

IMPLEMENTING COLLABORATIVE FOREST MANAGEMENT IN UGANDA

LESSONS LEARNT FROM KASYOHA KITOMI AND ECHUYA CENTRAL FOREST RESERVE

Review Report



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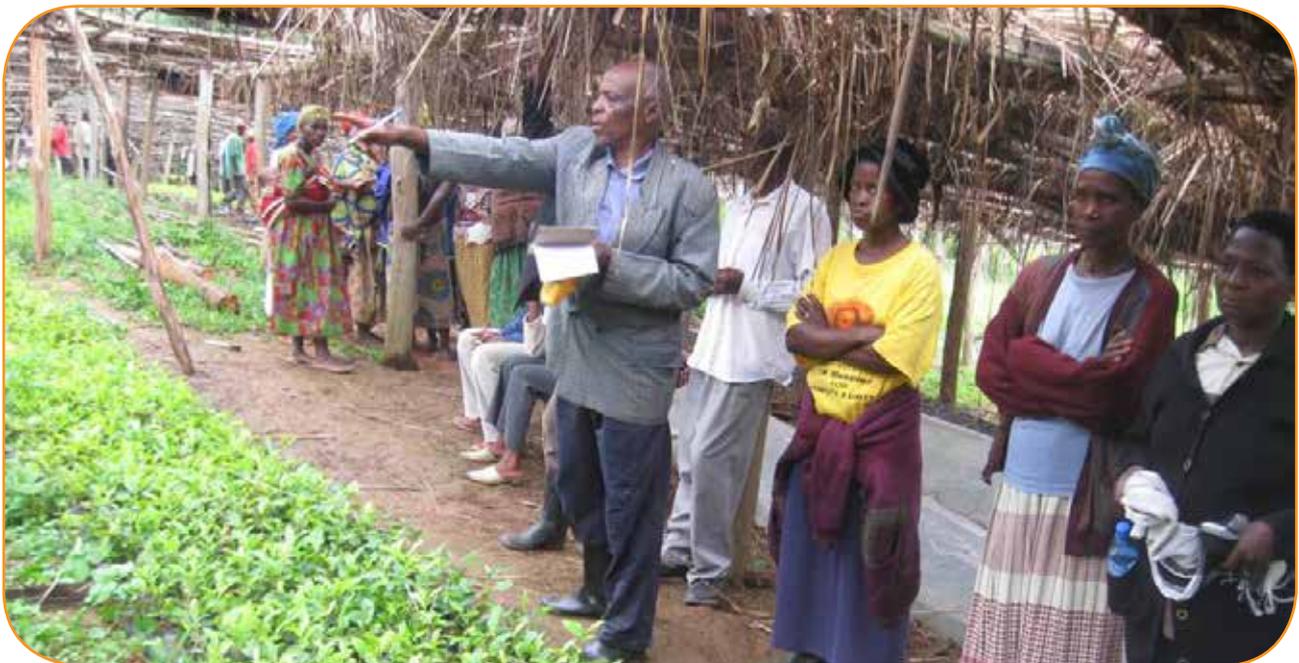
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IMPLEMENTING COLLABORATIVE FOREST MANAGEMENT IN UGANDA

LESSONS LEARNT IN KASYOHA KITOMI AND ECHUYA CENTRAL FOREST RESERVE



Review Report

2011



Bamboo domestication in Echuya landscape

ACRONYMS

BATA	Bitooma Abetereine Turinde Ebyobuhangwa Association
BTTEA	Butoha Twetungure Turinde Ebyobuhangwa Association
BUECA	Buzenga Environmental Conservation Association
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CFM	Collaborative Forest Management
CFR	Central Forest Reserve
DIIS	Danish Institute for International Studies
FR	Forest Reserve
KADECA	Kanaaba Community Development and Echuya Forest Conservation Association
KEDA	Kanywambogo Environmental And Development Association
KK	Kasyoha Kitomi
MECDA	Muko-Echuya Forest Conservation and Development Association
MPECA	Mwongyera Parish Environment and Conservation Association
NAADS	National Agricultural Advisory Services
NECA	Ndangaro Environmental and Conservation Association
NFA	National Forestry Authority
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NU	NatureUganda
PEMA	Participatory Environment Management Approach Project,
RPTPA	Rwajere Parish Tree Planting Association
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
SL CBO	Second Level Community Based Organisation

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Collaborative forest management (CFM) was introduced in Uganda in 1997, largely as a pilot programme in Budongo Central Forest Reserve (Masindi), Tororo Plantation Reserve (Tororo) and Namatale Central Forest Reserve (Mbale). The main aim was to promote community participation in forest management. The experience and lessons learnt from these pilots informed the development of the Uganda Forestry Policy (2001), the National Forest Plan (2002) and the National Forestry and Tree Planting Act (2003). The policy statement on CFM focuses on wide stakeholder participation, collective responsibility & equity in the management of forest reserves, and on improving the livelihoods of forest-dependent communities. One of the key requirements for CFM is the establishment of robust community institutions that ensure transparent decision-making, adequate representation and participation of women, men & vulnerable groups, and the equitable sharing of forest benefits and responsibilities.

The implementation of the policy is supported by the National Forestry and Tree Planting Act, 2003 (NFTPA), which defines CFM as a "...mutually beneficial arrangement in which a forest user group and a responsible body share roles, responsibilities and benefits in a forest reserve or part of it". The Act also provides for a responsible body to "enter into collaborative forest management arrangement with a forest user group for the purpose of managing a central or local forest reserve or part of it in accordance with regulations or guidelines issued by the Minister". The process of CFM has been elaborated through the CFM Guidelines issued by the Minister in accordance with the Forestry Act (Ministry of Water and Environment, 2003). The process proceeds through a series of communication and negotiation steps which lead to the signing of a CFM agreement. The responsibilities and benefit sharing arrangements are specified in CFM agreements and the accompanying CFM plans. These documents define the roles & responsibilities, and benefits of each party to the agreement.

CFM activities in Kasyoha Kitomi Central Forest Reserve (CFR) started in 2004 with funding from the Participatory Environment Management Approach Project (PEMA, implemented by NatureUganda (NU), in collaboration with the National Forestry Authority (NFA). The Development Objective of PEMA II Project was to *"improve capacity of poor women and men to sustainably manage and benefit from natural resources through increased rights and access to forest resources and increased forest based livelihood options thereby enhancing their wellbeing"*.



A bamboo nursery near Echuya Forest Reserve by NatureUganda

The immediate objectives were:

1. The rights and access to forest resources by poor women and men in forest dependent communities secured by facilitating the development and signing of CFM agreements in seven parishes surrounding KK CFR
2. The livelihoods of poor women and men in the seven parishes around the KK CFR improved by reducing forest related costs and increasing forest related benefits/returns through training in livelihood options
3. Capacity of partner organization enhanced to manage in pro-poor gender sensitive participatory natural resource management projects and to communicate and advocate for the developed CFM methods and lessons learned at regional and national level

CFM activities in Echuya Central Forest Reserve (CFR) started in 2004 with funding from the People Partner with Nature (PPN) Project, implemented by NatureUganda (NU), in collaboration with the National Forestry Authority (NFA). The Development Objective of PPN Project was to *“Reduce the destruction of forested IBAs and contribute to the realisation of best participatory forest management practices for the benefit of all”*.

The immediate objectives were:

1. Programme partners have capacity to work strategically with sustainable forest management and upscale learning
2. Participatory forest management contributes to improved livelihoods of poor communities, and reduce pressure on ecosystems and biodiversity
3. Local Conservation Groups (LOGs) have capacity and popular mandate to act as independent democratic organisations for the benefit of their communities and biodiversity

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was aimed at documenting experiences and lessons learnt from the implementation of CFM in Kasyoha Kitomi and Echuya CFRs. The specific objectives were:

The specific objectives were:

- a. To assess progress and effectiveness of CFM in contributing to the management of the CFR
- b. To establish the capacity of the community based organisations to negotiate CFM agreements for resource access, rights and responsibilities;
- c. To evaluate the participation and involvement of the local communities in managing the CFR based on negotiated relationships, rights, responsibilities, and returns
- d. To evaluate the social, economic and environmental impact of CFM implementation in the CFR

1.3 METHODOLOGY

This report is mainly based on the original report prepared and submitted to NatureUganda in 2011, but with some updated information to take into consideration new developments. The original study applied participatory approaches and a mix of primary and secondary data collection methods, including review of literature, focus group discussions, interview of key informants and field observations. The participation of the CFM community-based organizations (CBOs) established through the guidance of NatureUganda, NFA staff, local government officials and NatureUganda was instrumental in this study.



Series 19

THE STATUS OF BIODIVERSITY IN KASYOHA-KITOMI CENTRAL FOREST RESERVE



Series 18

THE STATUS OF BIODIVERSITY IN ECHUYA CENTRAL FOREST RESERVE

A Survey Report



2 THE PROJECT AREA

2.1 KASYOHA KITOMI CFR

Kasyoha Kitomi CFR is one of the natural forests in the biodiversity rich Albertine Rift in Uganda. It covers an area of 40,264 ha (Republic of Uganda, 1998) spreading over Bushenyi, Rubirizi, Ibanda, Buhweju, and Kamwenge Districts. About 87% of this area is covered by tropical moist forests (NFA, 2009). Records at the NFA indicate that between 1990 and 2005, the grassland areas of the CFR decreased by two thirds (from 2,362 to 777 hectares), while the extent of small scale subsistence farmlands (encroachment) more than doubled from 886 to 2001 hectares (NFA, 2009). CFM was seen as crucial in the efforts to balance the livelihood needs of the local people and the desire to conserve the biodiversity-rich forest reserve (FR).

Because of the production and biodiversity importance of the FR, the Forest Management Plan (2006) provides for a Community Livelihoods Working Circle which has the following objectives:

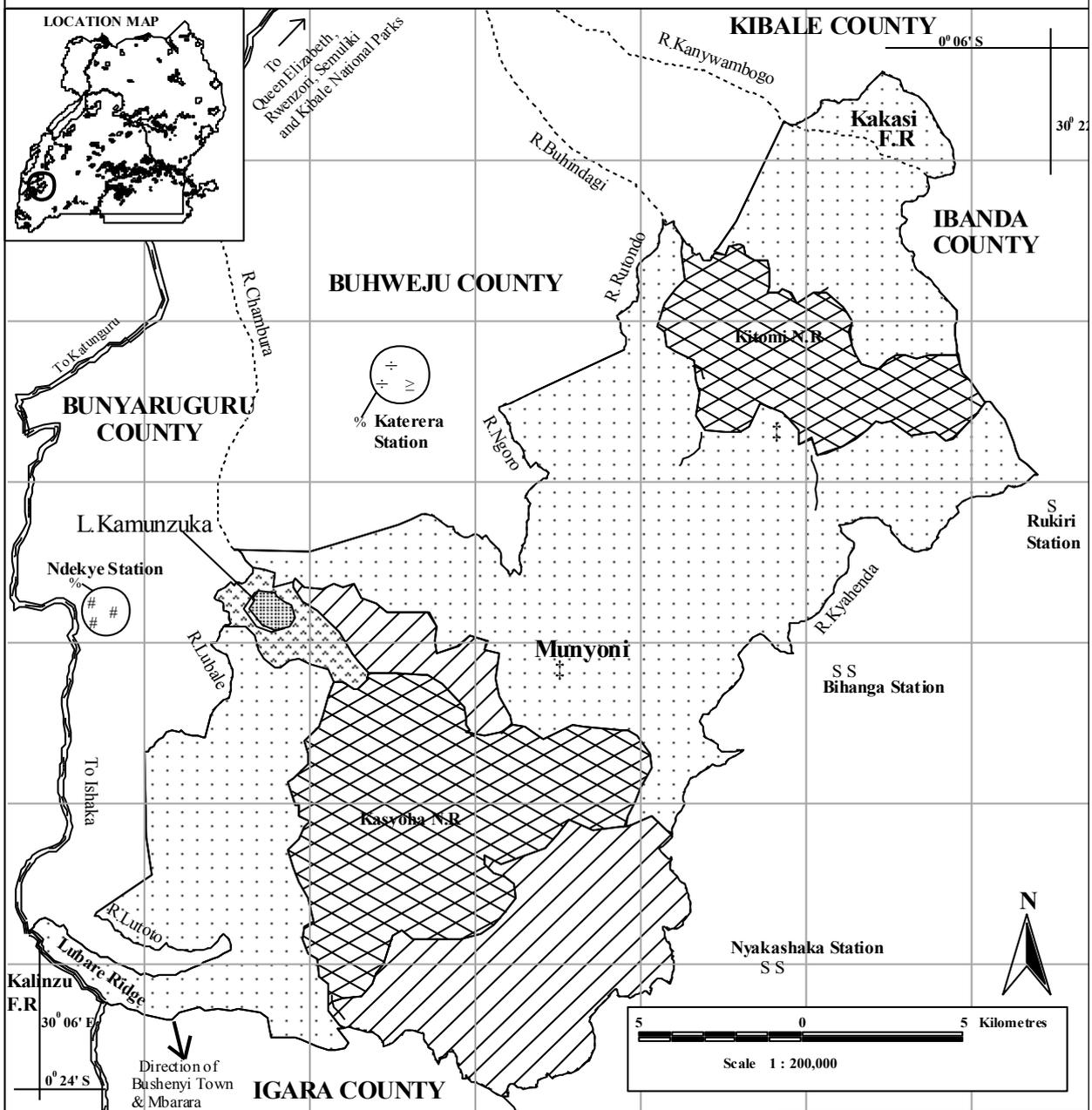
- i. NFA, in collaboration with other organizations/institutions, will promote the meeting of basic needs and alternative sources of wood products to improve the living conditions of the people.
- ii. Communities adjacent to the FR will be encouraged to plant trees or engage in other initiatives for income generation.
- iii. Institutions such as National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS), District Forestry Services, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs) will be encouraged to give technical advice to farmers and local authorities in tree planting and other forestry programmes for community benefit.

The Working Circle recognises that the forest resource available cannot meet all the demands of the rising population. Therefore the forest management plan encourages support to the communities to enable them supplement the resources from the FR by providing alternative wood and non-wood products through individual, family or group tree planting and other income-generating activities on their land. In addition, it provides for licensed planting of woodlots of suitable species in the grassland areas of the FR by the local people for the supply of timber, fuelwood and poles. The Working Circle also provides for planting of trees along the FR boundary in a 10-20 metre strip inside the reserve to meet their domestic and income needs. The implementation of CFM in Kasyoha Kitomi is therefore supported by the Management Plan, as well as the policy and legal provisions. However, since CFM is still a new practice in protected areas, monitoring and evaluation of its implementation will continue to provide useful information to guide future interventions. This assignment provides opportunity to inform all stakeholders about the experience and lessons learnt so far from the Kasyoha Kitomi CFM interventions.



Crater lake in Kasyoha-Kitomi Forest

ZONATION OF KASYOHA-KITOMI FOREST RESERVE



Management Zones

- Nature Reserve
- Protection (Buffer) Zone
- Recreation Zone
- Other Uses

Infrastructure

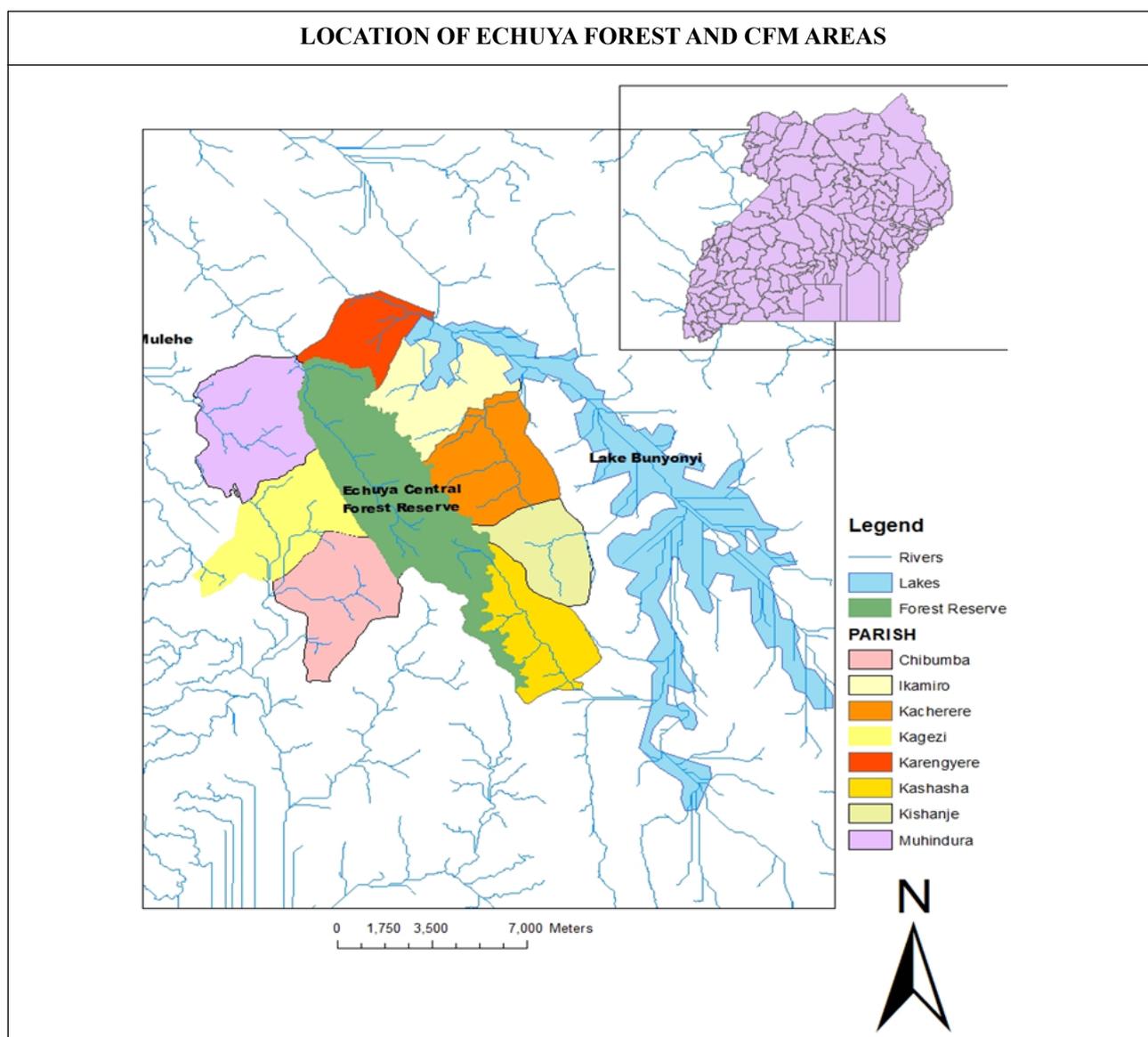
- Guard's house (under construction)
- Officer/ranger house (occupied)
- Officer/ranger house (under construction)
- Officer/ranger house (proposed)
- Overnight Patrol hut
- Motorable track/road
- River/stream

2.2 ECHUYA CENTRAL FOREST RESERVE

Echuya CFR is situated in Bufumbira County (20% of its area) in Kisoro District while 80% of the forest is located in Rubanda County now in Rubanda District (formerly Kabale District). It covers an area of 34km² (340 ha) with an altitudinal range of 2270 - 2750 m. It is situated on a high altitudinal ridge between L. Bunyonyi, 5 km to the east and Mgahinga National Park 13km to the south west and 11km east of Kisoro town. The forest is dominated by bamboo (*Sinarudinaria alpina*) on the hill tops and other woody and herbaceous plants especially *Macaranga* on the hill sides and valley bottoms. Echuya CFR is a unique Afromontane habitat and an area of high endemism. Particularly, it is an important bird area (IBA) AND Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) with about 137 species of birds including Albertine rift endemics and a significant population of the globally endangered Grauer's swamp warbler (*Bradypterus graueri*).

High human population density, extreme poverty and heavy dependence on the forest resources by the neighbouring communities exert immense pressure on the forest reserve. NatureUganda concentrated on setting up structures, namely organising and building capacity of six CFM associations in two sites, supporting prioritised income generating activities including those targeting only women, setting up forest health monitoring systems and building capacity of communities to apply them. Additionally, the Programme initiated advocacy activities through the CFM associations that targeted to influence both the district local government and the central government's actions and decisions.

This role has seen the CFM groups linked to the Uganda Network of Collaborative Forest Associations (UNETCOFA), an umbrella network for Collaborative Forest Management for individual and sub-regional networks of CFM Associations that are constituted of local level CFM groups.





Muchuya Swamp in Echuya Forest Reserve

3 FINDINGS

3.1 ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTATION OF CFM

3.1.1 Awareness creation and training

During the first 2-3 years of the projects, the projects concentrated mainly on community mobilization and sensitization, covering definition of CFM, understanding shared relationships, rights, responsibilities and returns; CFM-related policies, laws and operating guidelines and CFM planning process.

The key institutions involved in implementing the CFM agreements include:

- i. National Forestry Authority as a primary external partner in the CFM process
- ii. CBOs as the primary local partner in the CFM process
- iii. Local Governments, which are included to provide technical and logistical support
- iv. Third party partners like NGOs, whose role is advocacy, mediation between the primary partners
- v. International cooperation agencies as the providers of financial and technical support

The relevance of the above stakeholders in CFM process is well appreciated. Annex 1 shows the KEDA example of the roles, rights and benefits of the key parties involved, as they are enshrined in the CFM Plan which is part and parcel of the CFM agreement. Each of these institutions tried to carry out their responsibilities in the best way they could. Whereas some districts participation was limited to attending official functions like launching and signing of the CFM agreements, others such as Kisoro and Rubanda in Echuya Landscape and Rubirizi District in the KK landscape became part of the projects implementation partners. For example Rubirizi District had advertised for Vermin Guards at the time of the study.

The Project also conducted CFM-related training events on conflict resolution; participatory resource assessment; gender mainstreaming; institutional development; alternative income generating activities and enterprise planning and implementation.

Training in management of enterprises and agroforestry practices were considered important in improving the livelihoods of the FACs and reducing the over-dependence on forests products for their survival. Inter-parish exchange visits were also organized to share lessons and experience in CFM implementation. In addition there were exchange visits between the sites (Echuya and KK). These trainings were carried out in order to improve skills, influence attitudes and provide knowledge that was necessary for successful implementation of CFM.



Community members during a training session

3.1.2 Formation of community based organizations

CFM is dependent on the establishment of community based institutional structures to drive the process. By 2010, the Project guided the establishment of seven CBOs around the CFR, as indicated in Table 2 below. The CBOs cover the seven parishes in the Kasyoha Kitomi Landscape. Because these CBOs are legally recognized, it gives them the right to contract and be contracted in their names.

Table 1: Second Level CBOs Established by PEMA Project around Kasyoha Kitomi CFR

Parish	Name of SL CBO	No. primary CBOs	Women	Men	Youth/ PWD	Total No. of people
1. Buzenga	BUECA	16	181	149		330
2. Bitooma	BATA	11	137	139		276
3. Ndangaro	NECA	30	386	297	116	799
4. Mwongyera	MPECA	30	313	407		720
5. Kanywambogo	KEDA	18	232	216	110	558
6. Rwajere	RPTPA	32	390	610	8	1,008
7. Butooha	Butooha	11	190	148		338
Total		148	1,829	1,966		4,029

Source: PEMA II Project Records

All the CBOs had signed CFM agreements with the NFA. The CFM guidelines were followed to generate information to guide negotiations and inform the CFM agreements.

3.1.3 Livelihood interventions

The Project promoted small-scale income generating livelihood enterprises among the communities. Most of the small-scale enterprises in Kasyoha Kitomi were started in 2010. In Echuya, they have been running since 2004.

By 2010, the following interventions were considered as the **most successful**.

- i. Tree planting
- ii. Piggery
- iii. Bee-keeping
- iv. Agroforestry and soil conservation practices
- v. Robusta coffee growing
- vi. Passion fruit growing
- vii. Harvesting, processing and packaging of medicinal plants
- viii. Wine making

The following were the **key weaknesses** associated with the promotion of enterprises among the communities.

- i. All the enterprises existed before PEMA II among communities and there was no clear message as to the **value-addition** brought by PEMA II.
- ii. The scale of some enterprises (e.g. 4 pigs for 300 households) meant that the gestation period of waiting to benefit would be long for some families.
- iii. The message on the linkage between the enterprises and conservation was weak.
- iv. The choice of the enterprises, and their scale were not informed by basic benefit-cost analysis.

3.2 CAPACITY OF THE CBOS TO NEGOTIATE CFM AGREEMENTS FOR RESOURCE ACCESS, RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The implementation of CFM is highly dependent on CBOs as local institutions within the forest adjacent communities that can steer CFM processes. The CBOs are recognized by communities and the responsible bodies (in this case NFA). They are empowered to undertake activities on behalf of the communities, including negotiating the CFM agreements and mobilizing the communities for CFM implementation. Apart from propelling their formation, the Project invested in building their capacity to enable them to perform their roles effectively. The capacity building activities included awareness creation and training as described in section 3.1.1 above. In addition, the actual CFM implementation process provided hands-on experience to the communities in general, but especially the CBOs.

The members of the CBOs who were directly involved in the entire CFM development process, particularly those on the CFM Planning Teams, were better versed with the CFM-related policies, laws and the CFM guidelines. The iterative process of negotiation of the CFM agreements provided opportunity for the CBOs to understand the CFM process better and learn more about the intricate issues involved in conservation of biodiversity. Key informants and focus groups indicated that the draft agreements were thoroughly discussed in general meetings in which all the people were invited (see Box 1 for an outline of the milestones in the negotiation process). This helped them to internalise the issues involved. They were real negotiations because even in some of the meetings, sticky issues (e.g. timber harvesting, grasslands for tree planting in the FR) were openly and conclusively discussed, with NU playing a mediation role, especially where they were disagreements.

Box 1: Negotiating the CFM Agreement in Kasyoha Kitomi CFR

- All the people in the villages were invited to an initiation workshop
- They chose a planning team of about 30 people to take part in the negotiations with NFA
- A draft was prepared from the raw material generated during the negotiations
- The draft was read in another general meeting of all the people in the villages and changes were made
- A final draft was prepared and sent to NFA Headquarters for legal proof reading before producing a final copy for signing

However, the majority of the people within the CFM parishes did not fully understand the meaning and implication of CFM agreements. To some, CFM was about allowing local communities free access the forest reserve, especially for timber harvesting. In other cases, the CFM process was carried out hurriedly and the communities did not sufficiently understand the steps given in the CFM Guidelines. After the CFM agreements were signed, NU and NFA had to revisit some of the activities to help the members of the planning teams to sharpen their negotiation skills. Even among the staff of NFA and NU, there was still need to strengthen capacity to understand fully the concept and application of CFM so that they are all confident to independently steer the CFM development process.

In general, CFM was considered as entailing technical approaches which required continued hands-on practice in order to acquire the needed knowledge and skills. The continued support of the Project and other partners was therefore necessary to firm the communities and other implementing stakeholders in the principles and practices of CFM. NFA was also known to transfer staff, bringing in new ones who had no knowledge and skills in CFM implementation. To this end, the continued capacity building process was needed for both the communities and the CFM implementing partners.

3.3 PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVEMENT OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN MANAGING THE CFRS

3.3.1 Participation in planning

CFM planning process was guided by the CFM Guidelines, which outline the step-by-step participatory activities. A Planning Team consisted of about 30 selected members of a CBO. However, the community members were to attend all planning activities and provide their input accordingly. The political leaders were mobilized to support CFM, and they were key witnesses to all CFM agreements.

3.3.2 Participation in forest protection

The FACs work jointly with NFA to patrol the CFR against illegal activities, especially timber harvesting and bamboo harvesting. According to stakeholders, joint patrols were considered the most successful CFM activity in terms of forest management. The CBOs nominate the persons from the community to work with NFA staff to carry out on-foot routine monitoring of the forest. They have also set up systems for reporting incidences and location of forest crime to NFA, who in turn take action to apprehend the culprits. However, sometimes NFA does not respond promptly, oftentimes faced with resource constraints. Such poor response has tended to raise suspicions among the local partners that some of the NFA staff abet forest crime.

3.3.3 Participation in forest restoration activities

Harvesting of the forest usually targets high-value tree species, such as mahoganies and *Markhamia*, etc. Effective protection of the forest would in effect enable the natural restoration of these species. However, such a process is slow, and it has been a good forest management practice to carry out assisted regeneration through enrichment planting aimed at replacing those species which have been creamed out. For instance, Kanywambogo Environmental and Development Association (KEDA) has planted about nine hectares of degraded area at the edge of the *Illimia* Block using *Terminalia* sp, Mahoganies and *Markhamia* species among others. The communities continue to maintain the trees. Enrichment planting is one of the activities prescribed in the CFM plan. The main challenge however, is lack of clarity about the mode of benefit sharing, which was not clearly defined in the plan and CFM agreement. The initial plan by KEDA to apportion the said land to individual members to plant trees was disallowed by NFA because the people tended to concentrate on crop production instead of tree growing.

3.3.4 Benefit Sharing

The CFM process raised awareness among the communities and changed their attitude towards the forest and its management. The communities now see the forests as belonging to them and that these forests are for their own benefit. The main incentive for the communities to participate in CFM partnership is the sharing of the benefits accruing from such partnership. Benefit sharing is therefore one of the pillars of the CFM partnership. The roles and responsibilities of the communities shoulder include participating in joint patrols and sometimes supervision, arresting culprits, collect and provide information about illegal timber harvesting, participate in fighting wild fire, sensitizing communities about conservation.

The main incentives that motivated community participation include:

- access to the FR to harvest forest products (especially non-timber, bamboo) in a regulated manner
- access to the FR to grow trees in the grassland patches of the FR
- the desire to maintain good relations with NFA,
- the desire to conserve the environment and
- the provision of livelihood activities outside the CFRs.

The benefits are clearly indicated in the CFM plans. However, the benefit sharing mechanisms are not clearly stipulated therein. A number of issues have made the communities to lose trust in the agreement arrangement. For instance, while harvesting of various forest products for commercial purposes is included in the CFM agreements, communities are still required to obtain a licence through the normal NFA procedures despite the agreements. In effect access to harvest some of the forest products or plant trees is still limited. Similarly, tree planting in the CFR would require the communities to get a separate licence. The CBOs are concerned that they are subjected to other conditions when in effect the CFM agreement is supposed to be a binding document

between the parties involved. The communities doubt whether the CFM agreement is strong enough to protect their interests should NFA want to shift goal posts.

Access to resources in the forest was a major motivation for community participation in CFM. Because of the continued restricted access, the CFM members started compromising their integrity and fall back to forest crime. In addition, the communities felt that the financial benefits they got from participating in forest protection did not match their contribution. Simply put, the benefits are not commensurate to the level of effort they put in. It was apparent that the CFM negotiation process between the communities and NFA did not sufficiently go into details to ensure clarity roles, responsibilities, benefits and risks, and mitigation of conflicts.



CFM group members after putting out a fire in muchuya swamp

3.4 EVALUATION OF THE IMPACT OF CFM IMPLEMENTATION IN THE CFR

3.4.1 Social impacts

Improved relationships between the communities and NFA

CFM partnership has contributed to improving the relationship between the NFA and the local communities. Before CFM was introduced, the biggest conflict was over unauthorised access to the FR for resource use, especially for timber and charcoal. The local people harvested the forest products illegally, and NFA constantly harassed community members for their illegal activities. During the CFM process, the NFA staff came to appreciate the needs of the local people and the communication barriers between the two parties were removed. The fear of likely death because of being found in the forest by patrolling NFA staff had waned. A communication channel had formally been opened between the communities and NFA staff. The tension and pressure among NFA staff to protect the forests had decreased. The communities were getting empowered as evidenced from the arrests they had made of illegal pitsawyers.

Increased Demand for CFM partnership

As a result of improved relationship between NFA and the communities and the apparent benefits, the Project Management Unit started receiving a number of applications from groups outside the target parishes. Some of the CFM parishes like Mwongyera and Bitooma are not directly adjacent to the FR boundary. Initially, this caused frictions with the local people who were living adjacent to the FR because they had been excluded. But as the CFM process progressed, it was agreed that these people be admitted into the CBOs, and as more and more people join the CFM arrangement, the complaints have been minimised. In Echuya all subcounties surrounding the forest have been covered by CFM partnerships, including the Biraraa Batwa Community.

Change of attitudes among the communities

The sensitization and training activities during the CFM process contributed to the change of people's attitude regarding reliance on the forest for their well-being. There has been a change of people's way of life, especially for men who used to work as carriers of timber illegally cut from the forests. Engagement with them during the CFM process opened their eyes to focus on on-farm enterprises. The livelihood interventions had particularly changed the people's attitudes away from reliance on the FR and towards growing the tree products on their own lands, and engaging in other livelihood activities outside the CFRs.

The men who used to be employed as timber carriers by illegal pitsawyers have settled and contributing their labour for increased agricultural production. It was observed that banana production in Mwongyera Parish had increased owing to the increased labour force and application of soil and water conservation interventions. Also, the children who used to be timber carriers are now able to go to school, and the men spend more time with their families than before

Institutional attitudes towards CFM

The process has been directly facilitated through NU and not NFA. As a result many CBOs believe that CFM is a NU activity and when PEMA or PPN goes, the local partners will stop participating. This is evidenced by the fact that all the time, the people address themselves to the Projects Management and not the NFA which is their CFM agreement partner. However, the initial drive by NU was necessary because a neutral facilitator was needed since the NFA had a poor image among the communities right from the beginning. NFA needs to take advantage of the project to improve its image among the local people.

NFA (especially at forest-level) believes that community sensitisation associated with CFM has been very helpful in forging a common understanding of the issues involved in good forest management. However the field staff believed that CFM was not treated with the importance it deserves at the NFA headquarter, especially during budgeting.

Food security

The Project does not expressly focus on improving the food security of the FACs. However, the increased involvement of the FACs in crop production, livelihood interventions and other income generating activities was contributing to enhanced food security.

3.4.2 Economic impacts

The livelihood interventions have had the effect of turning around the attitudes so that people are abandoning the forest and getting more involved in self-help investments like vegetable growing, mushroom growing, and planting own tree seedlings for planting family woodlots. Because of the need for investment capital the communities have organized themselves to start Savings and Credit Schemes (SACCOs) from which they can borrow and return the funds with a small interest. This initiative helps them to pool resources for development. Some CBOs like RPTPA have attracted funding from NAADS to support other income-generating enterprises and other groups such as Mwongera have started a community Bank. Through NatureUganda, six groups in Echuya and KK landscapes have accessed seed funding to increase capital in the SACCOs.

The project interventions themselves have established (in some cases individuals sold products such as passion fruits, mushrooms, potatoes, bamboos, pigs, wine, etc). Whereas it is still too early to assess the impact of the income generating activities, however, as family projects continue to mature and the members are selling various products, it is likely that these activities will boost household incomes, improve food security and improved livelihoods at household level. In Echuya where the project interventions started earlier, there are records and evidence of financial benefits trickling to the communities. For instance, many people who had embraced growing of bamboo had started earning some income. It was also noted that whereas the green bamboo from the FR costs about UGX 300 per stem, those on private lands are going for UGX 600, and this is stirring a lot of interest among the people to grow bamboo.

Some challenges related to the implementation of the livelihood activities were however experienced. Some benefits have reached very few people in the CBOs, let alone complete parishes. For example only about 60 pigs have been distributed among 1040 members of RPTPA. In some cases, few tree seedlings were distributed to members especially in KK landscape. Such meagre interventions hardly create visible impacts on family incomes, and hence the FACs pleaded the Project for more supplies.

In the focus group discussion in Mwongyera Parish, it was noted that the engagement of men in enterprises on-farm has led to an increase in agricultural production, especially bananas, owing to the increased labour force (people who have left the timber cutting related businesses), and the soil and water conservation interventions. The proceeds from the sale of bananas are now used for paying fees for children who formerly used to be the main carriers of timber which was cut by the men before the initiation of CFM in the area.

One woman in Buzenga, who confessed to have been one of the main timber dealers with a big store in the area then, testified that the forest staff used to get bribes from them and turn around to arrest them once the timber was in the store, and this made for continuous losses. But now, from the interventions of PEMA Project and NFA, especially in soil and water conservation and the savings and credit arrangements established, she earns “clean money” and has developed her family more than when she was dealing in timber

3.4.3 Environmental Impacts

Forest restoration

The joint patrols have reduced illegal timber harvesting and charcoal burning considerably. As a result, the formerly degraded areas (especially charcoal burning and millet growing sites) are successfully regenerating naturally, to the extent that when NFA carried out regeneration assessment with the aim of enrichment planting, it was found that natural regeneration was sufficient and therefore, no planting was necessary. In Kanywambogo and Buzenga Parishes, it was reported that most of the paths used by illegal timber had closed.

However, the project had been implemented for only four years, and this is too short for the forest cover to be restored to near the original state. But it does indicate that the forest restoration campaign was effective in getting the local people to appreciate the importance of effective forest protection.

Forest/Tree Cover outside the FR

The projects has promoted soil and water conservation practices, including planting of agroforestry trees. Whereas it is yet too early to realize the impact, the trees grown under agroforestry system are likely to increase

the forest cover of the area. In addition, the soil and water conservation structures are likely to improve soil fertility and productivity of the land for increased production of crops. In Echuya and KK landscapes woodlots were set by households that participated in the project and there is already evidence that offtake because of firewood has reduced in areas where CFM has been implemented.

Sustainability

In terms of sustainability, focus group discussions and key informants indicated that when NU goes, sustainability of the people's commitment was uncertain because there was very little input on the side of Government. The same fears were also voiced by NFA staff.



Established nursery for community wood lots

4 LESSONS LEARNT, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 LESSONS LEARNT

- i. Establishing robust community-based institutions (CBOs) is a real necessity for successful development of CFM. The institutions are easy to deal with, and they tend to attract funding from outside the CFM partnership because they are people oriented, and there is a formal organisation to work with.
- ii. Granting legal rights is a strong incentive for forest dependent communities to win their commitment for sustainable forest management (SFM). The legal right issuance is a motivation to local communities to be engaged in conserving forests even when they are degraded forestlands with no ready-to- harvest products.
- iii. Effective and successful livelihood support from complementary natural resources related interventions constitutes a good entry point and vehicle for building trust. It can also be used as an incentive to attract community members to CFM, and creates opportunities to offer frequent interaction between NGOs, government and local community. The gains in terms of cash and otherwise from the complementary livelihood strategies allows members of CBOs to be less dependent on the forest and to allow forests to restore. This is particularly important as parts of the forest allocated for CFM are often degraded and are unable to provide sufficient short-term subsistence and cash needs to the members of CBO;
- iv. Promoting alternative livelihood strategies allows forest aggradations and encourages CBOs to continue with CFM processes, and to build their capacity and skills in becoming strong partners in SFM;
- v. Diversification of livelihoods also contributes to food security, including better nutrition, and improved health. It also allows the community to analyze the complex interrelationships between ecosystem components, livelihood systems and to appreciate the need for integrated natural resource management. Most of the livelihood interventions are agricultural. Sustainable operations of these livelihood activities are basically supported by healthy forest ecosystems not only by inputs. For instance, unless water resources are available, which in most cases are flowing from the forest ecosystem, sustainable rainfall is unthinkable. Intensification of agricultural production through the complementary intervention on already owned land would curb the horizontal expansion, which has been the case in the parishes where the project has been operating;
- vi. Building the capacity of all stakeholders in CFM partnership is an important pre-requisite for fruitful understanding of CFM principles and practices, meaningful negotiations of the fruitful implementation. All stakeholders must be clear about the relationships, responsibilities, rights and returns (benefits). The process of negotiating the CFM agreements provided an added opportunity for the CBOs to understand the CFM process better and learn more about the intricate issues involved in conservation of biodiversity.
- vii. CFM is best initiated by a third party (e.g. an NGO) but the process should be progressively handed over to the two principal parties, with the third party remaining on the side lines to smooth out difficult issues that arise from time to time.
- viii. The wavering nature of NFA's operational approaches towards CFM makes it difficult for the local partners to trust that the CFM agreement is sufficient to safeguard their investments in certain activities like tree growing in the FR. Neither does the NFA fully trust the local people to use the FR land and resources without close supervision. The gap in mutual trust is still big, but it will continue narrowing as NFA progressively fulfils its obligations under CFM plan.

- ix. The CFM processes offer an opportunity for sensitization of the local communities and open dialogue between the communities and the responsible body. Engagement of local people in a CFM process reduces conflicts between the CFM communities and the body responsible for forest management. During the CFM agreement negotiation process, it is important to anticipate issues that may lead to conflicts in future, and get into sufficient detail with a view to nipping them in the bud. The CFM negotiation process should not be stretched for too long because interest on both sides tends to wane. However, making it too short and hurried also tends to limit internalization of the issues involved by the partners. For the CFM negotiation process to be meaningful to the local communities over the long term, there is need to equip the CBOs with negotiation skills. Then they will be able to re-negotiate the agreements when the reviews come up because by this time, the projects supporting the CFM process may have closed. An external facilitator (third party) is necessary to improve the pace and quality of negotiations.
- x. Commitment to the nature and type of benefits shared is important in fostering trust among the local partner in order to become effective partners in implementing CFM. The biggest problem in the CFM partnership is the failure to develop formal benefit sharing mechanisms. The mechanisms are particularly needed in the case of sharing proceeds from sale of illegal timber impounded through joint FR patrols. Continued procrastination by NFA in allowing some degree of access for timber harvesting is making the people restless, with possibilities of young people reverting to their old illegal activities.
- xi. The support to livelihood activities provided through facilitating interventions, such as that of NU, is usually very limited but catalytic. It tends to spread too thinly on the ground. The approach creates a sense of inadequate achievement among those who receive one or two items, and disappointment among those who do not get anything, and yet they belong to the same CBO. This is the case in most of the CBOs involved in this study.
- xii. Non-forest income-generating activities (e.g. piggery) do not have a direct forest conservation link (except in cases where the beneficiaries were formerly engaged in hunting in the FR), and may not necessarily guarantee sustainable community participation in CFM. Injection of funds into activities that are not seen as forest-related (e.g. growing tea plantlets for sale at Rwajere) can generate enthusiasm for CFM but it does not necessarily mean that the CBO members will remain committed to CFM. All focus groups indicated that tree growing alone would not keep the CBOs alive. However, these activities help to reduce the pressure on the FRs more so if they are of a commercial scale and are evenly distributed among the CBO members
- xiii. For CFM to get rooted into the normal business of forest management and conservation, it is important that NFA staff appreciate it as an important activity, both at the field and top management levels. Divided loyalties to CFM by the NFA superstructure create a sense of frustration among the forest-level staff, and undermine community trust in the implementation of CFM. On the other hand, NFA transfers CFM-wise staff without careful consideration of the qualities of those being brought in to replace them. This results in lack of continuity and sustainability.
- xiv. Development and implementation of CFM is a long process, and requires deliberate investment in terms of funding and staff development. Initial investment would have to be done by the NFA and/or its institutional partners (e.g. NGOs). This then tends to attract investments from other organisations which are interested in working with organised communities that are involved in forest management and tree growing.
- xv. Honest and dedicated leadership of the participating organizations is key to meaningful CFM partnership. In CBOs where leadership had vested interests, there was not much to show on the ground, while in those CBOs with honest and dedicated leadership, progress is noticeable. A problem in leadership at the helm of NFA was also the main reason why CFM had not received the support that is commensurate with the importance accorded to it in the policy and law.

4.2 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. Successful implementation of CFM partnership contributes enormously towards responsible management of the forest resources. The process and practice of CFM in Kasyoha Kitomi and Echuya have demonstrated change of attitude among the principal partners, forged cordial relationships among the partners, and reduced forest crime. CFM interventions have also enhanced understanding of alternative options for household income and livelihoods and reduced over dependence of the FACs on sourcing forest products from the forest reserve. The fruits of CFM as enjoyed by the FACs have so far been admired by other villages where there is no CFM arrangement, some of whom have requested for the process to be initiated in their own villages as well.

Recommendation: *NFA should promote and invest in CFM as a tool for sustainable forest management. NFA should also take deliberate effort to train her staff in CFM policy and practices to ensure proper and appropriate implementation of CFM*

- ii. (ii) The implementation of CFM is highly dependent on the establishment of community based organizations within the CFM area. The CBOs are recognized by the communities themselves as well as the responsible body, and act as the focal point for community mobilization, negotiations of the CFM agreement and development and implementation of the CFM plan. The capacity of the CBOs to drive the CFM process will depend on the knowledge and skills of the members in the areas of CFM related policy and laws and institutional arrangements. The members should also have good leadership and negotiation skills, among others. For best performance, an independent external facilitator is necessary to guide the FACs to build the case for CBOs and build their capacity for effective CFM partnerships.

Recommendations: *NFA should work with credible Non-government organizations (NGOs) to establish and build the capacity of the CBOs for purposes of entering partnership arrangements between NFA and the FACs. Such NGOs should have experience in community based forest conservation and management.*

- iii. (iii) Incentives such as access to forest products and land for tree planting and direct financial benefits are important in motivating the local communities. Some of the initiatives may be within the forest reserve, while other benefits may be anchored outside. However, it is important that such incentives should be clearly defined and understood by all parties, who in turn should be committed to their obligations to ensure realization of incentives to the beneficiaries. Failure or lack of clarity in the flow of the incentives can break trust among the parties and increase conflicts.

Recommendation: *The CFM negotiation process between the communities and NFA must provide for sufficient discussions and adequate details to ensure clarity and mitigate conflicts before signing the CFM agreement.*

- iv. (iv) The nine-step CFM process takes a long period of time before eventually the parties arrive at a CFM agreement and its subsequent implementation. This is mainly because it takes some time for both the communities and NFA staff to understand, assimilate and commit themselves to CFM principles and practices. There are also variations within the communities, with some moving faster than others. However, stretching the CFM negotiation for too long (more than one year) does not necessarily increase the attitude of process ownership exponentially. Realistic ownership comes with implementation.

Recommendation: *NFA has to be flexible on the time taken to sign agreement. It is important that implementation of some practical aspects of CFM start before signing the CFM agreement, or even before legally registering the CBO. This tends to build confidence among both partners. In a project intervention set-up, it is advisable that a shorter segment of the process (e.g. one year in a 3-year project) is spent on the process before signing the agreement to allow time for a longer period of implementation and review. This will set more realistic parameters of implementation of CFM activities and create confidence among the partners*

- v. (v) Although CFM is seen as contributing a lot towards sustainable forest management (SFM), it has not yet been demonstrably accepted as a normal forest management practice by both partners. The partners view CFM as a project that will come to a close, especially because the CFM development process was championed by an NGO. This attitude is augmented by the fact that over the years of implementing the PEMA or PPN Projects, NFA has not invested much in CFM in the same area or other forest reserves. Even the Katanda CFM agreement negotiated through a process initiated by NFA with funding from Prime West could not be signed. The NFA field staff had to ride on the back of the CFM agreements initiated by NU to have the agreement signed.

Recommendation: *The independent NGO (Nature Uganda) should continue building the capacity of the FACs so that they are in position to undertake CFM processes and lobby and advocate for their rights as well as promote community-based forest management initiative. Where possible NFA should build its capacity with support from partners so as to be a dependable partners in CFM and in SFM.*

Recommendation: *NFA should marshal resources to promote community initiatives to contribute to sustainable forest management, and increasingly be seen as a leader in implementing the policy on collaborative forest management. the policy on collaborative forest management.*



ANNEX 1: ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, RIGHTS AND BENEFITS OF STAKE HOLDERS IN KANYWAMBOGO ENVIRONMENTAL AND DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION (KEDA)

Stakeholder	Roles	Rights	Benefits
Local community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in protection against illegalities. • Participate in fighting wild fires. • Provide information about illegal activities. • Negotiate and implement CFM plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extract forest resources under license. • Implement forest act and other rules and regulations • Implement CFM plan • Participate in forest management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to forest resources. • Livelihoods improved through implementation of income generating projects. • Ecological benefits from a well conserved forest • Improved relationship with NFA • Popularity and networks • Institutional development
NFA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To manage the forest • Monitor and guide the Implementation of CFM plan. • Support implementation of projects such as bee keeping, tree planting, craft making etc. • Supervise and monitor resource extraction. • Community sensitization • Revenue collection and giving out of contracts. • Biodiversity threat reduction, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the CFM plan. • Manage, protect and conserve the forest. • Allow community access to the forest under license • Carry out inventory to ascertain the amounts of forest resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable Forest conservation • Livelihood of local people improved. • Improved relations • Reversed environmental hazards.
NGO's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen CFM groups • Support implementation of livelihood improvement enterprises • Community sensitization. • Capacity building of communities in livelihood improvement options. • Lobbying and advocacy • Raise awareness about CFM and facilitate CFM process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement CFM • Access information about the forest status and management. • Lobby and advocate for fair policies in forest management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced pressure on forest-biodiversity through conservation. • Improved livelihood of community • Recognition and prestige. • Influence • Empowered communities in Forest Management and practice.
Local Government (LG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in proper management and maintenance of the forest • Support forestry programmes in Kicuzi sub county • Lobby for construction of technical schools, roads and dispensaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the CFM plan. • Manage, protect and conserve the forest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable Forest conservation • Livelihood of local people improved.



About *Nature Uganda*

NatureUganda, the East Africa Natural History Society (EANHS) in Uganda, is a membership, research and conservation organization established to undertake conservation actions using scientifically proven methods for the benefit of the people and nature. It is the oldest membership organisation in Uganda, having been founded (as EANHS) in 1909 as a scientific organization with the primary aim of documenting the diversity of wildlife in East Africa.

By the mid-1990s, EANHS-Uganda had attracted many members and broadened the scope of activities in scientific research, conservation action, public awareness raising and advocacy. At this point it was realized that a formal registration within Uganda would be necessary as a response to the increasing activities. The Society was therefore registered as a non-profit, independent national organization in 1995 with the operational name of NatureUganda – The East Africa Natural History Society. Her sister in Kenya is NatureKenya – The East Africa Natural History Society.

NatureUganda has been the national Partner of BirdLife International since 1995, and the society's programmes are based on the four well-established pillars of BirdLife global strategy, namely Species, Sites, Habitats and People.

NatureUganda's mission is promoting the understanding, appreciation and conservation of nature. In pursuing its mission NatureUganda strives to:

- Create a nature-friendly public
- Enhance knowledge of Uganda's natural history
- Advocate for policies favorable to the environment
- Take action to conserve priority species, sites and habitats.

NatureUganda has its secretariat in Kampala- Naguru, and services its 2,000 members and supporters through branches in Gulu, Mbale, Busitema and Mbarara.

Inspired by the original purpose of the East African Natural History Society to document natural history of East Africa, NatureUganda's work is hinged on scientific information generated through well laid down research and monitoring programmes. Considering that 90% of Uganda's GDP is derived from Natural Resources (tourism, forestry, fisheries), biodiversity conservation is a priority for the country. NatureUganda supports biodiversity protection and economic development through its research, monitoring and conservation programme, which provides quality scientific information mainly using birds as indicators to support local and national governments to make informed decisions. The support is provided through established partnerships with government agencies including Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), National Forestry Authority (NFA), National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), Wetlands Management Department (WMD).

This report of "Implementing Collaborative Forest Management in Uganda; Lessons Learnt from Kasyoha Kitomi and Echuya Central Forest Reserve" is a culmination of this collaboration effort to document the status of biodiversity in Uganda.

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