

*Integrating Livelihoods and Conservation  
People Partner with Nature for Sustainable Living  
Program 2015-2017*



## **Final Report**

1<sup>st</sup> January 2015-31<sup>st</sup> March 2018

*NatureUganda*

*Integrating Livelihoods and Conservation  
People Partner with Nature for Sustainable Living*

**Table of Contents**

List of Abbreviations .....	3
1. Summary of Phase I.....	5
2. The Partner .....	10
3. Project Implementation .....	11
4. Assessment of changes and results .....	26
5. Financial issues.....	31
6. Materials .....	31
7. Key learning and considerations for the next phase/sustainability .....	32
8. ANNEXES .....	34

*Integrating Livelihoods and Conservation  
People Partner with Nature for Sustainable Living*

**List of Abbreviations**

BECLA	Bufundi Echuya Conservation and Livelihood Improvement Association
BLI	BirdLife International
BMCT	Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Trust
BPM	Bird Population monitoring
BTTEA	Butoha Twetungure Turinde Ebyobuhangwa Association
BUECA	Buzenga Environmental Conservation Association
BUNETCOFA	Bushenyi Network of Collaborative Forest Association
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBO	Community-based Organisation
CFM	Collaborative Forest Management
CFR	Central Forest Reserve
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DDPS	District Development Plans
DLG	District Local Government
DOF	Dansk OrnitologiskForening/ BirdLife Denmark
ECFR	Echuya Central Forest Reserve
ENETCOFA	Echuya Network of Collaborative Forest Association
FACS	Forest Adjacent Communities
FWGNWC	Forest Working Group Network Western Chapter
IBA	Important Bird Area/ Important Bird and Biodiversity Area
ICOB	Integrated Community-Based Initiatives
IGAs	Income Generating Activities
JFP	Joint Forest Patrols
KADECA	Kanaba Development and Echuya Forest Conservation Association
KAPs	Knowledge Attitude Practices
KIHEFO	Kigezi Health Care Foundation
KIWOCEDU	Kigezi Initiative for Women and Children Empowerment and Development-Uganda
KK	Kasyoha Kitomi
LADA	Literacy Action and Development Agency
LbM	Locally-based Monitoring
LG	Local Government
MECDA	Muko Echuya Conservation and Development Association
MEFCPEA	Murora Echuya Forest Conservation and Poverty Eradication Association
MoUs	Memorandum of Understanding
MPECA	Mwongera Parish Environmental Conservation Association
MTRC-	Mushroom Training and Resource Centre
NBSAPs	National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans
NECA	Ndangaro Environment and Conservation Association
NEMA	National Environment Management Authority
NFA	National Forestry Authority

*Integrating Livelihoods and Conservation  
People Partner with Nature for Sustainable Living*

NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NRM	Natural Resources Management
NU	NatureUganda
OVCs	Orphan and Vulnerable Children
PA	Parish Assistant
PEMA	Participatory Environment Management Project
PMC	Programme Management Committee
PPN	People Partner with Nature (This Programme)
RDC	Regional District Commander
SACCO	Savings and Credit Cooperative
SSGs	Site Support Groups
U-PCLG	Uganda Poverty and Conservation Learning Group
UWA	Uganda Wildlife Authority
VOK	Voice of Kigezi
VSLAs	Village Savings and Loan Associations
WED	World Environmental Day

## *Integrating Livelihoods and Conservation People Partner with Nature for Sustainable Living*

### **1. Summary of Phase I**

***Provide overall analysis (not details of activities) of the first phase of the programme, including your assessment of the Programme set up, steering, DOF's role (management, coordination, supervision), your overall success and failures in implementation a.o.***

The first phase of the programme was a learning process where we were changing the implementation strategy from a project to a programme focus. There was a lot of time spent in baseline assessments, planning and getting used to the coordination system. Whereas this slow start led to delays in starting direct implementation of the programme, it was nonetheless a good learning process especially through the inception and planning processes.

The coordination by DOF was excellent but was often strained by the delayed submission of reports or updates from partners. Partly the reason for this was the frequent detailed reporting which took a lot of time amidst the implementation which was often under fast tracking but also the long chain of reporting from field to regional office to national offices to the coordination body (DOF). A template of reporting capturing main issues and activities could minimise this problem.

Our main success was the positive engagement and response from both NFA and CFMs in project implementation. In particular, the joint monitoring signalled sustainability of the project interventions as well as conservation efforts supported by the livelihood projects towards reducing the dependence of communities on forest resources. The increased awareness of communities on soil and water conservation was another significant success geared toward restoration of landscapes for increased productivity. The increase in domestication of Bamboo by households and positive response from communities towards this activity also indicated interest in decoupling of communities from the forest. Following the land slides that happened in one of the focal sites in Echuya that led to the death of one of the CFM leaders, the communities appreciated the need to conserve forests, stabilise the soils, reduce runoff and conserve other resources in the landscape.

The main challenges resulted from two areas. Firstly there were changes of senior technical staff at implementation level both from NatureUganda and NFA which affected the momentum of the project at field level. Secondly there was change in policy at NFA level. For example approval of management plan and the CFM plans were made from the solicitor general, which delayed some of the implementation of activities that were based on those plans. Nonetheless the approved documents would have a stronger support from government after they are signed.

***Describe the main contacts established in Phase I and the key achievements and learning from your advocacy efforts?***

Strong relations were built between Governments (LGs) at central, district and sub-county levels, local communities especially through CFM groups, NFA, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) including Community-based Organisations (CBOs) and Non-government Organisations (NGOs) operating in the landscape. These are all key to programme implementation and sustainability.

In partnership with NFA, a number of conservation activities were successfully implemented both within and outside the central forest reserves, which are also Important Bird Areas (IBAs), including but not limited to forest protection through patrols, Locally-based Monitoring (LbM) of forest resources, boundary maintenance, forest fire protection and the establishment of the bamboo nursery at Echuya, which was later followed by the establishment of two bamboo mother gardens in Echuya and Muko forest reserves.

At Kasyoha Kitomi (KK) Central Forest Reserve (CFR) and IBA, a liaison office to coordinate programme implementation was set up and is located at the NFA South West Range, Kasyoha-Kitomi Sector, Ndekye

## *Integrating Livelihoods and Conservation People Partner with Nature for Sustainable Living*

beat, Rubirizi town council. In addition to this, NFA also gave NatureUganda free space for the field office at Echuya central forest reserve and IBA, to be used by the Parish Assistant (PA)-Echuya and also as contact offices for all CFM groups at ECFR. This increased the visibility of NU and CFM groups.

Joint technical back stopping and monitoring of PPN interventions and conservation status of ECFR and KK by LG team, NFA, NU and CFM leaderships. This resulted into DLGs incorporating some of the forest conservation and livelihood improvement activities for FACs into their district development plans for both technical and material support. At KK, the LG constructed a community access road through MPECA plantation in KK forest for easy marketing of the communities' agricultural products as well as improving forest monitoring.

Improved forest management through joint forest protection and management decisions. For instance, from the joint forest patrols at KK, partners identified and stopped forest encroachment in 3 acres which had been cleared in BTTEA CFM area and Eucalyptus planted while there was timber harvesting in MPECA CFM area contrary to the conservation objectives. This was confirmed by a joint forest monitoring team involving LG team and CFM leaders who conducted a fact finding forest visit in the area. The District leaders took up the encroachment case and worked with the NFA headquarters and as a result, the NFA field staff who were responsible for supervising this area were all removed and others brought in. This was because they were not responding to the community concerns over forest encroachment. This event has completely checked the NFA staff and community habits of degrading the forest and has also actively inspired communities in forest protection after realizing that they own power of forest conservation and protection compared to the former days where they could sit and watch NFA and other illegal doers degrade the forest. This also resulted into improved compliance to CFM agreements and forest regulations.

Harmonised partnership arrangements with clearly spelt out roles and responsibilities of each partner. This was a result of consistent joint planning and information sharing platforms, which further contributed to reduced duplication of activities while ensuring increased benefits especially for the communities.

Increased recognition of communities by LGS and CSOs. For examples, CFM groups were given seats on all sub-county planning councils, where they participated and presented their reports and work plans for integration into sub-county and district development plans for supplementary support and sustainability.

Increased sense of ownership of KK and ECFR by all stakeholders. Since these have appreciated the conservation values of these sites and fully understand their 4 Rs (roles, responsibilities, rights and returns). This also resulted into a positive trend of reducing conflicts over forest protection. NFA staff have also reduced their involvement in forest related illegal activities and encroachment in fear of being held accountable and at worst lose their jobs because of the presence of CFM members who are now more empowered for forest protection.

In partnership with Kigezi HealthCare Foundation (KIHEFO) to address cross cutting issues like health, HIV and AIDs in overall programme interventions, communities around ECFR were provided with free HIV/AIDS health care support and free medical camps.

Two stakeholder's workshops for Rubirizi and Rubanda/Kisoro Districts on improving biodiversity/environmental conservation initiatives were held. Lessons, challenges and opportunities were shared and collective efforts for improving biodiversity conservation and including relevant interventions into district development plans were made. Participants included NFA, NU, CFM groups and LGS from the five districts around KK and ECFR

Through NU's partnership with Rubirizi Local Government, Swiss organization was linked to MPECA CFM

## *Integrating Livelihoods and Conservation People Partner with Nature for Sustainable Living*

group and as a result, all the user groups in bee keeping were supported in value addition and marketing. Since then, they have opened a honey shop where processed honey is being sold at reasonable prices.

### ***Describe what you consider the overall key learning from Phase I***

The overall key learning highlighted from phase I will serve as building blocks for phase II. Phase I applied a combined strategy of capacity building, empowerment and support to concrete activities in sustainable forest resource utilization and livelihood options working through CFMs, LGs, NFA, and other relevant institutions in the local villages, and addressing both women and men. This was relevant to building ownership and the capacity in local communities to engage in and benefit from sustainable forest resource use and management to improve livelihoods of both men and women.

#### **Component 1**

The first phase of the program ensured there was improved skills and knowledge in program planning and implementation, improved livelihoods and increased advocacy by stakeholders, which has established strong and well empowered forest patrol teams contributing to the improvement of the ecological integrity of the forests. This has also fostered the ownership and sustainability of conservation efforts at the two sites among leaders and Local communities since they have been fully empowered to independently carry out resource monitoring and advocacy to conserve their sites.

The improved skills and knowledge has created a solid base of service strategic providers, Trainers of Trainees and skilled collaborators. This has increased recognition of NatureUganda's contribution in conservation and community development. The approach has harmonized partnership arrangements under CFM implementation for all stakeholders.

Planning meetings including Skype meetings between field-based staff, NU and DOF presents opportunities for learning and sharing information on implementation and project progress.

We have however learnt that some community members engage in programme activities because they expect something monetary in return and so we need to change this attitude so that they learn to participate because they are conserving their resources and that should be the main drive.

There are many illegal activities due to weak lead agencies and we need to advocate for more law enforcement for BD protection in the programme sites

The community expectations are increasing especially from other groups not included in the project as a result of our success in this programme. We should have planned for this but we didn't so we need to devise means of handling or containing it. For the same reason, we are now receiving more requests for participating in partner events with a hope of them learning from our expertise as exemplified in the events we have organized.

Skills development of legislators and other stakeholders involved in forest protection in mainstreaming conservation issues into the District Development Plans (DDPs) is key to ensuring ownership and sustainability of conservation efforts, and overall achievement of NU programmes objectives.

#### **Component 2**

Implementation of different interventions both hard core and software has had tangible and intangible impacts on the wellbeing of targeted forest adjacent communities, NU staff and other partners.

## *Integrating Livelihoods and Conservation People Partner with Nature for Sustainable Living*

All community livelihoods interventions in project implementation ought to be tagged to conservation outcomes/benefits which require a lot of community commitments. For example all forest adjacent community members implementing IGAs should not be supported if they are not fully paid up members of CFM associations and are not implementing other pertinent interventions such as villages savings and loans groups, agro-forestry, tree planting, beekeeping, soil and water conservation practices on their farmlands

Embracing Climate Smart Agriculture in food production and biodiversity mainstreaming is key to achieving the long term objective of the programme. This is based on the fact that dependence of the local communities on natural resources is likely to be affected by the impacts of climate change on these ecosystems that is threatening the functions and services they provide. Climate change is inevitable and therefore adaptation is essential.

Highland bamboo has a lower establishment rate through cuttings than the *Asper sp* type, so this needs to be considered in future plans of nursery development.

Adoption of integrated landscape management approaches is fundamental to achieving successful agricultural landscapes for both biodiversity conservation and increased production

Participatory approach to habitat management has been considered a better approach to conservation of critical ecosystems and species. This requires that local communities that pose a great challenge to them continuously be involved in planning and conservation efforts.

The community supported financing model helped implementation of agricultural projects, small and medium businesses and improved food security. The program in some areas, initiated and supported community revolving fund. This benefited CFM members by diversifying income options. This has increased employment opportunities resulting into reduced time for forest resource harvesting while reducing pressure on the forest.

However, there are gender challenges especially originating from the patriarchal nature of communities at the two sites which continues to suppress women in actively participating and benefiting from natural resource related projects. Tailored women empowerment programmes should be implemented especially in communities around these conservation sites. Technical and material support to on-going IGAs and adopting farmers is key to scaling them up and for economies of scale and sustainability purposes.

### **Component 3**

Building synergies with like-minded development and conservation partners is crucial in strengthening, scaling up and sustaining programme interventions in a more holistic and integrated approach as has been seen in the partner relationships in this project.

Involving forest adjacent communities in forest conservation through awareness creation events, joint forest patrols and LbM has led to more effective forest protection. There is increased cooperation from CFM members and NFA staff, and increased Local Government support which ensures more sustainability for our programmes.

Empowering local people to realize their rights can provide an enabling environment for meeting community conservation objectives especially in cases where the direct benefits from the conservation efforts are clearly outlined and accepted by the community members. This has been the case in our programme area where communities are allowed to harvest resources sustainably from the forest they jointly conserve with NFA.

Both achievements and challenges can be found in community development and conservation programmes. Solutions to problems will require positive cooperation among stakeholders, thus, conservation projects need

## *Integrating Livelihoods and Conservation People Partner with Nature for Sustainable Living*

a dynamic and innovative approach for purposes of adapting to the realities of local communities.

It is also critical to strengthen community participation through more awareness creation events, capacity building programmes and poverty reduction strategies. Such improvements in design will lead to both improved forest conservation and increased livelihoods for all.

Since CFM initiation in Uganda in 1997, there are only 60 CFM plans/agreements with 60 CFM groups. According to NFA CFM specialist at the Headquarters, she admitted that only those at sites where NU is working are performing well. This indicates lack of capacity among the eligible CFM partners to develop the required quality of CFM agreements and a successful CFM implementation. Thus, there is a need for synthesizing and scaling out current NU's approach to CFM implementation to other areas in Uganda and advocating for uptake of success full approaches and lessons learned learnt.

Community stakeholders in the landscape are willing to collaborate in implementing CFM plans based on a shared vision. However, these need support in areas of capacity development and sometimes financial since most of them like NFA and LGs have insufficient and sometimes not budgets for CFM related activities.

Building on existing local knowledge of communities and already existing organisations was an important aspect of successful programme implementation. There is need for phase II to continue involving and utilizing the different local resource persons/organizations in the planning and implementation of the different livelihood intervention for the benefit of all.

There is an increasing awareness that governments cannot by themselves solve the major ecological problems such as Uganda's dwindling and degrading forest resources. Only through building partnerships with and within a well informed and empowered civil society can this challenge be met.

Continued involvement of different stakeholders in conservation related events and CFM implementation process will enhance their understanding of roles and responsibilities in meeting their obligations in natural resource management and conservation

Implementation of livelihood enhancement interventions has greatly contributed to better forest management through reduction of pressure on forest resources as there is diversification of economic activities and so the survival choices. It is also a good incentive to forest conservation efforts by FACs

Laws/policies related to natural resource management like soil and water conservation become more important if they are effectively implemented than if they are left well developed on paper. This needs support especially from different Government mandated institutions and communities

Tailored empowerment programmes for community vulnerable groups like women, the poor, youths and indigenous groups should be implemented especially in communities around conservation sites for equitable benefits.

The indigenous group still needs integration approaches and long term programmes in conservation and livelihood improvement activities if they are to reach a fully self-supporting and sustaining level because they still face challenges different from those of other tribes.

*Integrating Livelihoods and Conservation  
People Partner with Nature for Sustainable Living*

**2. The Partner**

***Describe if any new capacities have been developed in your organisation? What is the key learning and how has the capacity of a) the organisation, and or b) individual staff been built? How will raised capacity influence your future work?***

Four NatureUganda staff participated in the training in communications and social media, held in Denmark at the end of August. This enhanced the partner's skills and knowledge in communication and advocacy related dimensions and as a result, a communication Plan for PPN and NatureUganda in general has been produced and operationalised.

Three PPN field staff (participated in Conservation agreements training workshop held in Kabale under NU Cranes Monitoring programme and learned how to develop and implement conservation agreements. As a result, the MoUs for self help groups were improved using the acquired knowledge.

Two NU staff participated in four days CBD Biodiversity Mainstreaming Training Workshop from 6th to 9th November 2017, in Nairobi Kenya. The training workshop was organized by BirdLife International and designed for conservation practitioners with limited experience of engaging with Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) policy instruments and processes at the national or international levels in mainstreaming biodiversity issues to sectors that impact natural environments. This enhanced the partner's skills and knowledge in advocacy and biodiversity mainstreaming in conservation and livelihood enhancement projects while engaging different stakeholders.

Eight NU staff participated in a two days training in Mango's health check and Accountability Dialogue Tool, facilitated by a financial team from DOF; Lars and Christian. The skills acquired helped the team in different areas of Programme implementation including, work planning, budgeting and accountability. The capacity built helped greatly in ensuring effective and efficient implementation of NU programmes.

NU's capacity in managing pro-poor gender sensitive participatory NRM projects and to effectively communicate and advocate for uptake of successful livelihood approaches was improved and this supported programme implementation especially in line with proper gender mainstreaming into the programme.

Besides targeted trainings for NU staff, other trainings for programme beneficiaries including community members, CFM leaderships, NFA and LG were done in different areas including governance, lobbying and advocacy, financial management, resource mobilization, communication skills, LbM. e.t.c. NU staff shared their acquired knowledge as facilitators in such trainings.

Staff enhanced hands-on experiences through direct programme implementation, participation in partner workshops related to project management and organisational skills, gender and advocacy. The experience accumulated helped in advocating and lobbying for integration and up scaling of PPN approaches at district and national level.

***Describe any changes that have taken place in your organisation that may have been affected by or affected programme implementation (e.g. change of staff, government regulations etc.)***

There were a few human resource structural changes both at site and the secretariat. The Programme

## *Integrating Livelihoods and Conservation People Partner with Nature for Sustainable Living*

Manager, Mr. Michael Opige; one of NU's long serving staff left NU for further studies and was replaced with Dr. Dianah Nalwanga. In the same way, the membership and communication Officer (Martha Akello) moved on and was replaced by Benon Ssengendo. And similarly, The Programme Officer-Echuya Mr. Isaac Daniel Munaaba newly recruited moved on at the end of January 2018.

### **3. Project Implementation**

*Describe and reflect on relevant context related issues that have influenced on implementation (new policies, elections, climate/weather related issues, new opportunities (for instance invitation to participate in official delegations)*

There was a crucial change in PPN landscape at ECFR and on Kabale side in terms of political boundaries. Government of Uganda created a new district of Rubanda from the former Kabale district. The programme landscape at ECFR formerly in Kabale district is now in the new district of Rubanda. Rubanda had been a county under Kabale district Local Government (LG) Administration. As a result, new partnerships were created with both new political leaders and technical teams in the Rubanda district LG, as key partners to programme implementation.

As part of a weather and climate pattern, there is always a dry season between April to September of every year. This change in weather possibly driven by the general change in the regional climate resulted into increased drought which caused more frequent forest fire occurrences in the area especially in the period July-September, being the peak of the dry season in Uganda. The frequency and intensity of forest fires that happened at ECFR were challenging for NFA, FACs and other conservation partners. The fire threat sparked more damage especially in Muchuya swamp where at least 30 hectares were burnt down dramatically altered the ecosystem raising imbalances in the wildlife. There were also other four fire occurrences in different parts of ECFR in KADECA and BECLA CFM areas, where a total of approx 21 hectares were burnt. However, by close of the phase, the burnt areas had already regenerated naturally.

In KK, there were two fire incidences in February 2017 in MPECA Eucalyptus plantation, found in Katerera block of KK CFR. However, both fires were put off by the FACs. An estimate of 100 acres was burnt. The burnt trees were later cut down and replanted immediately. This plantation is Under the CFM guidelines, regulations and mutual arrangements between the parties (NFA and MPECA CFM group). This agreement was made during NU-PEMA II project where organized CFM groups were allocated part of the degraded forest area for plantation establishment as one way of forest restoration while integrating community livelihoods improvement.

In 2017, Following the dry season, heavy rains started in mid-September and these caused intensive soil erosion, floods and landslides that washed away gardens and destroyed Livestock and other property and houses as well as claiming human lives.

*Describe how stakeholders (target groups) have been involved in the intervention and how they have responded to involvement and benefits*

Joint planning meetings were successfully done with different partners including NFA, LG both at sub county and district levels for proper planning, coordination and implementation for different activities in a more beneficial and sustainable manner. This increases their ownership of the programme and provision of supplementary support to both NU and community beneficiaries.

## *Integrating Livelihoods and Conservation People Partner with Nature for Sustainable Living*

Joint forest patrols, LbM and community awareness sensitization meetings were conducted with all key stakeholders (NFA, LG, CFM Members and NU). This increased their appreciation of conservation values and as such, these partners have been advocating for sustainable conservation and wise use of forest resources and other natural resources outside the protected areas.

Stakeholders were involved in relevant trainings in different areas of the programme cycle and other cross cutting issues. This improved their skills in delivering their owned planned projects and also taking an active part in PPN implementation.

Participation and access to information. Different target groups were availed with different information materials both scientific and non-scientific. They were also involved in a number of awareness creation events like world celebrated days, radio talk shows and environmental education materials. Knowledge and information are key to empowering different stakeholders to engage effectively in decision making and to manage risks and increase resilience. Information sharing also created an enabling environment that strategically positioned them to use and further develop their capabilities to apply this information meaningfully in their everyday lives.

The benefits to girls and women of increased access to information are myriad and far-reaching on both individual and collective levels and in many realms – social, economic, and political. These include: *achieved varying degrees of improvement to their desire, skills, and knowledge to utilize information*

### ***Describe and assess the achievement of outputs and the key learning hereof***

#### Output 1.1. Partners' skills, learning and knowledge sharing facilitated and enhanced

Overall, this output was well achieved. The professional and administrative capacity and experience of NatureUganda was improved through a number of ways including but not limited to participation in PMC meetings during which sharing lessons and experiences were shared; targeted programme trainings in Communication and CBD processes; on job trainings in different areas based on the institution's training needs report, participation in relevant trainings organised for different targeted groups; direct implementation of planned activities and site based implementation activities.

As a result, Nature Uganda on many occasions was given awards of recognition as one of the best performing organizations contributing to conservation and community development. The conclusion of the external consultant's assessment that DOF and partners had sufficient experience and capacity also confirms this achievement.

#### Output 1.2. Program partners increasingly engage in advocacy for local involvement in biodiversity conservation.

Based on information from various baseline studies conducted, an institutional advocacy and communication plan was developed and operationalised.

The National REDD+ Technical Committee through the Social and Environment Strategic Assessments (SESA) Task Force held meetings during this phase I and the main business being development of the National REDD+ strategy for Uganda. As a result, NU was adopted as a member of the National Task Force convened by the REDD+ secretariat, Forest Sector Support Department for the development of the REDD+ strategy.

NatureUganda is part of the National Climate Change Policy Committee that is responsible for technical and policy related issues of Climate Change at the Ministry of Water and Environment and has participated in the meetings of this committee.

Two NU staff attended an Africa Business and Biodiversity Forum and Council for Africa Partnership in Ghana and exhibited its work including PPN Program objectives and intended outputs. NatureUganda is also a member of

## *Integrating Livelihoods and Conservation People Partner with Nature for Sustainable Living*

Birdlife Global Council.

NatureUganda being one of the strongest conservation and development organization in the new district of Rubanda was requested to provide a case study on its programmes, achievements and contributions to natural resource conservation and community development in the district. This was incorporated and produced in Rubanda@birth magazine, in the prime pages.

Nature Uganda was invited by relevant government ministries and CSO operating at national and regional levels to participate in different conservation related meetings and workshops, and included Eco-trust, NFA, NEMA, UWA, Ministry of Water and Environment.

NatureUganda as a BLI partner in Uganda developed a case study titled 'Batwa inclusion in institutional development and CFM empowers indigenous decision-making and rights advocacy in Echuya Central Forest Reserve, South Western Uganda'. This was submitted to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of indigenous peoples.

Nature Uganda also successfully advocated for participation of communities (CFM leaders) in local government planning processes of the three districts in the programme landscape. This gave the CFM groups a strategic position to share their achievements and plans with the districts for supplementary support.

NatureUganda was given a platform by Voice of Kigezi (VoK), a local FM Radio station to sponsor morning press reviews on conservation issues as an advocacy tool to promoting sustainable natural resource management practices in the region. This was successfully utilised throughout phase and is still ongoing. For purposes of reaching a wider audience, 19 radio talk shows resulted into enhanced understanding of stakeholders and CFM members on conservation status and ecological values of forests and benefits from CFM. Approximately 2,000,000 people within and outside the programme sites were reached via the radio talk shows.

NatureUganda is the convener of the Uganda Poverty and Conservation Learning Group. The U-PCLG has been strategizing on a number of things including: fund raising for the activity of the Network, discussion on minority groups; a case of Batwa and issues of human-wildlife conflicts

Two stakeholders' workshops for Rubirizi and Kisoro/Rubanda Districts on streamlining Biodiversity issues in district development plans were held. This aimed at lobbying LGs in mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into their development plans for effective implementation of the NBSAPs.

In partnership with Uganda Tourism Board, Uganda Wildlife Authority and other partners, NatureUganda organized the 2017 annual Big Birding Day and this aimed at promoting and advocating for avi-tourism and bird conservation at a national level. This activity continues to make birding one of the top and most lucrative tourism activities in the country.

- Output 1.3. Duty bearers' skills for participatory forest management increased through formal and informal involvement in the Program

NatureUganda convened a meeting of Uganda Network of Community Forest Associations (UNETCOFA) to discuss and share lessons in community participation in forest management

NatureUganda convened 48 joint dialogue meetings between CFM groups, NFA field team, LG teams to discuss and share conservation status of ECFR, progress of CFM implementation and partnership issues including the 4Rs in CFM implementation process, CFM guideline and regulations, policies, laws, rules and regulations, responsibility, roles of different stakeholders

At KK, joint monitoring of PPN interventions and conservation status of KK was done by district leaders, sub county staff, NFA and NU staff. As a result, Rubirizi LG has agreed to support the Eco-tourism project for

## *Integrating Livelihoods and Conservation People Partner with Nature for Sustainable Living*

BTTEA CFM group through both technical and material support, to boost forest protection. The two patrolmen found guilty of engaging in forest encroachment were expelled but investigations in this are still going on. On MPECA side, the LG agreed to incorporate infrastructural developments for FACS into their budget for the next financial year i.e construction of a community access road through MPECA plantation in KK forest. This will contribute a lot to easy marketing of communities' agricultural products, and will also ease forest monitoring.

As part of information sharing and building the capacity of PPN field team in programme planning and implementation, a total of 24 weekly staff meetings and 17 site exchange monthly staff meetings were held at NU field offices. This resulted into harmonized and well-coordinated implementation of planned programme activities.

NU held a total of 36 monthly planning meeting with NFA field staff at ECFR and KK, during which joint work plans on conservation activities both inside and outside CFRs were developed for joint implementation. As a result, integrated work plans with NFA and LG both at KK and ECFR were developed and jointly implemented as part of enhancing partnerships for efficiency and effectiveness in programme implementation

Two public talk shows and one event for "Keep Kabale clean" were conducted by NU in conjunction with security organs and Kabale municipal team. These events, which happened during the NatureUganda's public talk shows provided people particularly the young generation with information, skills and motivation they need to solve environmental problems, and in doing so, to improve the quality of their lives

NU and Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Trust (BMCT) in partnership with Rubanda and Kabale District Local Governments hosted the World Environment Day (WED) regional Celebrations. The celebrations were held from 16th and 17th August, and graced by the Minister of State for Water and Environment, Hon. Kitutu Mary Goretti as the Guest of Honour and attended by about 5,000 from all the programme areas, different stakeholders. The theme of the celebrations was *'Connecting people to Nature'* which is directly in line with the 'People Partner with Nature' programme. A series of events were held including the "Keep Rubanda Clean" activity to exemplify the connection between conservation and health, two radio talk shows on Voice of Kigezi as a public awareness campaign on the theme.

- Output 2.1. Local women, men and children have enhanced skills for sustainable equitable and improved Livelihoods

A comprehensive socio-economic study for the programme areas was produced and this explained the economic contribution of the forest to households in relation to the economic opportunities in the area. The IGA prioritisation for Echuya landscape was completed during the Echuya project time. The prioritised and implemented IGAs will be considered for continued support under phase II to ensure proper implementation, sustainability and replication at the new site-KK. Enterprises monitored included bee keeping, mushroom growing, fruit growing, vegetable growing and wine making.

**Bee keeping:** At Echuya raised a total of 180,757 kgs of honey harvested by the 12 bee keeping groups and sold to realize a total sum of DKK 499,579.

Another eight bee keeping groups at Echuya harvested a total of 2,420 kgs of honey and each kg was sold at UGX 10,000 (DKK 19.76) raising a total of UGX 24,200,000 (DKK 47,826. 087). The money was used by different groups for different purposes but generally used for loaning out to members as a self financing and revolving scheme for group members personal development; Purchasing materials for making more beehives; and also for operational costs of bee keeping groups.

At KK, 3,769 kgs of honey were harvested by three groups. These were sold and realised a total sum of DKK 67,910. MPECA leveraged support from Swiss Contact which has trained the group technically in various skills. The Rubirizi bee-keeping farmers gained skills in bee-hive products processing and marketing and were also supported with an additional 140 honey jars to use in harvesting. This NGO has organised the MPECA bee-keeping group to establish a honey shop for their processed, packed, labeled and well branded honey. By end of phase I, the group had earned DKK 2,471 from their honey shop. MPECA is using the earnings to pay rent for their honey shop,

## *Integrating Livelihoods and Conservation People Partner with Nature for Sustainable Living*

buying more packaging materials and also buying un-refined honey from farmers.

**Mushroom production:** Eleven (11) women mushroom growing groups at ECFR harvested a total of 7,829kgs of fresh mushrooms realizing a total sum of DKK 91,467.

Two Mushroom growing groups of Nyamirima Bakyara Tukwatanise Tukore and Kabagore Twetungure at KK were trained and supported in mushroom growing and marketing. A total of 74 participants including 13 men and 61 females. Nyamirima Bakyara Tukwatanise Tukore managing already harvest 747kg of fresh mushrooms and 82kg were dried. Each kg of fresh mushroom was sold realising a total of DKK 4,783. The dried mushrooms were sold, realising a total of DKK 7,412. The second group of Kabagore harvested 409 kg of fresh mushroom raising a total of DKK 4,043 and 37 kg of dried and earned a total of DKK 5,455.

One adopting group (Nyabubale group) was also supported with 100 mushroom spawns and technical guidance provided. By end of phase 1, the group had harvested a total of 96kg of fresh mushroom, sold each at UGX 5,000= (DKK 949) and harvesting was still going on by all groups

A study visit to Mushroom Training and Resource Center (MTRC) for these new groups both at KK and Echuya was conducted and a total of 21 participants including farmers and NatureUganda field staff. An expert in mushroom growing was facilitated to provide refresher on site technical support to the 8 groups both at KK and Echuya.

Community action planning meetings for adopting mushroom growing groups and individuals around Echuya was done and refresher trainings in mushroom growing done as part of skills development for better enterprises implementation and management and also sustainability purposes. A total of 360 participants attended including 66 males and 294 females.

**Fruit growing:** Fruit growers at ECFR also harvested a total of 1347sacks of passion fruits, realizing a total sum of DKK 750,588. Most of the monies were used by households to meet basic necessities, school fees for school going children, establishing small and medium enterprises, purchase of land and domestic animals and installation of solar panels. At group level, some money was used to buy more land for apiary expansion; invested in credit and saving scheme where members get short term loans for multiple uses.

Refresher training in fruit growers for eight parishes around ECFR was conducted. A total of 443 farmers attended including 213 women and 230 men. This enhanced fruit growers' skills in general management of the passion/tree tomato fruits, and also application of local solutions like organic manure and pesticides to control the local problems of diseases and pests being faced in fruit growing in the region.

**Vegetable growing:** CFM members were involved in growing of range of vegetables including cabbages, carrots, spinach, black night shade, onions and *Amaranthus sp.* These were harvested for both home consumption and sale. For only commercial purpose, only 5 groups were monitored and was established that a total of DKK 121,070 was earned as here summarized: MEFCPEA earned a total of DKK 1,557; Kacerere Multi-Purpose earned a total of DKK 5111; Kashasha organic vegetable growers earned a total of DKK 9,334; Kanaba Twongere Umusaruro earned a total of DKK 102,222 largely from onions, Ikamiro vegetable group earned a total sum of 2,846. However, the total amount earned by all individual farmers and groups was hard to be established.

**Wine making:** At Echuya, a total of 1471 jerrycans (one jerrycan=20 litres) of wine were made by three groups of Kashasha organic vegetable growing, Kacerere Multi-Purpose and Ikamiro vegetable groups, realising DKK 221,265

In KK, one group was trained in banana wine making, and supported with wine making ingredients and materials. 30 jelly cans (a jerrycan=20 litres) were produced, realising a total sum of DKK 118,590. One new adopting group of Ibamba Bakyara Group (IBG) produced 50 jerry cans of wine and were not yet sold; the second adopting new group of Bakyara produced 3 jerry cans of wine still in the young stage and were in the process of producing more. One individual, Mr Wilson, a long time waragi processor from banana deserted it for wine making and had this to say:

## *Integrating Livelihoods and Conservation People Partner with Nature for Sustainable Living*

*'The same amount of bananas I used to make 4 jelly cans of Waragi for 600,000/= each, I now use to make 30 jerrycan of wine worth 6,000,000/= (DKK 11,857.706), while ¾ of the fuel wood I would have used for waragi making is saved. I am now happy that I have adopted a much fuel efficient enterprise which is more lucrative. This will greatly help me to reduce my dependence on the forest for fuel wood. I am committed to spread this gospel so that other waragi making community members are converted" Banana wine is a viable project, environmental friendly and uses less firewood compared to waragi making, which consumes a lot of firewood and contaminates the streams and rivers during its processing,' said one of the entrepreneurs.*

**Piggery:** In KK, three beneficiaries with a total of 13 pigs and 23 piglets were monitored in Butoha Parish. A total of 14 piglets were sold at DKK 67 each realising a total of DKK 938. Most of the monies were used by the households to meet scholastic requirements of their school going children.

**Fish Farming:** One group with 17 members; 15 males and 2 females were trained in fish farming. The group members managed to increase on the Number of ponds from 23 ponds to 30 fish ponds. By the end of the phase, 03 farmers had already harvested a total of 286 fish and earned a total sum of DKK 1,978.26. These farmers used the money largely for construction of more fish ponds, procurement of fingerlings. One farmer, Mr. Banzinyakyire Charles used part of the proceeds to top up school fees for his senior three son and buying dried maize and beans for his produce business. These were then sold in a season when food prices are high earning higher profits.

At KK, a refresher training for three groups in fish farming was conducted, involving 20 fish farmers. This was done by the DNRO-Rubirizi district and the training areas included; establishment of pond sites, pond stocking, feeding, predator control and harvesting to improve pond fish management for purposes of having sufficient fish food and income for livelihoods improvements. The training was concluded with a study visit to successful fish farmers in Bushenyi District.

### **Other skill development done:**

Financial assessment of self-help saving and credit groups around Echuya and KK were done for purposes of establishing their performance status and analyzing different training requirements. Trained MPECA Beekeepers on apiary management, pest and disease control, post harvest handling and benefits of keeping bees, and different honey products. 25 members were trained on Apiary management (6 were female, 19 males).

**Soil and water conservation:** Eight soil and water conservation groups around Echuya continued to participate in maintenance and construction of trenches, terrace stabilization by planting agroforestry species-*calliandra*, *grivillea* and *stallia*. A total of 208 trenches were dug while 342 old ones were re-opened. Controlled soil erosion and landslides continued to contribute greatly to increased agricultural yields at different demo sites.

**Construction and use of energy saving stoves:** Conservation of Echuya CFR has a direct bearing on the needs and healthy of the forest adjacent communities. 168 energy saving stoves were constructed by 158 households. This was facilitated by trainers of trainees who are also part of community members. Locally available and free materials like soil, banana stems, sand, water and grass were used.

A consultancy on the minority Groups and conservation in Uganda spear headed by NatureUganda emanating from the U-PCLG discussions was done to reflect gender and poor and marginalised groups profiles.

In Echuya, revolving fund for four micro-credit community groups supported in earlier NU projects were monitored for purposes of generating good lessons for use in replication of the seed money scheme planned for in the programme. All the four groups were found performing well and had realised good results at both individual and group levels.

## *Integrating Livelihoods and Conservation People Partner with Nature for Sustainable Living*

For example, Kagano Kweyamba group used part of the profit made to purchase a house for use by the group as office/store, bought 6 acres of land where pine woodlots were established. At individual level, members were able to acquire short term loans for implementation of a number of personal projects largely agricultural, paying school fees and looking after their sick family members, and each of the 126 members was able to purchase an acre of land and used it for tree planting.

Kanaba Twongyere Umusaruro SACCO also made a profit which was used for promotion of green initiatives in schools, tree planting for communities, financial training for small groups and promoting farming as a business for sustainable cash flow. At individual levels, members used short loans for educational support of their children and improve their farming projects, from which proceeds have been used for solar panel installation, buying of motor cycles for use in bodaboda business for income generation and tree planting for reduced pressure on forest resources. Members also testified to have experienced improved nutrition, sanitation and hygiene at household level as a result of increased availability of household income.

Based on lessons and best practices by the old groups, NU supported five CFM groups (one at KK and 4 at Echuya) with seed money worth UGX 30,000,000. Prior, this, the leadership for the groups received a training in financial management. Training areas included different elements of financial management, institutional development, record keeping and reporting and resource mobilization. A total 51 (13 Females and 38 Males) participated in this training, including 11 NU staff. By end of this phase I, tangible benefits had been realised in some groups; for example, KADECA group at Echuya was recognised by LG from which it received additional funding of Ugx 2, 500,000.

NatureUganda in partnership with NFA continued to manage the community bamboo nursery at Echuya, currently with a total of 8042 bamboos (photo below and over page). A half of this has grown and ready for transplanting in the next reporting period. It has been planned that mother gardens be established first in order to create source of planting materials to meet the growing demand in future

Key learning is that in addition to NatureUganda's support, all groups developed a self initiated saving and credit scheme where group members meet monthly and contribute money which is being saved both in cash and in kind-By providing a means to safely pool their savings, this approach has helped community members to meet their daily food needs, education, and health care needs and to invest in small and medium businesses for improved livelihoods and poverty reduction.

- Output 2.2. Women have strengthened capacity to equal participation in the Program and benefit equally with Men

NatureUganda reviewed its strategic plan for 2016 – 2020 implementation during a planning meeting. All gender issues were streamlined in the overall strategic plan of NatureUganda. NU's operational manual was also revised and gender related policies improved for the benefit of female staff and for performance improvement purposes.

At site level, two individual CFM plans/agreements at KK were reviewed and specific gender roles and needs integrated just like it was done for Echuya during CFM review process. Areas taken into account included; increased and harmonized forest resource access by women for both domestic and commercial purposes, the 4Rs (Roles, Responsibilities, Rights and Returns) in overall CFM implementation process. For instance, on CFM leadership for all groups, it was agreed with and adopted by CFM members that at least three members out of nine on every leadership committee should be women, a change that increased women participation and benefits in forest management planning processes.

NatureUganda provided both material and technical support to different women initiated and viable projects in areas of modern farming practices, handcraft making, mushroom growing including areas of value addition and marketing.

A total of seven women Groups (adopting groups) with total membership of 316 members were given initial and

## *Integrating Livelihoods and Conservation People Partner with Nature for Sustainable Living*

later refresher on site trainings in mushroom growing and production processes. These had already been trained by the old supported group (working as Trainers of Trainees) in their respective areas of mushroom growing, in addition to self initiated study visits by the groups to mushroom demonstration sites for learning and replication purposes. By the end of the phase I, nine new women groups had adopted the enterprise and already trained by NU supported groups in different areas of mushroom growing.

A number of capacity building trainings, workshops and study visits were held for different CFM groups and in attendance were also women for integration and empowerment reasons. These included areas of governance (leadership, lobbying/advocacy, conflict resolution, group dynamics, fundraising, report writing, work plan development), financial management, resource mobilization, trainings in different viable projects like bee keeping, mushroom growing, fish farming, fruit growing, handcraft making; and the related study visits.

A total of 16 women participated in sub county level local council meetings in their respective sub counties at both KK and Echuya. They ably challenged LG leaders and other CSOs to prioritize gender issues; advance women rights to equal treatment with men including opportunities for political, economic and social empowerment activities. They also advocate for the right to equal participation to benefit from decision making and right to affirmative action. As a result, four women groups around ECFR were forwarded to Rubanda LG and received grants to strengthen their livelihood initiatives under the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme.

15 women were facilitated to participate in World Food Day where an exhibition product from enterprises including vegetable growing, mushroom growing, handcraft making and handcraft making was done. By end of the day, women earned DKK 513,834 from the sale of the exhibition products, in addition to getting marketing links.

Establishment of contacts relevant to women empowerment was successfully done for enhanced skills and benefits for women: Two women groups with members living with HIV/AIDs were organized and linked to KIHEFO for free cervical cancer screening and treatment, ARVs and other health care services; rural women benefited in terms of accessing material and technical support from LADA, and ICOBI in different economic empowerment projects, village saving schemes, Health care (HIV/AIDS) for infected and affected poor women with health and nutrition improvement projects and also providing educational support to their school going and most vulnerable children.

KIWOCEDU-a local CBO operating in the area on women empowerment and gender equality issues in conservation provided leverage support to five women groups, where each groups received 400 packets of mushroom spawn, fruit seedlings and handcraft materials; conducted 'Men for women' sensitization meetings on gender equality issues in conservation and development in partnership with Local leaders, Local Government staff, NFA and NU. Psycho social support was also provided to two women groups with members living with HIV/AIDs.

Nyarushija women group at ECFR was linked to the area members of parliament and were supported with different vegetable seeds including egg plants, cabbages, carrots, onions, beat root and spinach. These were successfully sown at group level and later planted at both group and household levels. These were harvested and a total of DKK 54,945 was realised.

Two groups of Kacerere Women and Kagano women group and one group of BTTEA women drama group at KK were trained and materially supported in handcraft making (jewelry making)-hand bags, ear rings, necklaces and bangles. A total of 152 women were trained. By end of the phase, the three women groups had already raised cumulative total of DKK 16,882, from the sale of different hand craft products made. All groups used part of the earnings to increase on their stock of handcraft making materials and while the balances were saved into their respective saving and credit schemes for loaning out to members. Plans of opening shops for hand craft materials around KK and Echuya were already under way.

With different socio-economic activities supported by NU and other CSOs, women have been empowered to

## *Integrating Livelihoods and Conservation People Partner with Nature for Sustainable Living*

transform their families. For stance, all groups started a saving and credit schemes from where managed to access affordable loans for small business, school fees and buying more hand craft materials for expanding their business. For weekly contribution they give it to one member by use of votes. They use weekly contributions to support their families.

**Members testified that;** *"the group has helped them to learn on how to organise their families in terms of sanitation and hygiene which motivates their husbands to continue allowing them to attend group activities and stabilises their families due to benefits they get from the group (school fees and home equipments) from their monthly and weekly savings. The group has helped members to know how to write due to their adult education class. They testified that, they are no longer using finger tips, they know how to write their Names; the group has changed women characters and increased their self esteem in confidence, hand community stability and equity."*

According to the assessment report on PPN's impact on women empowerment around ECFR and KK conducted by NU (by an external consultant) at the end of the phase I, there were visible benefits from women's participation in programme implementation as reflected in different testimonies:

### **Box2: Testimony - A Pro-community Politician Appreciating the PPN Project empowerment of Echuya Women**

"Nature Uganda's investment in women is more on ground and the impact is tremendous in our homes. For example, my wife is a member Kanaba Twongere Umusaruro group, a subgroup of KADECA. The group received a grant and trainings on financial management from NatureUganda some years back. Women were empowered to know why they should take loans from the group and how they can use the borrowed money to transform their lives.

I was very surprised when my wife of recent borrowed 200,000 UGX. She didn't even tell me when she was going to borrow the money. After getting it, she requested me to give her a piece of land where she grew onions that season using the loan money. I gladly accepted her to use the piece of land. She planted and harvested onions worth 2,800,000 UGX. She deducted all the expenses incurred, paid back the loan to the group and saved profits of 1,600,000. She gave me the money from her profit and we bought a cow which was pregnant and a calf at 1,300,000 UGX. After 5 months, the cow produced and we got a second calf. I gave her back her balance of 300,000 which she saved for her personal use. Now we get cow dung manure which we use for soil fertility and this has increased our crop yield. In our home, we know what food security is.

Women's participation in these groups has really relieved us men from all the donkey work of sustaining the household financially. Last term, I was over joyed when my son who is in senior four was chased from school due to a pending school fees balance of 100,000 UGX. I was not at home. My wife gave him the money immediately and the boy run back to school that very day. When I came back and she told me the good news,.....oooooh!!! Oooooh!!! Oooooh!!!..... I felt the value of a financially empowered wife in a home. Actually to tell you the truth, men who refuse their wives from joining such women's groups are sabotaging their own household development because women's incomes are household incomes. They spend it wisely, unlike most men of these days who spend on unproductive activities especially sports betting and galloping bottles of beer and waragi packed in polythene bags."

***Nizeye Joseph, LCIII Chairperson, Kanaba Sub-county Local Government, Kisoro District***

## *Integrating Livelihoods and Conservation People Partner with Nature for Sustainable Living*

### **Box 5: Testimony: Impact of FAL on the life of Rural Women in Rubirizi District**

Nature Uganda has done a lot of marvelous things in our lives. I for one never knew how to read and write. I never went to school. I was entirely dependent on my husband for everything. When NU came to our district and most especially to our Parish, Butoha, we were trained in IGAs such as beading and kneading table clothes. NU also started to teach those who did not know how to read and write. I joined Nyakihanda FAL class. I learned and after a few months, I could write my name. After a couple of more months, I mastered how to read. My husband became very happy because I became a changed person and turned into a classy woman that he had long desired for in his entire life.

I became more beautiful by wearing necklaces from the beads. As you can see, I look very beautiful and the bag I am wearing right now was made by me. Three years ago, I and my husband wedded. I was signed on my marriage certificate. I felt very proud to be witnessed by many people as I signed on the marriage certificate on my own unlike other women who use thumbprints. The chairperson of our drama group did not attend the church function. After the wedding, I wrote to her a small letter telling her that she missed witnessing me sign on my marriage certificate.

*Ms. Kembabazi Rosemary, Member, Butoha Drama Group, BTTEA, Rubirizi District*

### **Box 6: The Value of Good Nutrition to Expectant Mothers and the Unborn: Batwa speak out**

My name is Vastina Nyirakaromba. I thank Nature Uganda from the bottom of my heart. I got seedlings of tree tomatoes (ubutunda bw'amaraso) and planted them. When I was pregnant with this baby of mine who will soon make two years, I would feel dizzy. However, the dizziness stopped when within a few days when I started eating the tree tomatoes. I give the same to my child and as you can see, he is looking very healthy.

I gave birth to my child (a baby boy) at Kateretere Health Centre III. When I was admitted, I was in strong pain. The nurse left me there along with other expectant mothers. The laboratory assistant told us that he would help us to deliver our babies since he would always observe what the nurses and midwife at the health centre do but warned us that we should not blame him for whatever would go wrong because his job was to test blood samples in the laboratory and not to help pregnant women in child delivery.

I thank God that I delivered my baby very well with the help of the laboratory doctor and deep in my heart, I am convinced that I was able to deliver a healthy baby because I derived the energy from eating the tree tomatoes that were promoted in our community by Nature Uganda. Before I sit down, I want to request Joseph (Nature Uganda Project Assistant) and our two visitors Sarah and Joy to convey our greetings to the Nature Uganda bosses in Kampala and Kabale especially Madame Zeneb to help us with sheep, goats and rabbits to provide organic manure

According to the same report; '80% of women are using energy saving cook stoves with the following advantages: saves firewood; quickens the cooking process (two cooking chambers); Food keeps warm and from school children no longer eat cold food; smoke goes out and keeps the kitchen walls clean; saves time as beans can be cooked over night and morning time put to other use since the cook stoves have the potential to keep a lot of heat; prevention of burns in children because of cook stoves constructed on a raised platform. Attached benefits were explained as husbands are happy since women can foot the children's education without waiting for husbands; peaceful marriages because now husbands can sit near the fire place and discuss while wife is cooking; woodlots help to protect girls from risks of rape since firewood can be got nearer the home; and we get firewood out of our woodlots for sale and buy household basic needs'. Construction and use of energy efficient stoves has helped forest adjacent communities to use 70% less fuel than a three stone stove. The technique is also safer for people; and produces low smoke in the kitchens and to the environment. This will in the long run contribute to mitigation of climate change and its effects.

Part of the money was ploughed into the saving and credit scheme of groups as part of institutional building and group's self-financing mechanism. Members borrow the money for personal developments, and sometimes, the

## *Integrating Livelihoods and Conservation People Partner with Nature for Sustainable Living*

money is borrowed by the group for group investment and business ventures. As a multiplier effect, both individuals and groups are taking different women initiated enterprises with a new trend of men joining women groups for purposes of getting equal benefits.

Key learning: There are gender discrimination related challenges especially originating from the socialisation process and the patriarchal nature of communities at the two sites. As a result, there are still structural discrimination against women in the distribution of income, access to resources and participation in decision making and benefiting from natural resource related projects. Involvement of men as change agents and advocates is very important for women empowerment.

Gender planning and sensitivity are key to recognising gender issues and problems so that they are addressed in programme development, design and incorporated in all aspects of implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

- Output 2.3. Local communities are collaboratively managing forests with government partners and share benefits and responsibilities

A two days workshop for executive leaders of six CFM groups was conducted at Kirigime guest House, Kabale town. Considering that the CFM groups are key beneficiaries of PPN, there is need for formalized partnership arrangements, with clearly spelt out roles and responsibilities of each partner, thus drafting of MoUs between NatureUganda and CFM groups at KK was done through dialogue meetings with each of the two groups

PPN team also participated in a meeting organised by ACCU aimed at sharing information about its project entitled 'Enhancing community participation in monitoring forest and reporting forest and wild life illegal activities, improve government responsiveness to forest and wildlife governance issues as well as strengthen partnership in the sectors' and pledged to support this collaboration, which adds efforts to the PPN programme achievements.

A consultative meeting was held between NFA, Local Governments and BECLA members on conservation of Echuya and more specifically bamboos. As a result, NFA and BECLA members restored a total of 03 hectares of degraded area in BECLA CFM zone at Echuya. A total of 1344 bamboo rhizomes were planted. Bamboos are the main sources of livelihoods for communities around Echuya forest based on the fact that the quantities of forest bamboos have drastically reduced; there is high demand for bamboo domestication on private land and degraded areas of the forest.

Bamboo nursery and establishment of bamboo mother gardens. NatureUganda in partnership with NFA established a community bamboo nursery at Echuya, with a total of 8042 bamboos. An estimate of 75-80% survived and was planted at three mother gardens at Echuya and Muko CFRs. It is anticipated that the established mother gardens will offer reliable and sustainable sources of planting materials in future. Subsequent monitoring of the first round of planted bamboos was good-at Muko site, all the 625 planted bamboos survived while at Echuya, only 16 out of 625 dried up. The surviving bamboos are establishing very well, and already producing new rhizomes. These continued to be maintained through sport weeding and bush clearing. Monitoring of the last batch of planted bamboos was not yet by the time of this report compilation.

Considering that the CFM groups are the key beneficiaries of PPN, there was a need for setting up formalised partnership arrangements, with clearly spelt out roles and responsibilities of each partner. In a bid to achieve this, NatureUganda held consultative meetings with the leadership of four CFM Associations at ECFR and 02 CFM groups at KK on developing and operationalising MOUs.

A series of community meetings and a two days stakeholder's workshop on final review of two existing CFM plans and agreements for MPECA and BTTEA were held. This aimed at facilitating CFM implementing partners have an opportunity to learn from experience and feed back to the improvement of CFM agreements/plans; present and discuss the working documents for review of CFM agreements/plans, and agree on areas for modification; and produce the final version of the revised CFM agreements/plans for implementation by both CFM members and NFA. As a result the revised CFM agreements were approved by NFA for implementation.

## *Integrating Livelihoods and Conservation People Partner with Nature for Sustainable Living*

Joint Forest monitoring by the CFM associations, LG and NFA. The CFM Associations in Echuya carried out a total of 156 joint forest patrols while at KK 74 rounds were done. This continued to ensure that the status or condition of the forest is tracked and illegal activities at the two sites curbed down. Joint Forest Patrols have sustained good working relationship between communities, LGs and NFA resulting into increased compliance to forest conservation guidelines and regulations.

At Echuya, a joint fact-finding forest walk to assess the extent of forest degradation by Rwandese on Echuya was done by a team comprised of NU, NFA, Local leaders and CFM patrol team members. The report was shared with LG leadership of Rubanda and the LCV and RDC agreed to engage their counterparts in Rwanda until a cross border meeting over Rwandese illegal activities in Echuya for purposes of harmoniously addressing this cross border conservation challenge is held.

NFA at Echuya was facilitated to do boundary planting and for this first round, 10 kms were planted with 2000 pine patula and 2000 eucalyptus seedlings.

July- September being a dry season, NFA, LG and CFM agreed to constitute temporary joint fire patrol teams. These played a great role in enhancing community awareness and readiness on forest fire control and also putting off fire in case of any occurrence.

As part of promoting the understanding and conservation of nature, NatureUganda continued to fund morning news hours at Voice of Kigezi during which a number of conservation issues and role of NatureUganda were shared with the public. Three talk shows were held on Voice of Kigezi and aimed at sensitizing people on conservation issues and other cross cutting issues.

Key learning: Continuous sensitization of community members on CFM arrangements and National Forestry and Tree planting Act enhances understanding of conservation regulations while ensuring compliance by the different stakeholders.

Capacity needs assessment of stakeholders needs to be done and tailored trainings done. This will help to ensure their active involvement and participation forest conservation and protection.

The involvement of different stakeholders in conservation related meetings and CFM processes continued to enhance their understanding of roles and responsibilities in meeting their obligations in natural resource management/conservation processes. It also resulted into improved working relationship in regard to conservation activities inside and outside the forests.

Overall achievement: Joint forest monitoring activities and meetings increased stakeholders' appreciation and conservation of forests. As a result, a positive trend of reduced forest illegal activities in areas where NU is working has been noticed. Relationship between LG, NFA and CFM groups were reinforced while a sense of ownership of the forest is emergent. As a good indicator, the neighbouring CFM groups of BUECA and NECA adopted and are carrying out joint forest patrols and submit monthly reports to the key stakeholders (NFA and NU).

### Output 2.4. Monitoring results indicate improved biodiversity and eco-system services

Biodiversity surveys of Echuya and Kasyoha Kitomi were completed and a report produced. The report provided a comprehensive analysis of different forms of life including birds, plants and mammals, as indicators of health of the forest.

An assessment and evaluation of LbM and JFP tools at Echuya was done and the results indicate the relevance of these monitoring tools in strengthening collaboration among the partners but most importantly, their ability to provide information of the health of selected variables in forest conservation. They also indicate the ability of the community to monitor their own resources using simplified methods. The results from these monitoring

## *Integrating Livelihoods and Conservation People Partner with Nature for Sustainable Living*

programmes will inform decision making in the subsequent forest monitoring programmes and information needs.

Two LBM transects at KK and four at Echuya continued to be maintained and operational for forest monitoring purposes. A total of 108 of LbM were conducted by the four CFM Associations at ECFR, which contributed to reduced illegal forest activities because of frequent monitoring and information sharing/networking with the joint forest patrol teams. The forest canopy has improved. There are indications of forest regeneration like wildings identified in both sites. Some variations in flora and fauna elements have been observed with some species reducing in numbers while others increase and this needs to be further assessed.

Twelve rounds of BPM were carried out at the two sites using the BPM framework contributing to the online database for the programme. This information will be used to develop actions focused integrating bird conservation into sustaining people's livelihoods.

- Output 3.1. Program civil society groups have capacity to act as independent democratic organisations for the benefit of their communities

ENETCOFA and BUNETCOFA were re-organised to improve their performance. These groups are spearheading sensitization meetings with CFM groups, encouraging them to conduct joint forest patrols and providing information about the status of the forest. Following this, ENETCOFA and BUNETCOFA successfully registered at regional level with Forest Working Group Network Western Chapter (FWGNWC) and also at national level with Uganda Network for Collaborative Forest Associations. These networks are avenues of CFM groups to have a collective voice in advocating for better conservation practices and a better CFM process at all levels.

CFM leaders of the six CFM groups both at KK and ECFR were trained in constitutional development and amendment. Following this, individual CFM constitutions of six CFM both at Echuya and KK were reviewed democratically and improved/ revised for better leadership, group management, governance and conflict resolution within the groups.

Leadership for all CFM groups was trained in lobbying and advocacy related issues to strengthen capacity of CFM leaders to advocate for better services and CFM rights and for better CFM implementation. This strengthened the groups to actively advocate and lobby LGs and CSOs for recognition, support and participation in sustainable forest management and livelihood improvement activities. By end of the phase, it was locally assessed that over 80% of NFA, local government staff working in the programme area and CFM groups comply with CFM arrangement

Environmental Education for Sustainable Development has been streamlined into School Curriculum for 08 primary schools and development plans for 06 Local Governments around Echuya and KK forests. This has contributed greatly to empowerment of communities' schools with the knowledge, inspiration, and abilities for sustainable use and management of natural resources. Environmental clubs in schools were repositioned to continue spearheading environmental education activities in schools and FACs where they hail for the benefit of all. One primary schools of Chibumba with model EE clubs was supported with costumes for their MDD events as part of environmental education

Training of the four Environmental clubs at ECFR was done by an external facilitator, Mr Abraham Rukanga, the director of Kigezi Kinimba Actors. Based on the theme, each school composed and presented four items and they included a poem, traditional dance, original composition song, speech and a play. During competitions, two external adjudicators worked as final judges for grading schools' performance in different items. Chibumba Primary school emerged the winner. Different stakeholders participated in the final competitions show and they included Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs), District Natural Resource officers, District Education officers, RDCs, Inspector of schools from two districts of Kisoro and Rubanda, pupils, administrators and teachers.

Sport messages, radio talk shows, community sensitization meetings, morning press reviews on local radio stations with conservation messages continued to promote peoples' awareness about ecological values, and the strategies for

## *Integrating Livelihoods and Conservation People Partner with Nature for Sustainable Living*

sustainable conservation including the 4Rs-roles, responsibilities, rights and returns of different stakeholders. More than 1,000,000 people within and outside programme landscape were reached with conservation messages.

By engaging with and strengthening the CFM umbrella organs of ENETCOFA and BUNETCOFA, all CFM groups are provided with tools and mechanisms to participate in equitable decision making about the environment they live in and the forest resources they depend on at local and National levels.

Selected CFM leaders from the 4 CFM associations (BECLA; MECDA; KADECA and MEFCPEA) at Echuya were taken to a learning visit to MPECA in KK landscapes. 21 CFM leaders (17 male and 4 female) participated. Of these, 4 (2 male and 2 female) were from the Batwa Minority group. During the visit, these leaders were able to compare notes with their colleagues from MPECA (Mwongyera Parish Environmental Conservation Association) in regard to management of IGAs as well as Saving and Credit cooperative societies (SACCOs). After the visit, the leaders from Echuya came up with an action plan to strengthen their monitoring and reporting systems for the IGAs as well as strengthening their SACCOs arms in their associations. BUNETCOFA members were also taken to Echuya for a two days study visit and information sharing with the ENETCOFA members in Echuya forest.

As one way of promoting agreed CFM group structures that promote group cohesion and strong leadership, one CFM Association of KADECA was facilitated to conduct a general meeting for election of new executive leadership members. This was after the CFM group members petitioned Kanaba Sub County Local Government over the unsatisfactory performance of their executive committee members especially the Chairperson which resulted into immediate expulsion of the Chairperson. By end of the phase, KADECA had emerged as the best performing group with high level of democracy, innovation and 'whistle Blower' for any illegal activities inside ECFR.

NatureUganda conducted three dialogue meetings with the neighboring CFM groups of Katanda, Buzenga and Ndangaro in order to reduce forest illegal activities and re activate them as they have dormant. The three groups advocated for these sensitization meetings and applied for further support from NU in areas of capacity building, forest management and enterprise development.

- Output 3.2. Civil society networks engage in advocacy for participatory natural resource management and benefit sharing

Improved capacity of BUNETCOFA and ENETCOFA in CFM implementation and engagement in policy advocacy through related trainings, workshops and exposure visits. As a result, CFM groups established contacts with LG, NFA, NU and other Civil Society organizations such as Swiss Contact.

With the Local Government, CFM groups recognized and given a seat to continuously attend council meetings and present their activities to be integrated into Sub County and District Development Plans for financial, technical and moral support. For instance at KK, from the council meetings, BTTEA group is spearheading Eco tourism project, MPECA requested for co-management of Kidubule wetland with LG. As a result, Rubirizi LG handed over Kidubule wetland with an area of 100 acres/40ha and perimeter (3927.5m) to MPECA for better management. So far, its measurements had been taken and Plans for demarcation under way.

Through advocacy and participatory forest management processes, the CFM groups at KK accessed forest land for commercial tree planting in the grasslands inside the forest, in addition, MPECA accessed land for beekeeping which can accommodate over 3000 beehives, while BTTEA was to be supported by LG and NFA in the next financial period for Eco-tourism development inside the forest around transparent Lake (Kamunzuku). By end of the phase, Four BTTEA members had already been trained by Rubirizi LG in tour guiding, and establishment of a trail done at transparent Lake at Kamunzuku inside the forest.

## *Integrating Livelihoods and Conservation People Partner with Nature for Sustainable Living*

The LBM teams and Patrol team members at KK were able to hold NFA accountable for their engagement in illegal timber harvesting. MPECA LbM team confiscated illegal timber where the NFA supervisor was the lead person in this illegal activity. The LbM team members with empowerment from NU field team and Local Government teams notified NFA headquarters and the law enforcement team from NFA law enforcement department based was sent to KK where they spent a week doing forest patrols and fact finding at the site during which other illegal timber, power and hand saws were also confiscated and 12 culprits arrested. NFA and other illegal doers are now more vigilant with the presence of CFM groups, LG and NU as 'forest watch dogs'.

The CFM associations in Echuya CFR through their leaders advocated for a change in the NFA site-based supervisor and plantation manager since they did not comply with CFM arrangements at ECFR. With advocacy of CFM members at ECFR, NFA supervisor and Plantation Manager who consistently deviated from CFM arrangements were transferred and replaced with Mr. Herbert Turyahabwa and Gasana George respectively with good experience in CFM implementation and passion for forest conservation. The same was done by MPECA CFM group and similar human resource changes made and by NFA.

CFM groups at Echuya also advocated for establishment of a source of bamboo planting materials. Following this request, NatureUganda held a joint meeting with NFA and agreed to jointly establish a big bamboo community nursery on behalf of the local communities. NFA pledged their full support for this action.

At local levels, 13 joint radio talk shows with stakeholders (NU, LG, NFA and CFM groups) at voice of Kamwengye in Kamwengye district for KK and on voice of Kigezi for Echuya were held on different forest management related topics and the CFM arrangement for increased public awareness on policy issues and benefits that accrue from the CFM arrangement implementation, forestry regulations and the roles of different stakeholders.

Following cases of illegal forest grazers in the restored area at Echuya which was causing damage to the domesticated bamboos, CFM members and NFA lobbied NatureUganda to sponsor a radio talk show on forest conservation legislations and in particular the complications of culprits. One radio talk on forest conservation emphasizing issues of illegal forest activities and warning culprits at Echuya was done and participants included CFM members, Local Government workers, NFA and NU. As a result, there are reduced incidences of forest degradation activities especially illegal forest grazing, which has allowed the regeneration and recovery of the forest ecology.

Two CFM groups of BECLA and MECDA approached NU offices to seek help on establishing soil and water conservation demo sites as a way of addressing the rampant cases of landslides and erosion in their areas. These were linked to Rubanda LG where they were supported (technically and materially) in establishment of model villages in soil and water conservation in their respective sub counties.

Representatives of CFM groups at KK and Echuya were facilitated to participate in World Environmental day celebrations and World Food Day celebrations, where they made exhibitions of their forest conservation related products. This improved visibility of CFM groups and networks as nodes of sustainable forest management.

### Output 3.3. Civil society is included in governmental decision making processes at decentralized levels

Local communities were empowered to independently carry out reviews of their own plans and input into DDPs. Their position as members of council meetings puts them in a strategic position to actively contribute to the general district plans, ensuring that their needs and plans are considered.

The participation of the CFMs in local council planning processes have strategically positioned the CFM associations to possible opportunities of supplementary support especially for funding and marketing their

## *Integrating Livelihoods and Conservation People Partner with Nature for Sustainable Living*

<p>programmes for the benefit of the whole community.</p> <p>On Kidubule wetland, demarcation was done as a result of CFM participation in the DDP plans, and the natural resource Department is in the process of drafting and sharing a co-management plan for this wetland.</p> <p>Magambo sub county council approved the use of potential areas for Ecotourism around Sub county Head quarters by BTTEA. Magambo Sub-County, Council resolved that the chief should develop Memorandum of Understanding between Magambo S/C and BTTEA.</p> <p>At Echuya, Conservation issues like soil and water conservation and forest monitoring were incorporated into LGs development plans for implementation.</p> <p>At Echuya, each of the four CFM groups held a general meeting where all the CFM association members discussed how they would improve their associations. Nature Uganda too facilitated a meeting per CFM where there were participants from NFA and the Local government (both the political and technical) leaders. The meetings were intended to discuss further the work plans per CFM association, find out how far each had gone with implementing the agreed upon work plans and the way forward for subsequent implementation of both NU and CFM activities.</p> <p>CFM associations are working well with the sub counties' leadership. BECLA and MEFCPEA have secured office space at their respective sub counties and the leaders pledged continued technical support.</p> <p>NU and NFA plantation manager held a targeted dialogue meeting with LCV, RDC and Environment officer of Rubanda over the cross border issues at Echuya. This resulted into a joint forest visit to Echuya forest where Rwandese have degraded the forest through illegal forest resource harvesting. Participants included NFA team (supervisor, manager), Rubanda DLG (RDC, LCV, District Police Commander, Environment officer), and BECLA CFM chairperson. An action plan for addressing these cross border issues was developed including organizing a high level cross border dialogue meeting between NFA,CFM, CSO and Government conservation representatives on Uganda and counterparts in Rwanda.</p>

<p><b>4. Assessment of changes and results</b></p>
<p><i>Describe and assess to which extent and how expected change has taken place and whether these have left to desired impacts</i></p>
<p>The programme maintained its original design of operating from three areas: the secretariat in Kampala, the Echuya office in Kabale and the Kasyoha-Kitomi Office in Bushenyi. The secretariat continued to support the site-based offices both on technical and financial matters.</p>
<p><i>Describe and assess the Most Significant Changes from your point of view and in the opinion of various stakeholders/target groups</i></p>
<p>All groups engaged in livelihood projects have been able to start group saving schemes where members pool financial resources in addition to the money raised from different enterprises at group level. This has made it possible for members to get small quick loans for multiple uses and also saving money to re-invest in their enterprises creating more sustainable enterprises.</p> <p>CFM members involved in implementation of different likelihood enhancement projects have increased their capacity to access basic services such as education for their children, health care; food and improved housing. However, economic benefits were not enjoyed uniformly within the communities because, although the</p>

## *Integrating Livelihoods and Conservation People Partner with Nature for Sustainable Living*

interventions are open/available to all, there were different levels of participation and adoption-(innovators, late adopters and the laggards).

There is increased recognition and support from LGs in mainstreaming biodiversity aspects into their development plans. Incorporation of CFM aspects into LG development plans for example Conservation issues like soil and water conservation and forest monitoring have been adopted by the local government. The ecotourism project for KK is being considered by the Rubirizi local government and this will be finalised by March 2018

Despite a few cases of illegal harvesting of forest resources and encroachment, the knowledge, attitudes and practices of different stakeholders especially the forest adjacent communities about forest health and conservation generally improved.

Adoption of LbM and joint forest patrols by two more groups of BUECA and NECA neighbouring BTTEA and MPECA had improved. They are carrying out joint forest patrols and submitting monthly reports to the key stakeholders (NFA and NU). Information sharing in regard to conservation status of KK greatly improved.

As a result of positive impacts from the PPN programme, a number of applications from CFM groups neighbouring PPN sites and also other neighboring communities where CFM has not been initiated have been received and are principally requesting NU to extend the programme to their geographical areas.

CFM members have been empowered to hold accountable their leaders for better governance and service delivery. For example KADECA, one of the CFM groups at Echuya turned against their long term Chairperson who was no longer offering good leadership services and had instead personalized the group. Members sued the chairperson at Kanaba Sub County and as a result, local Government intervened, a situation that ended up having the chairperson interrogated and expelled over his poor leadership. An election for the new Executive committee members was democratically done by KADECA members with guidance from officials from two Sub county Local Governments of Kanaba and Bukyimbiri. At Echuya, members of CFM forest patrol team and newly formed fire gang groups conducted an abrupt forest patrol where illegal grazers and bamboo collectors were arrested and taken to sub county police.

At KK, MPECA CFM group applied to Rubirizi Local District government for take over and better manage Kidubule wetland with an area of 100acres/40ha and perimeter (3927.5m) and this was successfully approved and handed over to MPECA for better sustainable management.

Adoption of LbM and joint forest patrols by other CFM groups currently not working with NU. Some CFM leaders in Katanda, Buzenga and Ndangaro outside but close to NU working area have started to patrol and monitor forest illegal activities and the forest status has improved in the these areas. Information sharing has also improved.

Implementation of the programme has increased the understanding and appreciation of nature and this was reflected through increased membership to NU, increased applications from students and graduates as NU interns and volunteers; increased invitation of NU by a number of development and conservation partners to participate in relevant meetings/workshops and trainings.

***Describe in which ways PPN I has contributed to the planning and implementation of better forest management. Describe how the capacity of forest user groups/LCGs/SSGs etc. has been built***

## *Integrating Livelihoods and Conservation People Partner with Nature for Sustainable Living*

***and how that has translated into improved forest management. Describe how PPN has contributed to increased cooperation between stakeholders (GOV – civil society, networks etc.)***

Dialogue engagements between LG, NFA and CFM members conducted contributed much in harmonising partnership arrangements especially in making programmes for joint forest patrol and LBM. These 2 activities have done a lot in the conservation work.

The Joint monitoring programme has improved the relationship with all stakeholders, which has enhanced the joint conservation efforts of the forest. The engagement of stakeholders in council meetings and radio talk shows has reduced the occurrence of forest illegal activities.

Phase I helped to mobilize and strengthen CFM groups as local community-based organizations (CBOs), which formed the structural entry-point for CFM activities. For example, the CBOs were empowered to hold joint dialogues between the communities, LGS and NFA. Formerly, the two actors were repeatedly at loggerheads in relation to sustainable forest resource access and use.

Through different awareness events, FACs and other implementing partners have been sensitized about the rights of access, use and conservation of forest resources. The rights of various actors (communities, NFA, LGs, NGOs, etc.), their roles and responsibilities, benefits and gender concerns were among the main highlights of the sensitization and this contributed greatly to improved Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAPs) for better forest management.

NatureUganda facilitated SSGs in the development of systems for monitoring the progress in CFM implementation, including joint forest patrols, LbM system and a comprehensive toolkit for monitoring and evaluating the performance of CFM implementation in Uganda. The joint patrols, regulated harvesting and LBM practices all geared towards reducing illegal activities, promoting natural regeneration and contributing to the conservation and restoration of ecosystem services and environmental values of Echuya and Kasyoha Kitomi CFRs.

Supporting SSGs in implementation of various alternative livelihood options including income generating enterprises, tree planting, bamboo domestication, agroforestry, construction of energy saving stoves and aquaculture contributed greatly to economic empowerment of the communities and so reduced dependency on forest resources.

PPN I helped to enhance linkages between NFA and the FACs, which has provided a platform for for SSGs in lobbying and advocating for the rights of access and the use of Kasyoha Kitomi and Echuya. NFA-CFM partnership enabled the parties to understand their respective relationships, rights, responsibilities and returns (benefits) and forged improved working relationships and harmonious management of conflicts.

The programme built the capacity of SSGs as advocates of good forest governance aimed at reducing illegal activities in the forests and improving their conservation.

The collaboration between partners has improved joint actions and has helped to save the forests especially in times of emergencies including fires which need immediate, effective and timely action. At Echuya, district, sub county leaders and other stakeholders were mobilised by the CFM members to assist wherever there were incidences of fire. In particular, the Kisoro Resident District Commissioner (RDC) and LCV Chairperson were first informed by CFM leaders to offer them the required support in fire-fighting, which provided joint

## *Integrating Livelihoods and Conservation People Partner with Nature for Sustainable Living*

efforts with NFA, which normally has limited capacity to handle such incidences.

Linkages established by SSGs with CFM partners largely LGs with support from the programme resulted into increased benefits for FACs from a number of Government development programmes such as Women Empowerment Programme (WEP), Youth Livelihood Fund (YLF), Community Driven Development Project (CDDP), and Operation Wealth Creation (OWC). They were also able to access other services like technical, extension from LG extension workers. This contributed to achievement of enhanced forest conservation, access and use of the forests resources and promotion of livelihood activities for long term conservation of forests.

According to an assessment conducted by NU in 2018 on the ‘impacts of community empowerment in lobbying and advocating for natural resources conservation and understanding of shared roles, responsibilities, rights, returns-A case of collaborative forest management in Echuya and Kasyoha Kitomi central forest’; it was explained that in general, there is improvement in the integrity of the forest in the CFM areas, in spite of the existing weaknesses in implementation. The expression by both NFA and the FACs that “illegal paths are closing” is an indication of agreement in the general reduction of illegal activities. In Kasyoha Kitomi, timber businessmen are no longer seen, except small loggers who sneak in to cut small logs which they can convert quickly into timber. The efforts of the joint patrols provide a system of surveillance for addressing illegal activities, and so far it seems to yield positive results.

In the same report, it was stressed that the environmental benefits of tree planting efforts, including forest boundary planting, on-farm planting and community tree planting in the CFRs, are associated with their capacity to provide alternative sources of timber, poles and firewood, and hence reducing the pressure on the natural forest resources for domestic and commercial use. With increasing resources created outside the CFRs, the communities are able to depend less on the natural forests for these products.

### ***Describe how women, poor and indigenous peoples have benefitted and how and if the programme has contributed to increased equity in local communities***

According to the report on assessment of PPN impact on women empowerment around Echuya and Kasyoha-Kitomi central forest reserves, it was revealed that the IGAs supported by the PPN programme have ignited the saving culture especially amongst women and they have formed their own Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs), which are ably managed. This has led to increase in school enrolment in the programme landscape. The levels of domestic violence have also drastically come down.

The programme has realised improved appreciation and recognition of a woman’s role by men in transforming families and their communities at large. According to the assessment report, it was found out that men have developed an intrinsic hidden positive attitude and appreciation for women empowerment. Men now use women to get loans from VSLAs for family development because women are more trusted on repayment than men. This is great because the world is changed by people who think inwardly and take action to work on the current realities in their localities to create the desired future they truly want to see in their communities. Unlike before, women had started buying land together with husbands and jointly planning how to use it for family developments.

Through building synergies, the poor people and women have benefited in terms of accessing material and technical support from other CSOs for example, the Batwa around Echuya forest were linked to a new

## *Integrating Livelihoods and Conservation People Partner with Nature for Sustainable Living*

organisation-DIG and have been supported in organic farming practices including vegetable growing and soil and water conservation for improved nutrition, food security and incomes. Farmer field schools were also established for purposes of increasing their knowledge and skills in different areas of organic farming.

Women groups at Echuya were also linked to KIWOCEDU (Kigezi Initiative for Women and Children Empowerment and Development-Uganda) and supported in entrepreneurial development and 'men4women' sensitisation meetings on understanding that women empowerment requires a serious effort to understand and support change among men.

Through partnerships, at Echuya, 740 poor women benefited from LADA in different areas of village saving and loan schemes; ICOBI also helped (still helping poor women and most vulnerable children and their families to start economic empowerment projects including agricultural projects. ICOBI supported HIV/AIDS infected and affected women and poor people with health and nutrition improvement projects while 200 school going OVCs from poor families got educational support for purposes of improving their enrolment and retention at schools. A total of 65 youths including 38 girls were also supported to access vocational training as part of skills development and job creation

Through CFM arrangements, the Batwa and women have been recognized and their participation in the management of Echuya CFR has been ensured. Some of their rights and traditional knowledge have been respected and they are permitted to freely access Echuya CFR to harvest firewood, grass and ropes for basketry in a regulated manner for their domestic use and for sale. Therefore, there is affirmative action and promotion of equity and inclusiveness for women, Batwa and other poor people.

Economic empowerment of Batwa: These were empowered economically to engage in various livelihood improvement activities ranging from farming to beekeeping, participate in the SACCO arrangement and to support various income generating activities. From the money generated, batwa with a problem of land shortage and sometimes no land used part of the money to rent land for cultivation of mainly beans and irish potatoes. They were able to buy sheep considered to be well suited to survive on small pieces of land in addition to providing manure from the urine and droppings. From this one batwa group in birara were able to buy a motorcycle (referred to as ambulance by batwa) to transport their sick members to health centres for treatment.

Economic empowerment of women. A total of 18 women groups were supported with technical and material support in implementation of different IGAs including handcraft making, organic wine making, vegetable growing and mushroom growing. They were also facilitated to participate in exchange learning visit to other successful women groups engaged in similar enterprises for enhanced skills and positive behavioural change. Through these enterprises, women have been able to initiate saving schemes where members get short term loans for household based developments including small enterprises, paying school fees for their children and meeting basic needs.

The Batwa forest dependent peoples of Echuya CFR were empowered through the CFM arrangement to be able to participate in public fora to express their concerns and lobby and advocate for their rights and services. The women in particular were very active in all meetings, planning and other events giving exceptional contributions, and hence ousting traditional beliefs that women are kept silent in the presence of men

The women and the Batwa indigenous peoples among others have been empowered to actively lobby and advocate for their rights and services. Phase I made sure that all community leadership committees have

## *Integrating Livelihoods and Conservation People Partner with Nature for Sustainable Living*

batwa and women represented. These representatives exhibited high levels of assertiveness, and effectively demanded that they should be involved equally be involved and supported in the programme like other community groups for the benefit and well-being of all. The active participation of women and the Batwa in community initiatives overrides the long-held traditions that tended to suppress and suffocate the voice of women and other marginalized groups.

Improved family relations: the benefits from different women economic empowerment initiatives created flexibility in managing domestic affairs resulting into reduced gender based violence and better gender equality at both household and community levels

CFM leaders including women representatives continued to attend council meetings for integrating their activities into local Government development plans for increased support and adaptability. This helped women to present gender related issues and build synergies for complementing and sustaining different women empowerment programmes.

CFM groups were supported with seed money. The money was being borrowed and used by both men and women to implement different income generating enterprises and conservation activities for multiple benefits both individual and household levels.

### **5. Financial issues**

*Assess whether the budget was adequate for the implementation of the programme and its cost effectiveness related to your work*

Adequate and used in a more cost effective and efficient manner.

### **6. Materials**

*Describe which materials were produced during the programme (including those that can be uploaded electronically – scientific reports, articles, photos, video, screenshots from social media, TV and radio materials etc.)*

- A survey report on the status of biodiversity in Echuya Central Forest Reserve
- A survey report on the status of biodiversity in Kasyoha-Kitomi Central Forest Reserve
- A poster on Collaborative Forest Management as an approach to improving community livelihoods and sustaining forest conservation
- A radio documentary with conservation messages and other cross cutting issues
- Radio sport messages on conservation of Echuya forest and other natural resources.
- The quarterly NU newsletter "The Naturalist" continued to be a major platform for reaching out to the public including the approximately 2,000 members of NU and other partners including policy makers
- The print media produced some articles on Phase I interventions and the contribution of the programme to sustainable conservation of natural resources.
- A fact sheet and brochures on PPN programme highlighting the long term goal, objectives, sites and interventions.
- An article on PPN programme was produced in Rubanda@ birth magazine

## *Integrating Livelihoods and Conservation People Partner with Nature for Sustainable Living*

- PPN calendar-(2017),
- Banners
- Tear drops
- A report on assessment of PPN impact on women empowerment around Echuya and Kasyoha-Kitomi central forest reserves
- A report on the assessment of the NU CFM approach
- A report on NU institutional capacity Assessment
- A report on the performance of the LbM and joint forest patrols in forest monitoring
- Lessons learnt from PPN implementation in Uganda
- Map of Echuya landscape showing NU interventions
- Map of KK landscape showing NU interventions
- Pictorial

### **7. Key learning and considerations for the next phase/sustainability**

*Describe the key learning that you will build upon in Phase II and how you have addressed sustainability in the implementation of Phase I*

Periodic review of CFM plans/agreements; LbM and JFP implementation is fundamental for ensuring relevancy, effectiveness and ownership of joint forest protection initiatives.

LGs are important in strengthening lobbying and advocacy initiatives and continued support to building the capacity of CFM groups. The LGs at district and sub county levels have got technical officials (e.g. Community Development Officers, Forestry officers, Environment Officers, commercial officers, etc.), and are therefore naturally well placed for sustaining different programme initiatives.

For sustainability of the capacity development efforts, there is need for capacity development among partners in the programme especially NFA where the staff turnover is beyond our control. Continuous refreshers on the programme objectives should be enforced to ensure that the partners remain as focused to the targeted achievements as NU the lead implementers. This is going to be enforced in Phase II of the programme.

All the groups engaged in different IGAs have been able to start group saving schemes where members pool financial resources in addition to the money raised from different enterprises at group level. This has made it possible for members to get small quick loans for multiple uses and also saving money to re-invest in their enterprises thus making them more sustainable

The programme has strengthened the capacity of CFMs in negotiating for their rights but they still need support from partners plus engagement of stakeholders involved in forest protection to ensuring ownership and sustainability of conservation efforts at the two sites.

Meaningful investment in livelihood improvement options will depend on the community selection, ownership and personal commitment to implementing an enterprise one is involved in. Agricultural enterprises such as growing of onions, Irish potatoes, mushrooms, bee-keeping, sheep rearing, etc. were selected by individual community members and have contributed to improving household incomes, food security and social development. Where there is no community ownership, the interventions become mere project enterprises that receive little or no serious attention, rendering them as “NatureUganda projects”

## *Integrating Livelihoods and Conservation People Partner with Nature for Sustainable Living*

rather than “our development projects” for their benefit. This approach increased beneficiaries’ ownership and therefore self-driven efforts to sustain the IGAs being implemented.

The SACCOs are a strong springboard for community development. It is a source of capital for investing in viable enterprises determined by the community members themselves and encourages personal commitment to see that the investment succeeds to pay back the loan. It also encourages a saving culture among the communities, promotes growth of the SACCO, and propels community development and nurtures cohesion and economic sustainability.

Diversification of income generating activities for both men and women at the programme sites enables them to realize increased incomes and benefits they receive through sustainable activities outside the forest reserves

Community Empowerment and skills development, plus engagement of stakeholders involved in forest protection is important in fostering ownership and sustainability of conservation efforts at the two sites.

Continuous monitoring at low costs is very important for the sustainability of species monitoring programmes. However, this requires periodic review of CFM plans/agreements; LbM and JFP implementation a key ingredient to ensuring relevancy, effectiveness and ownership and sustainability of joint forest protection initiatives

Need for investments at group level to continuously bring together CFM members and strengthen their group cohesion while developing a sense of ownership to sustain CFM implementation.

Groups supported by the first DOF project are working as trainers of trainees and farmer field schools for the new adopting farmers creating a local resource base for both scaling up and sustaining programme interventions.

Involvement of women in a number of economic and conservation related activities in more women organised groups and also as members of other mixed sex groups has made them more empowered and recognised in their communities. For example, it has been passed as a bye-law that every group must have 30% of women as members. Therefore tailored men4women programmes should be implemented at programme sites to ensure gender equality and equitable benefits in both livelihood and conservation activities in and outside the forests

Implementation of climate smart agriculture: Engaging community members in alternative income generating activities that are not dependent on climate change or weather like handcraft making, bee keeping, mushroom growing is an innovative way of offsetting the effects of climate change towards household incomes and general wellbeing.

Support and strengthen community advocacy programmes. Bottom up advocacy from communities to national and higher levels is important to deliver lessons from the grass roots to influence national and international decisions. Building community capacity is much more beneficial and relevant.

CFMs basically target frontline villages and yet it has been learnt that outsiders to this target area equally impose the same and sometimes more pressure on the forest resources and yet they are not playing a vital role in forest conservation. CFM needs to be scaled up to a wider coverage.

*Integrating Livelihoods and Conservation  
People Partner with Nature for Sustainable Living*

Data collection and packaging is a vital base for documentation and dissemination of PPN achievements, best practices and lessons, experiences and challenges. This helps in enhancing the understanding of the process by multiple stakeholders at different levels and also making favourable and effective adjustments for a better process, up scaling and sustainability of the programme.

Conservation and livelihood improvement is holistic. This requires involvement of multi-disciplinary stakeholders to address cross cutting issues like health including HIV, family planning and reproductive health which are fundamental to achievement of sustainable conservation outcomes.

Participatory approach to habitat management has been considered a better approach to conservation of critical ecosystems and species. This requires that local communities that pose a great challenge to them continuously be involved in planning and conservation efforts.

## **8. ANNEXES**

Copies of materials in Section 6 above