployment of human resources to match well with different kinds of resources and volunteer expertise 4 (0.67)</td>
<td>Success depends on ability to fit participant capacities to NGO needs 3–4 (0.50–0.67)</td>
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**Scores**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Total = Σ Score × Weight (%)</th>
<th>1.55–1.93</th>
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<th>2.98–3.48</th>
<th>2.26–2.98</th>
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<td>Poor to unsatisfactory</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory to functional</td>
<td>Functional</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory to functional</td>
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Assessment of Status Quo and Alternatives

This section presents and evaluates the status quo and three policy options against the goals expressed above. The alternatives to the status quo include expanded uses of the GLI’s planned retreat center in Uganda; development of an interactive online database for volunteers, NGOs, and other stakeholders; and provision of observation and documentation services by the GLI. We address each alternative in turn and explain the numerical score we have assigned to each impact category, as defined in our goals and alternatives matrix.

Status Quo

We characterize the status quo option as a continuation of the GLI’s existing programs with no implementation of new policies. The GLI would maintain its volunteer tourism trips, construction of the retreat center, and various educational assistance programs. As mentioned above, we assume that the GLI plans to actively pursue the best practices we have recommended, improvements essential to successfully maintaining the status quo and implementing any of the policy options.

We do not believe that the GLI’s programs will have an immediate, measurable impact on meeting basic needs in target communities. The GLI’s projects are clearly geared toward education about poverty-related issues, but at present the GLI’s resources go almost exclusively to the volunteer tourism trips and to financing the planned retreat center. Because the GLI’s resources do not go toward providing services to local communities, they cannot be efficient by this definition. We therefore conclude that the status quo does not meet this goal.

Under the status quo, we believe that the GLI’s programs are unlikely to result in expanded cooperation and coordination among local stakeholders as a whole. Although the GLI seeks to build partnerships with local NGOs and communities, we find no indication that this is likely to inspire reciprocation of coalition-building efforts among other actors in the area. Kesterholt and Vogler’s (2012) needs assessment indicates that the GLI has, however, put effort into communicating with target communities in Rwanda and Uganda. This is a promising start, but the status quo does not improve communications with target communities to a satisfactory degree.

Despite early stage conversations with target communities and a handful of local NGOs, the status quo scores poorly on other impact categories under the “expanded cooperation” goal. We are not aware that the GLI has instituted or plans to institute MOUs to formalize its working relationships with other NGOs. Similarly, we are not aware that the GLI has initiated any joint projects with other NGOs in the area, despite ongoing conversations. We therefore believe that the GLI’s implementation of joint projects is not satisfactory under the status quo, but could be functionally remedied with a simple internal policy change by the GLI. Nothing indicates that the GLI has mechanisms for sustained communication with
members of the NGO community and public service providers at large either. The status quo does not meet this impact category, but the GLI’s nascent relationships with a handful of partner organizations offer potential for future communication and cooperation.

Finally, the GLI under the status quo performs moderately well to well in feasible implementation of initiatives. As discussed above, the GLI’s revenue stream covers substantial program and retreat center costs. The GLI acknowledges that this leaves little room for error and plans to diversify its funding sources in the future. With this level of financial instability, the status quo is unlikely to maintain adequate funding. To the best of our knowledge, the GLI programs are sufficiently staffed, and its volunteer travel successfully recruits the needed participants. We consider the status quo to be functional in its deployment of mission-appropriate administrators and program participation.

**Option 1: The GLI Conference Center for NGO Collaboration**

One alternative to the GLI’s volunteer trip structure is to establish a common venue for collaboration among groups and individuals interested in development. The GLI is already pursuing this option by building “a creative and innovative working space in the Bunyoni region [of Uganda] for students and community leaders from all around the world to convene to address complex social issues” (GLI 2013a). This “working space” will provide guest accommodations in addition to conference facilities. Our proposed policy option expands upon this idea in two ways. First, we propose that the center focus on new ways to actively contribute to the development needs of target communities such as the Batwa of the Musanze district. Second, we propose that the GLI specifically recruit leaders of area NGOs and subject matter experts to participate in conferences, workshops, and similar incubators in addition to the community leaders and students expected to use the center.

To raise awareness of this new multi-purpose collaboration center, the GLI’s resources and funding would initially go toward establishing relationships with NGOs and public service providers operating in the Musanze district. The GLI would reach out to universities, beginning with students in the University of Colorado Denver class taught by the GLI’s Executive Director, Jamie Van Leeuwen, described above. In addition to NGO conferences and student study, academic researchers would be able to use the conference center for long-term field research in the region. Plans call for the GLI to spearhead the design of all event planning and facilitation at the center, designed with 20 dorm-style rooms and 20 private higher-end rooms for visitors (GLI 2012). The GLI’s partner organization, Mindful Markets, will manage and maintain the center’s kitchens and overall space so the GLI can focus on budgeting and logistical coordination for the collaboration center.

The center would establish the GLI’s presence in the region, allowing it to foster long-term relationships with the local target communities. Through the
sustainable ongoing training and employment of locals in the tourism industry, the GLI will provide necessary skill sets, as well as potentially substantial livelihoods for local community members, thereby meeting a tangible need outlined in the Kesterholt and Vogler (2012) needs assessment. The GLI can make the collaboration center a place where target communities can address their needs, exchange information, and access Internet and information resources.

Initiatives developed during NGO conferences and research conducted by students and academics could be a worthwhile investment in addressing the local community’s needs. Advocates and NGO leaders state that meetings and workshops often raise awareness of their activities (Werker and Ahmed 2008). The GLI could build on the success of their speaker series in the United States (GLI 2013a) by inviting local community members and stakeholders to lead discussions on development strategies within both Uganda and Rwanda. Discussions hosted at the conference center could propel the NGO community to combine resources to target specific educational, health, or economic development needs in the Musanze district. Participating advocacy groups could draw attention to the social barriers that groups like the Batwa face, such as discrimination and a lack of representation in the local government (Balenger et al. n.d.). Research by academics and students visiting the GLI conference center could also improve development initiatives in the region.

This approach departs from the structures of traditional development interventions. External actors, foreign NGOs, or development agencies direct most development programs, and funding is administered and disbursed from centralized national or regional capitals. Dialogue about development initiatives typically occurs in these national or regional capitals, restricting the input of remote target communities. Increasing use of host-country human resources has started to provide both greater financial resources and a greater voice to locals, although the change is often limited to urban areas. The GLI acknowledges that to promote successful community development, the research and design of these initiatives must be nurtured from within the communities in which they occur (Todaro 1989). This not only addresses the weaknesses inherent in a centralized design and command structure, but also promotes localized acquisition of program inputs and the empowerment and engagement of local actors. As a whole, the collaboration center would elevate the influence and impact of the GLI’s activities within the NGO community and beyond.

By fostering well-researched, locally designed development initiatives, the GLI’s investment in this conference center would more effectively meet local development needs. However, the overall effect of these initiatives on the circumstances of target communities would not likely be measurable for several years. While this collaboration center might not affect the needs of target communities in the short term, over time it might indirectly affect the needs of target communities to a limited degree.
Inviting local representatives to all conference center functions would establish long-term, consistent communication with members of the marginalized communities and help the GLI collaboration center become a useful space. Representatives of the Batwa community could be among the invitees, although the center’s location in Uganda could create logistical complications. Local representatives would have an opportunity to share their needs directly with groups and individuals looking to provide effective assistance. The Batwa have already expressed frustration at not having a way to influence decision-making that impacts their communities (Balenger et al. n.d.). By participating in the planning of development initiatives at the center, they could substantially increase their influence over the activities that affect them. Overall, this collaboration center is somewhat likely to improve communications with target communities like the Batwa.

With this collaboration center model, the GLI’s mission to “incubate innovative solutions to poverty” would be met through facilitation of long-term partnerships with local NGOs and the public service provider community. Even if NGOs continue to work independently following their interactions at the GLI conference center, the sharing of ideas and activities in meetings can help NGOs improve “downward accountability” to the communities they are serving (Jacobs and Wilford 2010). The GLI retreat center is designed after the Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center in Bellagio, Italy, a “space for exchanging ideas across disciplines and geographies, engaging in focused small group interactions, and pushing creative and innovative thinking to address global challenges” (Rockefeller Foundation 2013). The GLI center could serve a similar purpose by bringing together groups and individuals with congruent regional development goals. For example, the GLI could encourage Educate!, a local NGO, to use the center for this purpose. Educate! focuses on teaching nonviolent resistance through a network in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Pirkopf, personal communication, March 18, 2013). The GLI could host Educate!’s meetings at the center, giving them a space to organize their efforts and touch base with new partners in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and even Uganda.

While the GLI cannot require that groups combine their funding and resources at the center, we think it likely that some NGOs will establish joint ventures after discovering the common threads in their missions and visions for improving conditions in the region. Even without joint project implementation, the collaboration center’s strength lies in its ability to foster sustained communication among local stakeholders. We believe the collaboration center is likely to increase joint project implementation (with or without official memoranda of understanding) and almost certain to sustain communication among NGOs and public service provision organizations.

Long-term upkeep and promotional efforts for this collaboration center could be difficult for the GLI without additional sources of revenue. The establishment of the collaboration center would give the GLI a place to house its students and volunteers, saving an average of $500 per trip. Although up-front capital costs of
the conference center have not completely depleted the GLI’s financial resources, staff acknowledge that it will need more diverse funding in the future (Pirkopf, personal communication, March 18, 2013). Materials for meetings, speaker events, overnight stays, and long-term research visits will almost certainly increase costs for the GLI in the short and long term. Although Mindful Markets’ on-the-ground management of the center will give the GLI more time to seek out funding, the impact of the conference center on the GLI’s budget is likely to be significant. The GLI could at the very least defray costs through an attendance fee for workshop and speaker events, although participation fees might be difficult to implement before the GLI has established its reputation for programming. Renting the center to local tourists may bring in revenue during the initial build-out of the GLI’s collaboration activities (Pirkopf, personal communication, March 18, 2013). However, the ability of this policy to sustain funding levels over time without significant additional revenue sources is likely to depend on successfully marketing the center as a tourist destination.

A fundamental question about the collaboration center is whether the GLI itself has the network and influence in its areas of operation to make it a useful tool for cultivating development initiatives. While its ability to maintain funding and lead volunteer-based trips has been proved, establishing this collaboration center without extensive, on-the-ground involvement in the area will be difficult. Although the GLI partners with local organizations and deploys a strong volunteer base, its ability to network and create relationships within the nonprofit community will be key to the conference center’s success. In their needs assessment, Kesterholt and Vogler (2012) list eight organizations in Rwanda that they believe can provide useful volunteer opportunities for the GLI participants. Reaching out to these groups may give the GLI a starting point in its outreach efforts, but the fact that local stakeholders do not currently participate weakens the collaboration center’s appeal. As such, we believe the deployment of mission-appropriate administrators and participants is relatively weak in this alternative.

Option 2: NGO and Volunteer Database

An alternative to the status quo is for the GLI to expand its existing website to include an online database to identify the mutual needs and interests of volunteers and partner agencies. We envision an organized platform that matches the interests of prospective volunteers and donors with prospective host NGOs, community-based organizations, and government agencies. The database would help the GLI to pair human resource needs with tangible volunteer skills, experience, and interests. Over time, the GLI volunteer partnerships would support a greater provision of public goods and services, and the standard of living in target communities would rise.

To develop this tool, the GLI could use appropriate volunteer and staff resources or seek professional services to establish the online database. Program participants, under the direction of the GLI management, would identify agencies actively engaged in community development and record their needs. This
awareness enables the GLI to tailor its recruitment efforts to volunteers with applicable skills and experience, thereby focusing expertise on improving conditions in the region. For instance, law school students could examine human rights violations or land tenure disputes. Medical students could collect data about physical and mental health and compare traditional health practices to modern ones, enabling local actors to develop applied and adapted solutions to meet health-care needs.

This networking database would create a link between the GLI and local stakeholders, which would strengthen partnerships. It would also serve to improve online volunteer recruitment efforts by providing much-needed details on volunteer activities. Organizations could tailor their database profiles — or request GLI assistance — to specify their mission, strengths, and focus. They could also request human resource or material assistance. Furthermore, the database could also provide a way for organizations to propose and fundraise for particular development projects in the Musanze district. Similarly, prospective volunteers could search for NGOs with goals congruent to their own. The database could even offer means for website visitors to donate to particular organizations, with the GLI charging a small administrative fee on each donation.

As a means of matching skills with needs, this low-cost project has potentially significant benefits. Through improved accommodation of skills and services to needs, student volunteers may apply what they have learned in class to the real world, and volunteers with professional backgrounds can better share their experiences for creative exchange. Partner agencies would subsequently benefit from exposure to the GLI participants with applicable skills and interests and volunteers would spend less time adapting to the local work environment and more time productively exchanging ideas meant to meet local needs. In measuring its efficiency in meeting the basic needs of the target communities, this policy option has the potential to meet this goal to a satisfactory degree.

This policy alternative would increase communication with the target communities to a limited degree. After establishing an operational database, would-be volunteers will be able to interact directly with agencies that interact with the target communities. Communication increases as the GLI sends more volunteers to share and learn, and the pool of resources for improvement increases as more organizations become engaged in the sharing of information. In terms of specific targeted groups, members of the marginalized Batwa community are not likely to have the same level of Internet access and computer literacy as volunteers or NGO partners. One survey estimates household Internet penetration in the Musanze district at 3.5 percent, with many users relying on access at work or school (James 2009). Due to limited Internet accessibility among those at the base of the pyramid, we do not anticipate this policy alternative will directly increase communication with a broad range of targeted communities.

The networking database developed by the GLI would not directly increase collaboration among local stakeholders, nor would it directly create joint projects
for regional NGOs. However, it is designed to showcase projects being proposed or implemented by local agencies and may serve to broadcast the efforts of all local actors to volunteers and collaborative community actors alike. This database would provide a platform for entrepreneurial agencies to become aware of other organizations’ activities and may pinpoint opportunities to collaborate and combine resources. These potential collaborations may not need an official form of memorandum of opportunity (MOU) unless there are financial relationships involved. In fact, mandatory MOUs could present a significant barrier to entry in what should be a low-cost and highly collaborative endeavor. On the other hand, if the GLI were to use the database to assist in fundraising, we advise that MOUs be established. As such, this networking database meets the basic functionality of drafting MOUs and implementation of joint projects.

Initiating a regional NGO and volunteer database can certainly promote and increase collaboration and communications among NGOs. The ease of access and involvement in this online network would promote stronger ties among the local NGO community and public service providers. With the relevant information and resources in the networking database, NGOs could search for and find similar projects previously implemented, learn from their successes, minimize difficulties, and avoid making the same mistakes. As a result, some NGOs may find it necessary to contact other NGOs for additional information and further communication. However, it is not clear how regular the communication would be. We consider the policy under this impact category meets the goal in promotion of collaboration among local NGOs to a satisfactory degree.

It is not certain that the networking database could maintain adequate funding over time. On the one hand, the database would not likely require high capital or recurring costs. On the other hand, the GLI may need to hire an extra staff member, which would increase costs. If the networking database runs well over time, the GLI could place related advertisements on the site and generate some revenue. Additionally, the GLI could receive a small percentage of donations that partner organizations gain at the site. While this policy does not quite meet goal of maintaining adequate funding in the near future, it has the potential to do so.

This alternative is quite feasible in terms of deployment of mission-appropriate human resources. The GLI can recruit program volunteers based on the criteria requested by other NGOs. Alternatively, the GLI can design programs that fit the skills of their volunteers and make the online database more comprehensive. We believe the deployment of mission-appropriate administrators and program participants is met with this policy alternative.

**Option 3: Documentation and Evaluation for Local Stakeholders**

Our final policy alternative is for the GLI to use its NGO networks and volunteers to expand its focus of listening and thinking to the skilled, standardized documentation and evaluation of conditions in the target communities. Such
activities would improve the understanding of local community needs, in turn improving the impact of existing and future development initiatives.

External documentation and observation activities will likely depend on the interests and skills of the volunteers. For example, an economics, sociology, or business student could make quantitative comparisons of crop prices in local markets to qualitative observations of socio-economic, political, and cultural phenomena in the region. Organizations such as the United Nations Volunteers program and the Peace Corps require reporting of technical activities, training, research, outreach, safety, work conditions, partnerships, and cultural learning. The GLI could use these established reporting structures to report volunteer efforts and inform multiple stakeholders of the conditions that participants encounter in the field.

The Gorilla Organization is an example of a partner with an established presence and a diverse portfolio of development activities in the Musanze, Rwanda and Kabale, Uganda areas. The organization supports local artisans, encourages sustainable agricultural training projects, mushroom growing, and beekeeping, provides potable water provision and sanitation, and strengthens the Batwa community (Gorilla Organization 2013). Its website does not, however, communicate how progress in these areas is measured. The GLI could target such organizations and projects for evaluation and documentation services.

Periodic program evaluations that measure tangible improvements in livelihoods substantially increase an organization’s capacity to fundraise, up to 18 percent in the first year of evaluation for international nonprofit organizations (Bekkers 2006). The possibility of producing a monitoring and evaluation report for such an organization constitutes a tangible value-added to the organization with subsequent advantages, including increased fundraising capacity and the potential to reinvest those funds in targeted program improvements. Providing administrative support to organizations already engaged in the targeted communities may subsequently raise GLI’s profile. This policy option is consistent with the GLI mission to actively listen and think before acting (GLI 2013c) and may provide a product that local partners could use to improve development programs and service provision.

In the short term, this option would have few to no direct impacts on the target communities; however, improved capacities among local actors would lead to improvements in fundraising and community development capacities. This option addresses the fact that underdevelopment in the target communities exists despite ongoing efforts among local players (Kesterholt and Vogler 2012). Indeed, numerous stakeholders operate with overlapping development goals. Therefore, systematically improving existing efforts should result in substantial progress in the provision of public goods and services. All manner of governmental, private, nonprofit, and nongovernmental organization stands to benefit from evaluation efforts that effectively target and isolate areas for concentrated improvement.
Shifting the GLI’s focus to providing documentation and evaluation services to partner agencies may not directly increase the level or frequency of communication with the target communities. Extensive involvement with partner agencies in a context where the volunteer is deeply involved in analysis of the partner organization over a period of weeks may increase the volunteer’s level of integration with the local development community. Communication at this level could challenge and deepen volunteers’ thinking on relevant local development issues in a way that direct communication alone may not achieve. This observation and documentation option therefore satisfies the goal of increasing communication with target communities.

As nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations seldom have adequate funds to acquire unbiased program analysis, this would provide a much-needed service to these organizations (Brinkerhoff 2002). The increased credibility and transparency provided by objective program evaluation (Bekkers 2006) would allow the organizations to more effectively fundraise. Such a symbiotic relationship is most effectively established by meeting with partners, discussing mutual needs, and then developing a framework for collaboration to be outlined in a MOU between the GLI and these organizations. As such, implementation of this policy alternative is almost certain to include a formal agreement between the GLI and the local NGOs and public service providers. The local development actors would also be empowered with tangible data on where and how to best focus efforts to improve programs and service provision. This could lead to further collaboration with the GLI as volunteers may be needed for future consultation with partner organizations in meeting needs and implementing improved programs. In the short term, the evaluation and documentation efforts will not necessarily increase joint project implementation.

If the GLI wishes to provide partner organizations with monitoring and evaluation reports that demonstrate measurable program impacts, it will need to maintain open lines of communication with these agencies. Generally, the type of evaluation we envision would require baseline study measurements followed by measurements at a later date. Sustained communication between the GLI coordinator and the partner agency regarding a timely, long-term documentation and evaluation plan would be necessary under this policy, meeting the policy goal.

If the outcome of this policy option is similar to those studied by Bekkers (2006), the ability to show philanthropic donors a measurable increase in the value-added services provided to partner agencies through these monitoring and evaluation reports would increase the GLI’s capacity to fundraise by approximately 18 percent in the first year of implementation. This additional capacity does not guarantee that the GLI’s fund access will be maintained under the new policy, so we still do not believe this policy will necessarily meet the goal of adequate funding.
Determining whether the GLI can recruit talented program evaluators (MPH or MPA graduate students, for instance) should be the first step in assessing the feasibility of this option. Indeed, the GLI may already be capable of gauging interest in this skilled demographic by measuring volunteer participation among those enrolled in this development-focused curriculum. As such, this policy alternative is likely to satisfy the goal of deploying mission-appropriate resources.
Recommendation

Based upon our assessment and reflected in the weighted impact scores we have assigned to each policy alternative and to the status quo, we recommend Option 2: the GLI should pursue an interactive online database for volunteers, community members, NGOs, and other stakeholders. We believe this policy option offers the most effective means for the GLI to expand its services to become a broker of development assistance in Rwanda. We anticipate that the database option will be strong in efficiently applying resources, moderate to strong in increasing cooperation among stakeholders, and moderate to strong in feasible implementation.

Our simple cost-benefit analysis estimates that the interactive online database will provide $37,000 in benefits to the GLI and stakeholders each year, including $28,000 in donations and $9,000 in increased volunteer labor. We estimate that the database will require an initial investment of $1,500 to $2,500 for website development, $600 for online donation transactions, and $300 to $1,800 for marketing and outreach. This provides a ratio in the first year of $8.80 in benefits for every dollar in cost and as much as $21.75 in benefits for every dollar in cost in subsequent years. We assume that costs and benefits are borne by the GLI and the database’s other NGO participants and we do not estimate benefits to target communities or include donor and volunteer contributions as costs. (See Appendix B for a full discussion of the methodology.)

In summation, we believe that the interactive online database offers a good cost-benefit ratio at low financial exposure for the GLI. Through the GLI’s online matching of individuals with local NGOs and community service providers, the application of specific volunteer skills and talents to development initiatives will have the greatest impact on the needs of target communities in Rwanda. The database could also serve as a place for networking and idea sharing among volunteers, NGO representatives, and community members. Unlike the alternatives, the database is feasible given the GLI’s funding and staff resources. By acting on this recommended option, the GLI will play a more significant role in the outcome of development activities in Rwanda’s marginalized communities, thereby establishing networking and initiative benefits with a lower up-front cost compared to the other policies evaluated in this report.

While this database is the strongest of our policy alternatives, the GLI will need to address the lack of direct input and involvement from target communities like the Batwa. As observed in our analysis, Internet access and computer literacy are not common in these marginalized Rwandan communities. As sustained communication with these groups is a goal in our analysis, the development and design of the database should prioritize the communities’ access and input to ensure the database adequately represents and meets their needs.
Appendix A: Background on the Musanze District and Batwa People

The Musanze district, approximately 200 square miles, is located in Northern Province, Rwanda. The district’s population totals over 300,000 and its population density of almost 230 people per square mile reflects Rwanda’s status as one of the most densely populated countries in the world. Half of all citizens of the Musanze district lack access to drinking water and only 5 percent have access to electricity. The district has a population growth rate of almost 3 percent, attributable to its estimated fertility rate of 6.5 births per woman. In addition, three-quarters of people in the Musanze district live below the poverty line, as defined by the local Musanze government (District de Musanze 2007).

Despite Rwanda’s notable recent growth in GDP, the Musanze district reflects economic shortcomings endemic to the country. Ninety percent of the district’s economy is agriculturally based and predominantly produces potatoes, corn, wheat, and a local variety of bean. Crop production is limited by a lack of available fertilizers and pesticides and by serious soil erosion. The Musanze district also specializes in livestock breeding, particularly goats, cows, and sheep. Furthermore, the district’s industrial sector is severely limited, with the largest local businesses devoted to agricultural production and processing, resource extraction, and the manufacture of consumer goods (District de Musanze 2007). Ecotourism is a significant economic driver in the region, however. The landscapes and wildlife, particularly the famous mountain gorillas, draw tourists and cash into Musanze and offer promising avenues for future economic development.

The GLI seeks to broker assistance for communities that lack access to basic services. Following Kesterholt and Vogler (2012) and the interests the GLI has expressed in personal communications, our analysis focuses on the GLI’s impact on the Batwa, an impoverished group in the Musanze district. In this economic climate, the Batwa ethnic group of Africa’s Great Lakes region is in particularly dire straits. Historically, the Batwa were hunter-gatherers who relied upon the forests for their sustenance. Decades of deforestation and social marginalization by other groups in Rwanda eroded the Batwa lifestyle. When the Rwandan government confiscated Batwa land in the 1970s to make way for the Volcanoes National Park, the Batwa were left with few options but to attempt to integrate into mainstream Rwandan society. Some succeeded in becoming foresters, fishermen, or artisans, while others were driven to become unskilled laborers or beggars. Recent efforts to integrate the Batwa into the ecotourism industry have gained some traction, but so far have had very limited impact (Oluka 2011; Burnett 2012).

Mainstream Rwandan society still discriminates against the Batwa, relegating them to second-class status. Many see the hunter-gatherer tradition as an illegitimate and inefficient use of the land, allowing society to justify the denial of
Batwa land rights, to stereotype the Batwa as poachers, and to harass the Batwa community. The stigma results in substandard provision of public goods and services to the Batwa, further compounding obstacles to the community development (Lewis 2000).
Appendix B: Cost-Benefit Analysis of the Recommended Policy Option

To support our recommendation to create an online interactive database for volunteers and nonprofits, we conducted a simple cost-benefit analysis of the policy option. Cost-benefit analyses attempt to monetize and weigh the social “good,” or benefit, against the social “loss,” or cost, generated by a policy. Some costs and benefits are easily monetized, such as website development fees or income from donations collected online, but others require estimates based on unseen “shadow” prices. According to the policy goal of “efficient application of resources to meeting basic needs of target communities,” we examine the cost-benefit ratio of the policy, or how much “good” is generated per dollar of cost. We should note that even though the recommended policy option likely affects multiple segments of society, specifically nonprofits, volunteers, and target communities, we only consider costs and benefits to the GLI, NGOs, community based organizations, and government agencies in this analysis.

We estimate four costs and three benefits in the cost-benefit analysis. The costs include website development and maintenance, advertising, and transaction fees for donations processed through the website. We calculate these costs at market rates according to a variety of commercial sources. The benefits are less straightforward, including total amount of anticipated donations from the website, wage equivalencies of volunteer hours, and anticipated increase in volunteer participation. We draw upon academic and government literature to estimate the latter two “shadow” prices. All figures are in 2012 U.S. dollars.

Costs

The major cost of building the interactive database will be developing the website itself. Although the cost of website development can vary depending on site qualities and features, we anticipate that the first version of the interactive database for the GLI will be a simple and easily accessible design for a wide range of users. We compared several developers’ estimated costs for different features and use quotes from Mazuzu.com (2013) as representative of our calculations. A website including personalized profiles, site-wide search, secure donation processing, an email account, and listing management will cost between $1,500 and $2,500. We anticipate that server fees, including hosting and domain setup for the website, will be negligible. The GLI could build the online database upon its existing website and negotiate for lower server fees with its site host, Elevated Third (PRWeb 2012).

Consultation with a number of web service providers indicates that website maintenance varies depending on the number of updates and hours needed for the updates. Maintenance services typically require monthly contract fees varying from $25 to $500. On average, we found the higher the monthly contract fee, the lower the hourly rate, which varies from $10 to $90 per hour. We also discovered
that many website maintenance service providers offer nonprofit discounts ranging from 25 to 50 percent. We anticipate site updates every two weeks with minimal hourly maintenance of two to four hours per month. With a sample of over 30 website maintenance service providers, the mean cost of a monthly website maintenance contract is approximately $50. Average hourly rates are $25. Assuming a total of no more than four hours of maintenance per month and assuming professional services are utilized in lieu of volunteer maintenance, the required costs should not exceed $150 per month.

To recruit more volunteers for the GLI and other NGO programs, the online database will require outreach efforts. One way to reach a wider audience is through online advertising. We contemplate two possibilities: cost-per-click advertising or cost-per-mille advertising. Cost-per-click advertising charges a given amount each time someone clicks on the advertisement, whereas cost-per-mille advertising charges for each thousand times the advertisement is displayed online. Since cost-per-mille advertising is pricier than cost-per-click advertising, we base our cost estimates on a year’s worth of cost-per-click advertising on Google. Cost-per-click advertising on Google is five cents (Submit Express 2013), and we estimate 100 unique users will visit the site per day (MediaCollege.com 2012). We anticipate that 20 percent or more of unique visitors to the online database will be directed there through advertisements. At 100 visitors per day, with 20 to 100 unique clicks on advertisements for the database, we estimate an annual online advertising cost of between $365 and $1,825.

Third-party contracting agencies that process donations will charge transaction fees for each donation sent to the GLI and its partner agencies through the database site. A number of organizations offer donation management to nonprofits, including CauseVox, GlobalGiving, Crowdrise, and FirstGiving (Ackerman 2011). Each financial organization collects a percentage of the funds raised through the buttons or forms used on the database, ranging from 2 to 15 percent, depending on the features of the revenue collection tool provided. We model the transaction fee cost using PayPal, a subsidiary of eBay that processes online transactions worldwide. PayPal’s donation button costs 2.2 percent of transactions for 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, with no startup or cancellation costs (PayPal 2013). GLI is in the process of securing 501(c)(3) status at this time, so they will qualify for this lower transaction fee (GLI 2013e). Based on our estimate of $28,000 funds raised annually, as detailed below, the yearly transaction cost for the GLI’s online database will be approximately $600.

**Benefits**

We anticipate that the largest benefit of the GLI database will be the opportunity to collect donations and revenue for the NGOs and public service providers using the site. While few will seek out the website with the sole intention of donating to the organizations represented (Sargeant et al. 2007), we anticipate that some visitors seeking volunteer opportunities will also donate. We also assume that
benefactors would be unlikely to discover many of these nonprofits or know how to donate to them without the “one-stop shop” services of the database; thus we do not believe that donations made through the GLI website would simply replace donations made through other venues.

According to data collected on 51,000 charitable organizations by the Chronicle of Philanthropy, charity sites received an average online donation of $77 per day (Flandez and Gipple 2012). The sampled organizations may differ in size and structure from the GLI and other regional nonprofits, but the study’s large sample size suggests that this donation rate is a reasonable representation. At this expected daily donation level, we estimate that the GLI will collect approximately $28,000 in annual revenue for the NGOs and service providers represented on its database site.

Volunteer labor provides benefits that are less easily quantified. We follow five steps in quantifying these benefits. First, we establish an average shadow wage rate as an equivalency for the value of labor provided by volunteers. Second, we estimate how many hours of labor volunteers are likely to provide. Third, we estimate the number of Americans volunteering in Rwanda. Fourth, we estimate the increase in volunteer participation that the online database could generate over the status quo. Finally, we multiply the anticipated increase in volunteer hours by the shadow wage rate to estimate the benefit of greater volunteer involvement.

To establish the value of volunteer labor, we use a shadow price that represents the wage nonprofits would pay for the labor that volunteers provide for free. We value volunteer time in the United States at $22.14 per hour (Independent Sector 2013), but this estimate is problematic in three ways. First, this rate is likely significantly above Rwandan wage rates. Assuming that volunteers provide the same service that could be provided at local wage rates, $22.14 would overestimate the value of volunteer labor. Second, we are unable to project the types of labor that volunteers will provide. The services of an American doctor volunteering in Rwanda, for example, would likely provide benefits far exceeding this estimate, whereas an American college student performing unskilled labor would provide benefits well under this estimate. The number of doctors compared to the number of students recruited through the interactive database is impossible to project, and we do not attempt to do so. Third, this estimate ignores the possibility of volunteers from other countries whose labor might be valued differently. The GLI draws its volunteer pool from the United States, however, so assume an American volunteer labor force. Actual benefits might be significantly above or below our chosen shadow price.

The U.S. Department of Commerce estimates that the median duration of an international trip for U.S. residents is 12 nights (U.S. Department of Commerce 2012). We assume this implies 13 days in the destination country; subtracting a travel day on either end and further assuming that volunteers follow a pattern similar to other travelers, this implies a median of 11 possible volunteer days. Volunteers are unlikely to work 11 days straight or provide eight hours of labor
per day during their vacations as they will want time to explore their surroundings, so we estimate that volunteers will work half time, or four hours per day. This yields 5.5 full days, or 44 hours, of labor in the course of an “average” volunteer’s trip. Calculated at $22.14 per hour, we estimate approximately $975 in benefits per volunteer.

The Rwanda Development Board (n.d.) estimates that over 23,000 people traveled to Rwanda from the United States in 2010. Of these, about 8,700 visitors came on vacation and 1,000 came for “other” purposes. We are unable to find exact figures for the number of people traveling to Rwanda to volunteer, so we simply assume that one-fifth of visitors in these two categories, or about 1,900 people, qualify as volunteers. Spenceley et al. (2010) estimate that 25 percent of international tourists engage in gorilla trekking, implying travel to the Musanze district. Not all travelers to Musanze will engage in gorilla trekking, and so are not captured in that 25 percent. The landscape of Musanze is a major tourist draw even without gorilla trekking, so we assume that as much as one-half of all tourists in Rwanda visit the Musanze district. Assuming that about 1,900 Americans travel to Rwanda to volunteer and that about one-half of this group travels to Musanze to work for a total of 44 hours at a value of $22.14 per hour, we estimate that volunteer labor generates $925,000 in benefits every year.

The GLI’s interactive database will reduce search costs for prospective volunteers, which should increase the total number of volunteers. We are unable to find academic literature that estimates the increased “consumption” of travel given lower search costs, but we assume that more accessible information will lead to a lower perception of risk by consumers and thus to an increase in volunteer participation. We expect that NGOs participating in the online database will be based in Musanze, meaning that the database could influence a substantial portion of the volunteers traveling to Rwanda. If the GLI’s interactive database could generate a 1 percent increase in volunteer participation — admittedly a large influence on the market — volunteer labor could provide an additional $9,250 in benefits every year. We stress that this estimate is rough and is likely to be on the high end. It is also limited to the NGO community, since we do not estimate other costs or benefits for volunteers or target communities. Nonetheless, we believe that it is plausible that the interactive database policy option could generate benefits to participating NGOs in the form of wages saved.

Cost-Benefit Ratio

We estimate total costs in the first year of between $4,200 and $6,700, including a one-time website design cost of between $1,500 and $2,500, annual maintenance fees of $1,800, annual advertising fees of between $365 and $1,825, and annual transaction fees of $600. We estimate the annual benefit to be more than $37,000, including $28,000 in donations and $9,250 in volunteer labor as compared to the status quo. We therefore estimate a cost-benefit ratio in the first year of as much as $8.80 in benefits for every dollar of input. Subsequent years will yield a ratio of as much as $21.76 in benefits for every dollar of input at an undiscounted rate.
Unquantified Costs and Benefits

We did not quantify a number of potential costs and benefits in this brief analysis. These costs and benefits apply specifically to the volunteers utilizing the database and the target communities that the GLI hopes to support through the improved work activities of volunteers using the database.

One cost to volunteers not quantified in our analysis is the opportunity cost, or the decision to devote scarce resources to one activity over another, of utilizing the website instead of other online or in-person networking tools. This value could be time spent looking for opportunities through social networking sites like Facebook and LinkedIn, or perhaps webinars offered by organizations recruiting volunteers. This volunteer cost could be quantified in a fashion similar to that of volunteer labor hours, taking into consideration the hours put in exploring the GLI database instead of other useful websites. We do not expect this cost to be substantial, as the GLI database should minimize search costs for these volunteers overall. Another cost to the volunteers is travel. While the GLI offers some financial support to their participants (Pirkopf, personal communication, March 18, 2013), not all the NGOs that acquire volunteers on the database will have the same capacity. Since the opportunities available to volunteers through the database will be more substantial, participating in other NGO programs could be expensive without financial support.

The interactive database also benefits volunteers. Not only does the database reduce volunteers’ search costs for volunteer opportunities, it also provides a platform for volunteers to employ their strengths and accomplish something meaningful. The database will help volunteers match their skills with local NGO needs and gain valuable real-world work experience. By making volunteer participation easier, the interactive database can enhance volunteers’ future employability. In addition to work experience, volunteer opportunities in Rwanda will teach student to adapt to a new environment and work with new people, giving them a rich cross-cultural experience.

Full discussion of the costs and benefits of aid to target communities is a topic beyond the scope of this study, but four primary costs merit attention, should the interactive database drive an increase in volunteer participation. First, learning to use the interactive database also presents an opportunity cost for the target communities that the GLI hopes to serve. The target communities may have limited Internet access or be unfamiliar with navigating a database. Even with a basic understanding of the site’s functions, investing time and economic resources using the site takes away from other daily activities. Second, volunteer work could undermine local markets. If well-intentioned volunteers provide a good or service for free, for example mosquito nets or house construction, they might inadvertently outcompete a local businessperson and thus damage the local economy (Guttentag 2009). Third, volunteers frequently perform work in which they are unskilled or have little incentive to do well. Guttentag (2009) points out that volunteers in medical clinics abroad routinely perform tasks that medical
establishments in the U.S. or Europe would never allow them to do; a “something is better than nothing” attitude among volunteers is unlikely to inspire high-quality work. Finally, communities might develop relationships of dependency on NGOs and their volunteers. This could occur if NGOs portray a sense that certain improvements or development projects are possible only with outside intervention, or if communities become accustomed to receiving support for projects or improvements they could make without external assistance. In both cases, well-intentioned NGO projects could actually delay a community’s overall development.

The benefits to the target community follow the assumption that the database increases the number of volunteers participating in the GLI programs, thereby increasing the number of benefits produced. Numerous studies demonstrate the existence of non-monetized socio-cultural benefits associated with volunteer tourism in a developing country outside of the immediate services provided by the volunteer and their host NGOs. Among these intangible benefits is the willingness to engage in cultural exchange within the context of the service-learning experience (Clifton and Benson 2006). Both the volunteer and host community member derive unquantifiable pleasure in interacting with and learning from people from another part of the world, as well as from developing connections that tend to outlast the time spent in country (Brown 2005). Additionally, Clifton and Benson acknowledge the significant influx of spending that accompanies volunteer tourist visits, citing a considerable decline in receipts in rural areas of post-SARS-outbreak Indonesia attributed to decreases in volunteer tourism expenditure on local products and services. However difficult to quantify, these declines in inflow of tourist dollars also corresponded to a pronounced decline in tourist visa applications.

The documented capacity of volunteer organizations to build internal social networks may motivate the GLI to implement the recommended database. McGehee and Santos (2005) cite the galvanizing effect of volunteer tourism on the level of activism among local NGOs and civil society. Their work examines the “connection between volunteer tourism, social networking and consciousness raising,” in the GLI’s case, the significant factors that can be utilized to benefit the Batwa.
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