

**COLLABORATIVE FOREST MANAGEMENT
AND COMMUNITY LIVELIHOODS: A CASE OF
BUDONGO FOREST RESERVE, UGANDA**

BY

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO MAKERERE UNIVERSITY IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER OF
SCIENCE IN ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

2009

ABSTRACT

This study was conducted in Budongo Forest Reserve (BFR), Masindi district in March to June 2007. Its overall objective was to evaluate Collaborative Forest Management (CFM) contribution to local incomes and to the condition of the forest. The specific objectives were to: (i) assess the socio-economic benefits obtained by local communities before and under CFM; and (ii) assess the condition of selected non-CFM and CFM forest compartments in BFR.

Data were collected using field observations; structured and semi-structured interviews; and forest sampling. A total of 140 respondents were interviewed. A structured questionnaire was randomly administered to local people within the study villages while FGDs were conducted with National Forestry Authority (NFA) field staff, Local Councils (LCs) and Community Based Organisation (CBO) leaders. Forest sampling was undertaken in the forest compartments with CFM and without CFM. Enumeration of trees in nested sample plots was done against a developed list of tree species commonly harvested for timber, poles and charcoal in BFR. Field observations were made in homesteads for tangible products harvested from the forests. Illegal human forest activities were recorded by walking through forest user paths. Analysis of data was by GenStat, Microsoft excel and SPSS computer programmes. Gross Annual Household Cash Income (GAHCI) was computed to show the contribution of CFM to incomes. Means of structural attributes of seedlings, saplings and trees were computed to compare the conditions of the forest with and without CFM.

The study findings were that local people extracted a range of non-timber forest products; charcoal and timber before CFM but they are only allowed to extract non-timber forest products under CFM. Although the contribution of CFM to people's income was significantly less than before it was adopted, it (CFM) introduced alternative income sources like tree seedlings, beekeeping and collection of wildings. Local people were unsatisfied with CFM because of lack of a mechanism of sharing benefits e.g. forest produce under the agreement, fees from issued licenses and confiscated timber during patrols; and lack of meaningful participation in planning and management of forests. Motivation for participation in CFM

was due to the immediate benefits from ICDPs in the CFM villages and speculation. It was found that CFM improved democracy in communities because of the training in governance. Although the natural regeneration in the CFM forests was significantly higher than the forest without CFM, this cannot be fully attributed to CFM. The differences were partly due to inherent differences in micro-edaphic factors of the compartments studied. However, coupled with the fact that there were many illegal human activities in forest without CFM (W37), my opinion is that conditions of forests with CFM were better than those without CFM. The presence of significantly more new illegal pitsawing in the CFM forest (W38) might be a sign that patience within the communities for benefits promised in the agreements is running out.

In light of the fact that the CFM contribution to incomes is still low, alternative income generating activities (IGAs) need to be emphasised so as to deliver on community livelihoods. I recommend that the CFM agreements be revised to address the issue of unrealised benefits under the agreement by specifying a time span for forest recovery before communities resume extractive forest uses under CFM and to integrate alternative IGAs in the agreement. I further recommend that the on-going revision process of the BFR Forest Management Plan (FMP) treats local communities consultations seriously particularly for CFM as provided by the law and forest policy. I recommend that government (NFA) secures multi-lateral donor funding to subsidise CFM implementation because it encourages forest regeneration and deepens local democracy and yet NFA cannot support its implementation locally on its budget because CFM is expensive. Lastly, it's increasingly becoming clear that spread of CFM to most of the CFRs is necessary to avoid transfer of illegalities (degradation) to forests managed not under CFM.