

## In the words of a visitor...

*"Words fail me when I try to describe the experience we had today with the Batwa people. (...) With some outside guidance, they are now beginning to use their native skills of music, dance, and creating pottery to elevate the quality of their lives.*

*As we arrived, inching our big bus down the steepest, bumpiest road I have ever been on, a group met us, dancing, singing, and drumming. We were treated to a series of outstanding dances in which their bodies gyrated and muscles rippled. Four men would lead off, together in step and movement, and then the women would weave in and take the lead role. Sometimes they would dance together.*

*It wasn't long before they had us up and dancing with them. We were beginning to get the movements, arching our backs, stepping and dancing to the drum beats, and moving our arms in rhythm."*

(Donna McNeese-Smith, Associate Professor Emeritus, UCLA School of Nursing)



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## At the crossroads of tourism and sustainable development.

NDA's tourism activities are life-enriching for the participating visitors as well as their Rwandan hosts. We create culturally engaging, intellectually challenging and very intimate high-value experiences that offer unique insights, educate and provoke. We also provide numerous opportunities for meaningful empowerment, sustainable economic development, poverty reduction, reconciliation and enhanced cultural pride. Our vision is to make a meaningful difference that ensures that the *new dawn* is followed by a bright day.

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## ancing pots

Life and culture of the  
Batwa in Rwanda



## 'Historically marginalized people'

Our Dancing Pots experience offers the visitor a unique opportunity to learn about and interact with a community of settled and forward-looking Batwa - or 'historically marginalized people' in the words of the government of Rwanda. Located close to Gisenyi, the members of Abatigayubuke are harnessing their famous traditional skills of pottery and performing arts to make a living and to serve as an exemplary Batwa community that is fully integrated in the area's social life and structures.

Today, there are only about 33,000 Batwa left in Rwanda, representing 0.4% of the population. Recent official statistics (2004) revealed some highly disturbing facts:

- 30% of the Batwa population is economically non-active (compared to just 1% of the total population)
- 69% are casual laborers (compared to 9%)
- 23% of adults are literate (compared to 78%)
- 43% are landless (compared to 12%)
- 20% have inadequate housing (compared to 3%)
- 35% have no appropriate latrines (compared to 5%)
- 37% rely on non-potable water (compared to 19%)

Nevertheless, the Batwa are able to maintain a distinctive identity and culture. Particularly renowned are their skills as potters, dancers and musicians. The idea of the Dancing Pots project is, therefore, to create valuable opportunities to provide financial resources to improve their socio-economic conditions and enhance their social status.

## Community empowerment & benefits

The empowerment of Abatigayubuke members went far beyond the provision of opportunities to share their culture with foreign visitors and gain some important financial benefits (70% of the profits, like in all other NDA projects). In their own words:

*"We look clean, people are now pointing at us saying 'Can you tell if that one is a Twa?'. And we like this comment because for them a Twa is dirty, hungry, disrespected by himself and the others. Now the history has changed!"*

(Alphonsine, Abatigayubuke President)

### Benefit sharing mechanism:

- 35 service jobs during the activities (for 25 members and 10 non-members)
- Education fund (16 children)
- Agriculture fund (4 plots of land for subsistence)
- Community development fund
- Direct income for sale of pottery products



## Tour itineraries and prices

### Half-day excursion:

- Introductory presentation at the hotel in Gisenyi
- Welcome dance at Abatigayubuke
- Pottery experience
- Introduction to Batwa dances
- Introduction to Batwa music and instruments
- Discussion about Batwa culture and life
- Traditional ubusabane get-together party

### Prices:

- 4-7 persons: \$80/person (from Gisenyi)
- 8-10 persons: \$70/person (from Gisenyi)
- 11-14 persons: \$60/person (from Gisenyi)
- 15-30 persons: \$50/person (from Gisenyi)

### Variations:

- Special tailor-made tour packages from Kigali
- Pottery workshop
- Dance and music workshop
- Other activities in the Gisenyi area, including the Kivu Coffee experience 'From crop to cup', a visit to a traditional healer, a visit to the Ecole d'Art at Nyundo or some relaxing time at Lake Kivu

### More information:

- [www.newdawnassociates.com/DancingPots.htm](http://www.newdawnassociates.com/DancingPots.htm)