SNAPSHOT VIEWS OF INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY FORESTRY NETWORKS: UGANDA COUNTRY STUDY

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This is one of series of reports commissioned by CIFOR as part of its study of 'Learning from International Community Forestry Networks'. All these studies were carried out within a tight budget and very brief time frame, which necessarily implied an anecdotal and impressionistic method of data collection. CIFOR and the authors acknowledge that the findings in these studies are thus partial. In our view, however, they do provide interesting insights into the complex world of networking and advocacy and are thus being made available to help networkers and those promoting community forestry to reflect on and, hopefully, improve their work. Please check with the authors before you cite or quote these works. The support received from various individuals during interviews is gratefully acknowledged. These included Godber Tumushabe, Patrick Kivumbi, Oluka Akleng, Helen Gakwaya, Fred Wajje, Gorettie Nabanoga, Grace Bazaaya. I am grateful for the assistance of Frank Muhereza, Agrippinah Namara and Mr Kauka in accessing relevant literature. I am also indebted to the contribution and support I received from participants to the Uganda Lessons Workshop, as well as that from my two research partners Simon Nampindo and Joseph Ndawula.
Executive Summary

This study is a component of a research project whose broad scope was to “review the experiences with international networks designed to promote community forestry, to assess how much ‘value added’ they have provided or could potentially provide to activities at the local and national level, and their ability to advocate for community forestry at international levels. The purpose of this study was to prepare a situation report on the above objectives within the context of Uganda country experiences. The situation report was compiled on the basis of a fact-finding mission that used a wide range of data collection techniques including desk study, informal interviews and a national stakeholders’ workshop.

Uganda was one of two countries selected from the region of the basis of the researcher’s prior familiarity with partners there, the perceived visibility of networks active there as well as a distinctive presence of donors active in the country’s community forestry sub-sector. The study was broadly structured into two components. The first component was meant to give an overview of broad trends in forest policies as well as situating community forestry within the broader forestry context of the country. The first second component investigated networks with particular reference to their visibility, the tools used, their major intervention points, their structuring, linkages among them and their policy and other impacts. An underlying theme was to draw lessons on best practice with regards to networks and networking.

The following broad observations were made with respect to the contextual setting:

1. Over 70% of Uganda’s forests and woodlands occur in the private domain, but current community forestry approaches appear to over-emphasize on protected forests, being mainly institutionalised through collaborative forest management, which gives a spatial bias.
2. Most of the collaborative forest management initiatives operate through project-based approaches. Restricted project timeframes constrain tracking of processes across temporal scales, whilst conditionalities associated with donor support inevitably erode autonomy.
3. Most of the projects are implemented at localized sites, which constraints the relevance of lessons learnt mostly across the spatial dimension.
4. Waves of political and fiscal decentralization have swept across Uganda resulting in the creation of a nation-wide superstructure of bodies for decentralized government – but much still needs to be done to give these decentralizations a democratic orientation.
5. Limited environmental decentralization has occurred, mainly through the superposition of environmental committees on administrative and local government structures – but it still lacks complementary elements necessary to democratise it. For instance the emphasis needs to shift from mere privileging through benefit sharing towards greater local decision-making and control. There needs to be downward accountability, and even in the current set-up the community dividends need to be more meaningful in terms of capita value to
constitute a credible incentive, whilst the remittances need to be more regular and predictable, this applying especially so for schemes at the forest margin zone.

6. Environmental decentralization to local authorities is still highly circumscribed, and the authorities appear to be under tight administrative and fiscal control of the Forest Department – they are only allowed to control forests that are less than 100 hectares, and even in these forests permit issuing and revenue collection are done by FD officials, with revenue sharing arrangement skewed against the local authorities.

7. A policy has been put in place that broadens the scope of community forest management, emphasizing on community forestry management on private lands as well as the concept of multiple uses and multiple users as well as the roles of he various stakeholders including facilitators under whom networks fall. The policy is only recent but the challenge needs to be taken up.

8. The underlying causes of the policy and legal shifts and other changes cannot be attributed to one factor in isolation, these being the cumulative effect of many interacting factors.

Some lessons learnt with respect to networking structures and processes included:

1. A variety of networks exist in Uganda at a variety of scales, which offers scope for cross-scale insights, but the constraints is that collaboration among them is considered weak.
2. Formalization was viewed as a liability to networking because a formal network “ends up in tension with its members”, and “impairs their visibility” as well as “eroding their identity and autonomy.
3. No networking tool is necessarily better or worse than the other, and networking tools seldom work best in isolation but in combination with other tools.
4. In terms of vertical and horizontal links, no structure appears better than the other as they complement each other, with the question being, perhaps, that of balance.
5. Strategic points of intervention including, awareness raising, capacity building and advocacy are synergistic components of the whole process of seeking to influence change.
Learning from International Community Forestry Networks – A Synthesis of Uganda Country Experiences

1. Introduction

This study is a component of a research project whose broad scope was to “review the experiences with international networks designed to promote community forestry, to assess how much ‘value added’ they have provided or could potentially provide to activities at the local and national level, and their ability to advocate for community forestry at international levels. The more specific objectives of the umbrella project were to (1) synthesize lessons emerging from international community forestry networks through a collaborative process, emphasizing on the networks’ ability (or inability) to provide ‘value added’ to local and national processes and to advocate for community forestry at international levels, (2) share these lessons with the main stakeholder groups, and in general to synthesize lessons on best practices to realize the greatest payoff in community forestry management by way of community forestry networks.

The purpose of this study was to prepare a situation report on the above objectives within the context of Uganda country experiences. The situation report was compiled on the basis of a fact finding mission that used a wide range of data collection techniques including desk study, informal interviews and a national stakeholders workshop that was convened towards the end of a two week country study visit. An open and participatory research approach that emphasized on promoting ‘social learning’ about community forestry networking in the country was adopted. Uganda was one of the two countries selected from the African region on the basis of prior familiarity of the researcher, donor interest and the extent to which the country has pioneered with decentralizations that have important implications on the forest sector.

The next section gives an overview of Uganda’s forests and related tenurial issues, whilst section three gives an overview of broad trends in forest policy in Uganda, with an emphasis on underlying drivers, and the role that community forestry networks might have played. Section 4 considers the political ad fiscal aspects of decentralization in the Uganda local governance sector, highlighting how it has implications on environmental aspects of decentralization that are considered in section 4. Collaborative forest management is then briefly highlighted as an aspect of environmental decentralization in section 6. Sections 7 to 11 give detailed as well as sythesized analyses of community forestry networks and networking structures and processes in Uganda. The penultimate section considers policy and other impacts at a variety of levels, whilst section 13 offers a synopsis to pull the various lessons together.

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1 A key consideration emphasized during the methodological workshop convened at the inception of the project was that the study was definitively not an EVALUATION, but “an attempt to learn lessons from experiences”.
2. Uganda’s forests and related tenurial issues

Uganda is located at the convergence of ecological communities characteristic of the drier East African Savannas and the more moist West African Rainforests (Langoya, 2002). The major vegetation types include natural forests comprising of tropical high forests and Savanna woodlands, with the remainder being a miscellaneous category of other minor vegetation types and plantation forests of mainly conifers. Forests and woodlands cover about 24% (or 5 million ha) of the total land area of Uganda, of which 80% is woodland, 19% moist high forest and 1% commercial plantations (Forest Sector Coordination Secretariat, 2001). Approximately 30% of such forests and woodlands are gazetted mainly as protection forests directly under various forms of government jurisdiction including that of the national forestry authority (FD) and the national wildlife authority (UWA). The majority (70%) of the forests and woodlands thus lie outside the gazetted forest domain where they exist under various forms of private and customary control (Table 1).

Table 1. Approximate areas (ha) of forest and woodland under different categories of ownership and management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cover type</th>
<th>Controlling authority</th>
<th>Total (ha)</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Forest Reserves under state of local authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tropical high forest</td>
<td>National parks and wildlife reserves under UWA</td>
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<td>Woodlands</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plantations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other cover types</td>
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<td>Total Land</td>
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Forests and woodlands are land-based resources and thus land tenure has important implications on access to land and its resources, and in fact mirrors the broad patterns of ownership of forests and woodlands outlined above. The government of Uganda holds gazetted state land and all the resources on it in trust of all the citizens of Uganda through custodial ownership. Ordinary Ugandans citizens can access ungazetted land outside the state estate in three main ways:

1. Freehold ownership, which includes customary and mailo land under kingdoms. Colonial rulers purportedly placed considerable tracts of land under the private ownership of Buganda kings in order to secure colonial rule (Nyangabyaki, 2002).
2. Leasehold land in which individuals lease land from someone, usually the government, and in normal cases for periods of not less than 49 years (Langoya, 2002).
3. *Bibanja* land ownership in which an individual occupies land through a mutual agreement with the owner of such land.

However, as Putnam (1984) argues, to understand the present we have to understand the past. Contemporary tenurial patterns in Uganda have as much to do with the present as they have to do with the past. The next section gives a brief overview of trends in forest and related policies in Uganda. Emphasis is placed on major informing issues and goals as well as the drivers of the various policy changes (or lack of change) and their related impacts on people and forests.

### 3. Overview of trends in forest policy in Uganda

Although no formal (written) policies were in place during the pre-colonial era, localized tribal kingdoms reputedly ensured environmental regulation through a system of customary controls that were informed by local indigenous knowledge systems. Land was reportedly more abundant in relation to population levels\(^2\), and human need and resource availability were kept more or less in balance by subsistence modes of existence that were sustained by low impact hunting and gathering and long-rotation shifting cultivation (Ndemere, 2002). Without necessarily romanticizing human-environment relationships in typical Ugandan pre-colonial societies evidence largely appears to suggest the context of people living in some form of “harmony with nature”.

The incipient phase of the colonial period saw a marked influx of foreign forces including explorers and missionaries, and later fortune seekers and business interests, and it culminated in colonial conquest and the advent of capital led development policies. In the forest sector, new entrepreneurs sought to expand their fortunes through the commercial extraction of timber, wild rubber and coffee, which in the absence of some form of regulation, resulted in rapacious destruction of forests. The introduction of cash crops and taxation further aggravated forest destruction through clearance for cultivation and other cash generating activities.

Colonial administrators promulgated the first forest policy in 1929 as a reactive regulatory measure to ensure the conservation of forests. The policy marked the beginning of protectionism, and it was subsequently consolidated, in the 1940s, by the setting up of protection forests and the requisite bureaucracy to ensure such protection i.e. a distinct forest management authority. Despite the creation of protection forests, commercial extraction of timber still remained one of the policy mainstays, especially on the back of increasing demand for timber from Europe and America in the post World War II period. A policy review in 1948 thus re-emphasized the commercial thrust of existing policies, and identified the need for the establishment of production forests of mainly planted exotics to support the commercial and export-led focus of the policy

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\(^2\) Archaeological evidence however suggests that populations may not have been low everywhere in pre-colonial times as reflected through extensive ancient cultivation terraces in some parts of Africa (e.g. Nyanga), whose construction should have been labour intensive, and thus suggesting high population levels (Summers, 1948).
(Ndemere, 2002). Considered in retrospect, colonial forest policies over-emphasized on capital accumulation and environmental protection at the expense of livelihood and other interests of the peasant sector. Protected forests were invariably created through the eviction of some peasant communities from their ancestral homelands. Victims of eviction were further to be denied use rights to resources in protected areas through laws purportedly designed to maintain such areas in pristine condition. Elsewhere outside protected areas other colonial forest laws denied peasants the right to extract resources other than for subsistence (Nyangabyaki, 2002).

Forest policy during the early post-colonial period (1962-1980s) can best be summed as “more of the same”, inasmuch as it upheld the colonial status quo in emphasis on protection and production aspects as well as on commercial exploitation (Ndemere, 2002). A policy review done during the 1970s further reinforced the commercial thrust of the founding colonial policy, and additionally envisioned more central control of forests, and of industry. At a broad level this epitomised the general centralization of political power under the Idi Amin dictatorship but the political conflicts and struggles associated with this era led to a breakdown of law and order and of forest management institutions as well as the collapse of industry. The institutional vacuum existing during this era was associated with a massive influx of people (encroachers) into most nature parks and protected areas.

A recent policy review that appears to have been instituted at the behest of donors, and done in 1988, emphasized on new initiatives to halt deforestation, the need for forest sector rehabilitation and the creation of awareness on environmental issues. It additionally emphasized on a multiple stakeholder approach, a move that is thought to have spawned the emergence and mushrooming of local environmental NGOs, and other organizations that championed “conservation with a human face”, an agenda that mainly drew inspiration from the 1992 Earth Summit (Nyangabyaki, 2002). In spite of its multiple-stakeholder orientation the policy regrettably excluded local communities living close to or within the protected forests (Ndemere, 2002). A further review in 2001 added emphasis on multiple use forestry, including agroforestry, and recognized the realities and complexities of multiple use, and the need for multiple stakeholder collaboration and the roles of the various stakeholders including the private sector and local communities. The multiple stakeholder and collaborative orientation of the policy are seen to have created and enhanced the space for organisations using the networking approach to champion peasant empowerment through community forest management (Ndemere, 2002). Whilst it is not easy to conclusively establish the chain of cause and effect in a complex and dynamic world of many interacting factors it would generally appear that external drivers at the international level significantly influenced latest changes in forest policy in Uganda.

The pro-people orientation of the forest policy was further reinforced by its emphasis on decentralized governance, a tenet supported by a battery of other Ugandan laws. The next two sections consider the extent to which the chorus of citizen empowerment espoused in such laws and policies translates into thoroughgoing peasant empowerment in the Ugandan community forestry sub-sector. Given the patchiness and complexity of
processes associated with decentralizations\textsuperscript{3} emphasis will be placed on underlying drivers of the process as well as its strengths and limitations inasmuch as they provide lessons for the future, particularly that of initiatives seeking to add value to community forest management\textsuperscript{4}.

4. Decentralisation in Uganda: the structural aspects

The mainstreaming and formalisation of decentralisation as a guiding governance policy appears to have been an extended process informed by a variety of internal and external factors. From a historical perspective, decentralization was, as far back as the early 1980s struggle against the Amin regime, the founding vision of the National Resistance Movement. The first objective of the Movement’s Ten Point Programme reportedly espoused “a local government system that would empower communities to “take charge of their own destiny through local institutions of self governance and resource mobilization” (Ahikire, 2001). Resistance Councils became the Movement’s vehicle for mass mobilization, and these were transformed into a nationwide hierarchy of resistance councils and committees upon the Movement’s ascension to power in 1986. The move was purportedly designed to enhance the Movement’s grip on the countryside where it hitherto had not established significant grassroots support and legitimacy (Ahikire, 2001; Wagaba, 2001). A battery of statutes formalised the Resistance Councils into the institutional infrastructure for decentralised governance in present day Uganda. The Local Councils and Committees statute of 1987 made such councils legitimate entities, recognising them as the formal administrative structures to which central government transferred authority to plan, make decisions and provide services at the local level. A subsequent statute in 1993 further refined the procedures to enhance “autonomous decision making” by the Resistance (Local) Councils.

Decentralisation as a policy was further strengthened by article 1b of the 1995 Uganda constitution, which states that “decentralisation shall be a principle applying to all levels of local government and in particular, from higher to lower level units to ensure people’s participation and democratic control in decision making”. Decentralisation was reportedly also swiftly instituted and implemented by the National Resistance Movement government to forestall demands for federalism then championed by Buganda, and apparently coming to the fore at that stage in history (Tukahebwa, 2001). Elsewhere, at a broader level decentralisation was ostensibly accelerated by “the fall of communism and triumph of liberalism”, “the perceived failure of the state”, as well as “related international initiatives ostensibly designed to bring Africa out of its dire socio-economic predicament” (Tukahebwa, 2001). Conditionalities associated with initiatives such as Structural Adjustment Programmes centred around the creation of “leaner”, “folded back” and presumably more efficient states - with civil society and local communities

\textsuperscript{3} Coglianese and Nicolaidis (1996) as well as Ribot (1999) argue that more genuine empowerment under decentralisation takes much more than the transfer of power from one level and its retirement into another level. Both works explore the complexities potentially associated with decentralisation in everyday social practice.

\textsuperscript{4} This includes international, as well as regional and local community forestry networks.
expected to move in, through decentralisations - to occupy the spaces left in several arenas by the retreating states, including that of local governance (Nyangabyaki, 2002).

Uganda has a five-tier local government system comprising of both administrative and legislative functions with executive officers performing the administrative functions whilst elected representatives perform the legislative functions (Namara and Nsabagasani, 2001). The over-arching level of local government is the district (Local Council 5), below which is the county in rural areas or a municipality in urban areas, both of which are essentially administrative units. The next levels of local governance, in decreasing order, include the sub-county (Local Council 3), the parish (Local Council 2) and the village levels (Local Council 1)(Fig. 1). Most of the entrustments decentralised by the 1997 local government statute, including income tax collection, service provision and some aspects of environmental management, are held at the district and sub-county level. The sub-county retains 30% of the revenue collected whilst 35% is remitted to the district government, with the county and parish each getting 5%, and the village getting 25% (Nyangabyaki, 2002). Thus Uganda features prominently as one of the few countries in the Sahelian region to have pioneered with more thoroughgoing modes of decentralised governance. The next section, however, argues that the above seemingly democratic hardware (structural arrangements) for decentralised governance has not been adequately complemented by the necessary software (operational arrangements) for effective local empowerment, particularly in the environment-related sectors. The thesis has important implications on strategic points of intervention for initiatives aspiring to add value to community forest management, including community forestry networks.

5. Decentralization in relation to community forest management in Uganda

The initial phases of decentralisation in Uganda appear to have been dominated by the political and fiscal aspects of the policy, with environmental aspects apparently occupying backstage. A combination of factors, including those associated with a global-local politics of the environment, was instrumental in accelerating environmental decentralization and elevating environmental issues into the policy and legislative realms. At the global level, the politics of funding made the mainstreaming of environmental issues a major precondition for accessing donor support. For instance, Nyangabyaki (2002) reports that the context in which some laws in the later half of the 1990s were crafted was one in which lawmakers were under considerable pressure from donors to incorporate environmental dimensions into legislative processes. Such a move was supported by the “pro-people” inclination of preceding statutes including the Uganda constitution of 1995. At a more local level, the notion of environmental decentralization fitted into the designs of those politicians who sought to steer clear of unpopular issues to enhance their own power bases and interests. Some such politicians purportedly owned

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5 In their characterization of the central aspects of decentralization polices Agrawal and Ribot (2000) distinguish environmental decentralization from political and fiscal decentralization. Their typology, however, does not necessarily imply that these are mutually exclusive aspects as they are complementary components of the same broad process.
Figure 1. An organogram of the Uganda local government system.
portions of land in nature parks like Mt Elgon, and thus championed “peasant rights” by advocating for the freeing up of land from protected forests for peasant use (Nyangabyaki, 2002). And at the grassroots level itself the sheer weight of local tenurial and use pressures rendered protectionist approaches untenable (Driciru, 2002; Langoya, 2002).

The main law governing environmental issues in Uganda is the National Environmental Statute of 1995. It encourages “maximum participation of the people of Uganda in the development policies, plans and processes for the management of the environment”. The coordinating body, the National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA) is charged with the responsibility to work with lower level institutions namely, District Environmental Committees and Local Environmental Committees to ensure that environmental concerns are integrated into district and local level planning processes, to ensure participation of local people in environmental planning, and to mobilize local people and resources to solve environmental problems (Nyangabyaki, 2002). In the wildlife sector committees that have been created to partner local government units with UWA in collaborative resource management include Production and Environmental Committees (PECs) at the district, sub-county, parish and village levels (Fig.2). The PECs comprise of elected representatives as well as technocrats and bureaucrats. Representatives of the PECs sit in the Community Protected Area Committee (CPAC), whose meetings are also attended by UWA (Namara and Nsabagasani, 2001). Thus in line with preceding strands of analysis, political decentralisation in Uganda provided the organizational mainframe upon which an additional hardware to sustain environmental decentralization was later superposed. As argued earlier to understand the comprehensiveness and robustness of these arrangements we also have to consider the operational arrangements under which decentralised or community based forest management operates in Uganda. The argument here is that much still has to be done at the level of the software of environmental decentralization in Uganda.

Although community forestry is conceived as broad in principle the history of its implementation in Uganda is, in several respects, quite insular. - being mainly seen as “donor driven” and restricted to the forest margin zone (Langoya, 2002). A collaborative forest management unit has been created within the Forest Department with a specific brief to “institutionalise” collaborative forest management. The Uganda Wildlife Authority also uses the collaborative forest management model as a vehicle for involving local communities in areas surrounding national parks. In practice, the over-emphasis on the forest margin zone means that close to 70% of the forests and woodlands on private lands are given diminished importance (Langoya, 2002). The narrow focus of participatory forest approaches is widely perceived and acknowledged both within government circles and beyond. For instance, a participant at a stakeholders’ workshop on collaborative forest management questioned whether “the coordinating unit had any plans for other models of collaborative forest management for private lands” (Forest

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6 It is recognized even within the Forest Department that community management systems seek to guarantee access and control over forest resources to communities living in them (Langoya, 2002).
Figure 2 An organogram of how PECs relate to the local governance structure (arrows represent flow of membership.)
Department, 2002:10). In suggesting ways forward towards broadening the concept beyond a narrow sub-sectoral approach, another participant observed “we probably will be more embracing if we call collaborative forest management, collaborative resource management because we are working towards the sustainable management of a wide range of forest resources including wildlife, just like the Uganda Wildlife Authority is doing in focussing on both flora and fauna” (Forest Department, 2002:9).

There are two types of forest reserves when discussing management powers decentralized under collaborative forest management arrangements. There are those forest park reserves such as Mt Elgon Forest Park, which have been closed to commercial exploitation. Here communities can access some subsistence resources, whose extraction is deemed environmentally benign, through collaborative community management schemes. Here power over the forests is either under Uganda Wildlife Authority or Uganda Forest Department. Collaborative management schemes are kinds of agreement in which ultimate directive power rests with the state wildlife and forest bureaucracies. The second type of forest reserves are those from which commercial harvesting of resources can be undertaken. Power over the management of these forests is supposed to be distributed between the central government and the local governments. The latter is supposed to be responsible for forest reserves less than 100 hectares in size while the state deals with those of bigger sizes. Even in this arrangement no effective decision making powers have been devolved to the local governments (Kanyesigye and Muramira, 2001; Namara and Nsabagasani, 2001, Muhereza, 2002; Nyangabyaki, 2002). Power over what can be exploited, who can exploit and when, is in the hands of the central government forestry officials. In the case of harvesting of commercial timber trees, the central government forestry officer has the authority to issue a permit and collect the related fees. In turn these fees are supposed to be shared between central government (60%) and local governments (40%). The rationale of giving local governments 40% is that they are supposed to police the forests against illegal harvesting of forests resources” (Nyangabyaki, 2002). Decentralisation under collaborative forest management arrangements, therefore, largely does not go beyond the privileging of communities through access to a circumscribed range of resources. As Langoya (2002) argues, it is important to ensure secure access to resources as well as transferring authority and decision-making power to important stakeholder groups, including local communities.

Public land is often alternatively called customary land, and with the new constitution of 1995, is often seen as giving the effect that it is private land (Nyangabyaki, 2002). Decisions on species designated as commercially valuable, the quantities in which they are extracted as well as the related collection of levies are exclusively controlled by the central government Forest Department, and this applies for both private land or land under local authorities. The Forest Department collects the revenue through a system of permits issued to intending users. The arrangement apparently removes the incentive

Note should be made here that there are other community forest management approaches in Uganda that do integrate across sectors and extend to private lands, including agroforestry (considered in a later section), but are not readily mentioned and recognized as community forest management by a wide range of people interviewed.
structure required to motivate both the local governments and private owners to manage these resources (Murphree, 1999; Nyangabyaki, 2002).

In addition to its narrowness in scope the process of environmental decentralisation through collaborative forest management arrangements and the technical requirements for good environmental management may be seen as in tension (Nyangabyaki, 2002). In spite of the rhetoric of community empowerment the gulf between the interests of the so-called local communities and other stakeholders is more often than not quite conveniently understated. For instance, the European Economic Community made the eviction of peasant communities that had encroached onto protected areas a condition for the disbursement of funding support for collaborative resource management activities (Nyangabyaki, 2002:10). Similarly, the Mount Elgon Conservation Development Project, implemented with technical assistance from IUCN under funding from NORAD, involved evicting encroachers and the re-establishment of park boundaries (Kanyesigye and Muramira, 2001). In most cases the evictees assert ancestral claims to such lands, and they continue, through a variety of strategies, to exert tenurial and use pressures on such lands. In Mbale National Park collaborative forest management involved restoration and conservation of the forest through tree planting in an initiative supported by the Uganda Wildlife Society – Forests Absorb Carbon Dioxide (FACE), funded by a Dutch electricity generating consortium. An audit of how much carbon dioxide had been sequestered was then done in response to which the sequel Greenhouse Gas Verification Project was commissioned. In commenting on how such ideas were so out of sync with the realities of their everyday social life, Kanyesigye and Muramira (2001:35) quote a 75-year old villager arguing “...we grew up and found our parents and grandparents depending on the forest. The forest is our father, our mother...How can some stranger come and pose as one who knows more about what has long been our own”. The next section gives further insights on the implementation of collaborative forest management at the grassroots level.

6. Collaborative forest management implementation – some glimpses from the ground

On the ground, collaborative forest management in state forests under the Forest Department is being pioneered with at 7 sites, with all of them using project-based approaches relying on donor funding. (Table 2). Thus in addition to reflecting a conceptual bias that appears to equate community forest management with collaborative forest management, and a spatial bias that appears to focus on the forest margin zone, collaborative forest management also reflects a project bias. Because of their project proclivity and related requirements, including the need to demonstrate tangible impact within restricted timeframes, collaborative forest management initiatives lose a considerable measure of the flexibility of social social-learning experiments that they are supposed to be (Langoya, 2002). And because of related complexities social experiments are best tackled in evolutionary perspective (Murphree, 1990). The ethics of intervention additionally include the need to have an understanding of the drivers of intervention including the criteria, standards and benchmarks of entry as well as thresholds of exit. Related questions include: when is intervention necessary?, what amount of intervention
is enough?, and why intervene at all? More often than not, availability of donor funding invariably is the common denominator to all these essential questions.

The extent of over-reliance on external support in Uganda has been such that “where there has been no external funding districts have been unable to create the necessary (environmental) institutions required in the law” (Nyangabyaki, 2002:25). The flip side of this observation is that environmental institutions, including environmental action plans, mostly exist in districts that received donor support. For instance, the World Bank supported the crafting of such institutions in Mbale District, whilst USAID funded the creation of similar institutions in Masindi District (Nyangabyaki, 2002:24).

The need for representativeness, no doubt, constitutes a common benchmark of entry when projects are initiated, as they mostly are, at localised sites. The idea is that the pioneering experiences will provide broad generalizable lessons that can be scaled up to other areas. On the ground, in Uganda, the upside of this consideration is that collaborative forest management sites cover a variety of contrasting ecological and socio-political settings including tropical forest swamp, montane forest, bamboo forest as well as plantation forest (Langoya, 2002). The downside, nevertheless, is that no site can ever be the exact replica of the other both in biophysical and socio-political terms, which sets a limit to the extent to which generalisations can be draw from pilot cases.

Table 2 CFM Sites in Uganda, the supporting projects and donors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site/Reserve</th>
<th>Supporting Project</th>
<th>Donor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tororo</td>
<td>Peri-urban plantation project</td>
<td>NORAD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namatale</td>
<td>Natural Forest Management Conservation Project</td>
<td>EU</td>
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<tr>
<td>Budongo</td>
<td>Natural Forest Management Conservation Project</td>
<td>EU</td>
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<td>Mpanga</td>
<td>Natural Forest Management Conservation Project</td>
<td>EU</td>
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<td>Echuya</td>
<td>Natural Forest Management Conservation Project</td>
<td>EU</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nabanga</td>
<td>Lake Victoria Environment Management Project</td>
<td>World Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sango Bay</td>
<td>East Africa Cross-Border Project</td>
<td>UNDP/GEF</td>
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Source: Adapted from Uganda Forest Department (2002)

The next section considers various aspects of community forestry networks that are active in Uganda and the extent to which such aspects contribute or could potentially contribute in adding value to community forestry management processes. Emphasis is laid on the strengths and weaknesses of the various aspects of the networks inasmuch as they provide lessons for the future.
7. The visibility of community forestry and related networks in Uganda

The wide array of community forestry related networks active in Uganda defies classification into neat typologies. However, some form of classification is necessary to give a broad overview of the networks, although this should not be seen as underestimating the complex inter-linkages that occur. In terms of geographical focus networks active in Uganda span from the global level to the regional and national levels as well as to more localized scales including the district-level. The FAO-based Forest Trees and People Programme, was by far the most visible of global networks operating in Uganda. Having been initially based on a centralized model in which coordination was done from Sweden, the programme later evolved into a decentralised system of regional and country focal points. Uganda falls under the East and Southern African Region of the programme, but in-country, the administration is split between a facilitator role that is housed within the Faculty of Forestry and Nature Conservation at Makerere University, and a coordinator role, which is conducted by an NGO called Environmental Alert. FTPP was, however, reportedly folding up after having been active for close to a decade, with its exit strategy emphasizing on localization of most functions including fundraising. Another global network mentioned was the International Institute for Environmental and Development (IIED)’s initiative in the area of soil fertility management, which is based on the “farmer field schools” model emphasizing on knowledge sharing through farmer field days and exchange visits. Like FTPP, it was reportedly based on a system of regional chapters with the East African region covering Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia. However, unlike FTPP the initiative was seen as centrally run, with a coordinator based in the Netherlands. Some individuals and institutions also received publications from the Overseas Development Institute’s Rural Development Forest Network.

Several regional level networks were also reported to be active in Uganda including Forest Action Network, which is the East African regional focal point for the FTPP. The East African region covers Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, and to a smaller extent Mozambique. Having been formed in 1995 the network started off focussing exclusively on forestry issues but later broadened their scope to include land tenure and conflict resolution related issues in response to their recognition of the importance of inter-sectoral linkages in natural resource management. Although FAN has its own independent projects, its networking service builds onto the decentralized networking structure of FTPP. Another important regional network that recognizes the importance of inter-sectoral linkages is the Agroforestry Research Network for Africa (AFRENA), which is also structured along the lines of regional focal points for Eastern, Central and Southern Africa, with all operating under the auspices of the International Centre for

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8 FTPP was the most frequently mentioned international network during interviews with numerous individuals representing different organizations including those from the Forest Department, NGOs and Makerere University. It was also the global network that was most frequently mentioned during the Stakeholders Workshop, which was conducted during the curse of the study.

9 Interview with female lecturer at the Faculty of Forestry and Nature Conservation, Makerere University.

10 Interview with a representative of an environmental NGO.

11 Interview with a representative of an environmental NGO.

12 Interview with a senior Forest Action Network administrator.
Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF). AFRENA operates on the principle of the “flagship model”\(^{13}\). The model divides areas into zones of specialization in pioneering with agroforestry interventions that are then screened and tested with a view to promoting best practice at a broader scale. AFRENA as a research network is partnered by a sister regional network focusing on educational aspects of agroforestry, the African Network for Agroforestry Education (ANAFE).

Preceding sections have already outlined the conceptual bias in Uganda community forest management circles that appears to associate community forest management solely with collaborative forest management initiatives. Considered in more holistic terms, AFRENA thus broadens the scope of community forest management. Unfortunately agroforestry is separately institutionalised through the National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO), whilst collaborative forest management is institutionalised through the Forest Department, with little or no coordination between them\(^{14}\). Such lack of coordination extends to the rest of the organizations championing community forest management through the networking approach\(^{15}\). Unlike FAN and AFRENA, PELUM was mentioned as a regional network of NGOs with a Central and Southern African focus, but it was reportedly based on a centralised organisational structure. It was seen as mainly working on sustainable agriculture and food security issues, being centrally coordinated from Zimbabwe\(^{16}\).

The fact-finding mission also recorded several networks that were more national in character. In the area of agroforestry, the Uganda Agroforestry Development Network (UGADEN) is the national affiliate to the more regional AFRENA. The main aim of UGADEN is to get agroforestry technologies to as many people as possible, and it pilots with agroforestry interventions at two sites, Kabale and Kifu, representing a highland environment and a lakeshore lowland environment, respectively. A recently introduced intervention, funded by USAID, aims to reduce pressure on natural forests by, through planting, making available what people usually go for in the forest. UGADEN’s work is internally perceived to be still in its infancy, a phenomenon attributed to ICRAF’s initial predilection to centralize all programmes and activities. Thus earlier activities were reported to have been researcher dominated, with the present change in focus emphasizing on building local needs into research attention\(^{17}\). Despite its short history, overweening dominance by donors, both in choice of sites and interventions to consider, was identified as one of the weaknesses associated with UGADEN’s activities to date. For instance the concept of biodiversity conservation through domestication of those species considered to be most under pressure in the forest was contradicted by most farmers’ failure to respond to the envisioned incentives. Most farmers readily took up the

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\(^{13}\) Interview with two ICRAF field officers.

\(^{14}\) Interview with two ICRAF field officers.

\(^{15}\) Point emphatically stressed by a Forest Department officer during the National Stakeholders Workshop at Makerere University.

\(^{16}\) Interview with a female NGO representative.

\(^{17}\) Interview with two ICRAF field officers.
planting of fruit trees and not of the ‘threatened’ species, which they continued to extract from the forest\textsuperscript{18}.

Whilst most of the above international, regional and national networks are formalized, a few informal and loosely structured national networks were also encountered. One such network is the Uganda Forest Working Group, whose articles of association were carefully crafted to guard against the formalization of the network. The network mainly groups organizations that are into advocacy and it is still evolving, having been conceived only three years ago. \textbf{Formalization was viewed as a liability to networking because a formal network “ends up in tension with its members”, and “impairs their visibility” as well as “eroding their identity and autonomy”, which can lead to disillusionment among the members and eventual atrophying of the network}\textsuperscript{19}. An informant also mentioned UPDNET as an example of an informal network to which his organization was affiliated. The network brings together people seeking to share experiences on participatory methodologies\textsuperscript{20}. Other national networks with varying degrees of formalization include the Biodiversity Network, KULIKI Trust and VI.

Lack of contact with the grassroots is often cited as a major constraint to the activities of most externally driven development initiatives. In the area of networking in Uganda this constraint is hopefully overcome by the existence of the Development Network for Indigenous Voluntary Associations (DENIVA), a network of indigenous NGOs and CBOs operating at and below the district level. Emphasizing, as it does, on horizontal linkages, the network is seen as overcoming the sense of “isolation”, which can be quite “overwhelming” in the “developmental jungle” out there\textsuperscript{21}. The network sees itself as being useful not only to the participating NGOs and CBOs but also to local governments and the citizens that they all aspire to serve. A keynote speaker to a stock-taking workshop organized by DENIVA recommended that the network should aspire to retain its autonomy by avoiding getting swallowed in vertical linkages with donors and government\textsuperscript{22}. This section has, through a very elementary classification, summarized some of the networks mentioned to be active in Uganda. The next section will consider the lessons learnt with respect to the networking tools used by the various networks.

\textbf{8. When are networking tools appropriate or inappropriate?}

Two major insights emerged with respect to the tools used by networks. The first was that \textbf{no tool is necessarily better or worse than the other}, and that the appropriateness of any given tool depends on a number of other factors including the objectives of the network, the networks membership structure, the network’s target institutions as well as the structuring of the network and its resource endowments. A complimentary insight was that \textbf{networking tools seldom work best in isolation but in combination with other}

\textsuperscript{18} Interview with two ICRAF field officers.
\textsuperscript{19} Interview with a senior executive of an advocacy NGO.
\textsuperscript{20} Interview with an officer of an environmental NGO.
\textsuperscript{21} These insights were variously expressed by Josephine Ahikire and Mr Nyamugasire in a document that captures the proceedings of a workshop organized by DENIVA.
\textsuperscript{22} Such linkages were seen as mostly based on the provision of funding (Nyamugasira, 2001).
tools. Thus, it is important to understand the contexts in which the various tools can best or least be effective. Electronic media, especially email, were seen to be quite effective in terms of timeliness as well as coverage, especially in this “high-tech” era in which virtually any piece of information can be accessed at the “touch of a button”\textsuperscript{23}. Most informants were however quick to point out that emails are most appropriate for well resourced networks that can afford the “astronomic costs” of the related equipment and technologies, and also least relevant and least amenable to poor and illiterate farmers at the grassroots level. Electronic contact was also viewed as a very “impersonal” way of interacting, which needed to be augmented by other “face to face” modes of communicating, including workshops\textsuperscript{24}.

Although workshops do foster “face to face” personal contact allowing for “organic bonding”\textsuperscript{25}, and social capital development they were overwhelmingly seen as entailing high transaction and other costs and being susceptible to the “talk shop” syndrome in which they are “quite long in speeches and speech-making” and usually “very short in terms of impact and follow-up action”\textsuperscript{26}. Peer socialization in which workshops attract the “same old faces” was also mentioned as a weakness associated with most workshops\textsuperscript{27}. Workshops were also seen as “one-off things” that came “far between the times”, and therefore needing to be augmented by other rolling modes of interaction during the intervening periods\textsuperscript{28}. Although newsletters were considered as constituting a “long-lasting records”\textsuperscript{29}, which could be referred to on an on-going basis, it was noted that people seldom buy let alone read them\textsuperscript{30}. The Forest Action Network, with some experience in producing wide circulation newsletters at a regional level also indicated that the whole process of producing newsletters was very expensive.

Although there was consensus that melding tools was the best strategy informants were wary of being prescriptive about the best combination of tools to be used for a given level. Thus, if the intended target audience includes literate national level actors including those in the government departments, academics and the NGO sector then electronic media (telephone, fax and email) together with print media and workshops would appear to be more relevant. However, deploying such tools at the national level in-order to have an impact at the grassroots level appears to be based on a strategy of hope and assumptions of a relay. The hope is that it is assumed that influence will be passed on from the level of national facilitators to grassroots level facilitators and then eventually to

\textsuperscript{23} Captured in an interview with an officer of an environmental NGO, in his own words.

\textsuperscript{24} The point was strongly emphasized by female lecturer during an interview conducted at the Faculty of Forestry and Nature Conservation at Makerere University.

\textsuperscript{25} Interview with a female lecturer at the Faculty of Forestry and Nature Conservation, Makerere University.

\textsuperscript{26} Interview with an officer of an environmental NGO.

\textsuperscript{27} Interview with an officer of an environmental NGO.

\textsuperscript{28} Point strongly emphasized by a female lecturer at the Faculty of Forestry and Nature Conservation, Makerere University.

\textsuperscript{29} The words of a female lecturer in at interview at the Faculty of Forestry and Nature Conservation, Makerere University.

\textsuperscript{30} Interview with an official of an environmental NGO. It should be noted, though, that most of the newsletters of international networks including that of ODI’s Rural Development Forest Network and that of the FTPP are distributed free to members.
the target communities before the impact can be felt. Such cascades need to be shortened through strategies that seek more direct intervention at the grassroots level. DENIVA and UGADEN, no doubt potentially fill this need, albeit at a localized level for the latter, for which scaling up appears to be a critical need.

9. Strategic points of intervention and target institutions (or levels)

Five broad areas emerged as the major strategic points of intervention for networks seeking to influence and transact change in community forest management processes in Uganda, including research and gathering ideas on the topic, awareness raising; capacity building, information sharing, advocacy and directly implementing change. These categories roughly correspond with those of various community forestry practitioners identified by Nyamugasira (2001) at a DENIVA workshop in which he emphasized that community forestry practitioners needed to understand themselves in their various shades first before they could understand others, particularly their constituencies. He distinguished development entrepreneurs or ‘the ideas people’ from development activists who advocate and articulate the ideas of others and development workers who implement the ideas of others. There was general agreement both among participants to the above workshop as well as among informants to this study that the above categories of people and zones of interests were not mutually exclusive but synergistic. For instance in elaborating on these synergies an informant to the study commented: “To me the concept of isolated knowledge groups is not effective. The question should be where to start. Once we have our ideas we can go on to do awareness raising, capacity building, dissemination and advocacy”. Whilst the order here may be debatable the underlying logic is that proper sequencing gives the greatest payoff. In elaborating the link between research and extension she went on to add; “You cannot extend an idea that you do not have”. The work of Davies (2001), at a more generic scale but refined level of analysis further elaborates on the nested nature of activities falling around the rubric of influencing, including awareness raising, capacity building and advocacy, together with its sub-components of lobbying and campaigning (Table 3). Despite the general agreement on the need to tackle the nested constraints to community forest management in a holistic manner that builds on complementarities it was acknowledged that community forest networks in Uganda have not done enough to build on such synergies.

31 Conflict resolution was also mentioned but to a much smaller extent.
32 An additional category identified by Nyamugasira (2001) is that of development opportunists, or those who are in it for purely personal reasons.
33 Interview with a female lecturer at the Faculty of Forestry and Nature Conservation, Makerere University.
34 Observations by two officers in the Forest Department on what works and what does not work with community forestry networks in Uganda.
Table 3 The nested nature of activities targeted at influencing change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Awareness raising</th>
<th>Capacity building</th>
<th>Lobbying</th>
<th>Campaigning</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Change in behaviour anticipated

N.B. Whilst awareness raising is targeted at changes in knowledge and attitudes the rest are aimed at changes in behaviour

Source: Davies (2001).

At a more disaggregated level the importance of advocacy was quite forcefully emphasized by two of the NGOs visited – Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE) as well as Environmental Alert. A popular advocacy event mentioned in both organizations was that in which, through a system of partnerships with advocacy organizations including ACODE and UFRIC, people of Butobuvuma contested their rights to part of their land that had been clandestinely annexed to a sugar company by an alliance of powerful forces. Although the people finally did lose the land through a political decision, made in favour of the sugar concern, the whole event reputedly generated the sort of publicity and interest that might deter politicians as well as big-business from “taking local people for granted”35. In commenting on the relative success of this advocacy process Patrick Kivumbi argued, “bottom-up advocacy and partnerships were key”. He stressed that “bottom up advocacy results in effective problem identification whilst armchair advocacy gets detached from the real issues”. Commenting on regional and international networks from a grassroots perspective an informant was of the opinion that FTPP and FAN tended to over-emphasize on conflict resolution at the expense of other modes of transacting change or seeking to influence36.

It was argued, in similar fashion, that no scale of entry - be it international, national, district or grassroots – was really better or worse than the other, the critical thing being to scale down broad level visions, lessons and experiences to the peculiarities of the local and scaling up localized experiences to broader levels in such a way that there is synergy. Stressing this point in alternative terms Nyamugasira (2001) envisaged networks “specializing in zones of comparative advantage” but “not blind on the need for synergies”, and “creating space for each category to belong and feel supported”. In suggested a way forward another informant pointed out the need for a forum for networks to organize their activities together37. No doubt partnerships are key to fostering such synergies. But to what extent have international networks in Uganda built partnerships and linkages that allow for such complementarities?

10.Linkages among local and international community forestry networks in Uganda

There are two major ways in which international and regional networks partner with in-country networks in Uganda. The first, consisting of formal linkages is associated with

35 Interview with an officer with an environmental NGO.
36 Interview with a female officer from an integrated rural development NGO.
37 Interview with a female officer from an integrated rural development NGO.
international or regional networks that have a decentralized structure in which there are regional and country focal points. The FTPP structure - with regional contact points in Europe, North America, West Africa, East and Southern Africa as well as the Asia-Pacific region - fits into this category. The Forest Action Network is the formal coordinator of FTPP for East and Southern Africa. It also doubles up as the country coordinator for Kenya (Fig. 3). Countries falling under the East and Southern African region include Mozambique, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia. The decentralized FTPP at the Uganda country level is run by two organizations, one with a networking and another with a networker role (coordinator and facilitator).

AFRENA is a regional network that, through its decentralized structure, also fosters formal linkages with a community forestry network in Uganda, namely UGADEN. Falling under the auspices of ICRAF, AFRENA has regional focal points in East, Central and Southern Africa. Countries falling under the East African region include Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia. In Uganda ICRAF is seconded to the National Agricultural Research Organization under which UGADEN operates as a national agroforestry network.

Local networks can also be linked to international and regional networks in subtle and less elaborate ways including shared membership in which Ugandans may, as individuals or institutions, belong to many networks at a variety of levels, thus allowing for cross-fertilization across a range of scales and organizations. The significance of associated knock-on effects should not be underestimated since a considerable number of people acknowledged that they were able to access literature or ideas from big international networks like RDFN and FTPP through others, even though they were not necessarily formal members of these networks.

Vertical linkages, as in decentralized network models, were seen as conduits for the flow of considerable amounts of financial resources to sustain community forest management processes at a variety of scales, including regional, national and grassroots levels. But because “money is power” the recipients of such assistance are usually seen as having their autonomy eroded. Despite the politics of its supply, money is however necessary to get things done, and it is usually not easy to raise the required sums from internal sources. Whilst horizontal linkages are seen to score quite highly in dimensions such as responsiveness and autonomy they certainly do not score as highly when it comes to the cross-scale dimension. Again, it appears that no structure is necessarily better or worse than the other as they appear to complement each other, with the question being, perhaps, that of balance. The preceding sections considered the visibility of community forestry networks in Uganda, subsequently highlighting the major insights relating to networking tools, strategic entry points as well as the structuring of the networks. The

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38 Either all the organizations visited, or their personnel, were members of more than one network.
39 Interview with a senior lecturer at the Faculty of Forestry and Nature Conservation, Makerere University.
The point about money being necessary to get things done was mentioned by a female officer of an integrated rural development NGO.
40 Interview with an official from an environmental NGO.
41 Interview with a senior Forest Action Network administrator.
next section briefly outlines other lessons emerging from in-country opinions on what works and does not work with networks and the networking business in Uganda.\textsuperscript{42}

\textsuperscript{42} The section mainly draws information from informal interviews and the Uganda Lessons Workshop, which had a section on what works and what does not work with networks.
11. Further lessons learnt on networks and networking in Uganda

(a) To formalise or not to formalize?

Group sentiment during the Uganda Lessons Workshop corroborated individual opinions against formalization already highlighted under the section outlining the visibility of networks in Uganda. Self-reliant and loosely structured networks in which members contribute their own resources were argued to foster a sense of dedication, proximity and belonging than the usually remote secretariats of formalized networks. Formalized networks were also variously perceived to:

- Have secretariats that compete with the members they purport to serve
- Evolve into NGOs and cease to serve the purpose for which they were originally meant
- Overlook the importance of consulting and become detached from their constituencies

(b) Asymmetries of power and interests

These were noted to be characteristic of “mass membership” networks that bring together a diversity of individuals, organizations, and therefore, of interests and opinions, with some members inevitably feeling dominated and marginalized. Those who feel marginalized lose a sense of ownership, and therefore of commitment. In explaining the complexities between the concepts of marginalization and her sense of ownership and belonging to a big international network, a cynical lady informant quipped, “I do feel I belong to the network through membership, which to me, is almost close to open access. I, however, do not have a sense of ownership because the network is driven by powerful individuals who run and dominate everything.”\(^{43}\) In suggesting ways forward another participant argued that what brought people to network was common interest, and therefore, that some screening of such interests was important when networks are formed\(^{44}\).

(c) Vertical or horizontal integration

A preceding section has already considered this aspect of the structuring of networks in greater and more balanced perspective. Further “voices from the field” are, however, given here in the interests of more balanced coverage – this being mainly a study of perceptions. For reasons of timeliness, personal contact and proximity, a lady representative of a CBO that is a member of a district NGO network felt “more comfortable” with local networks\(^{45}\). In comparing the scope for a range of networks to have grassroots impact another lady informant felt that local networks held the greatest

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\(^{43}\) Interview with a female lecturer at the Faculty of Forestry and Nature Conservation, Makerere University.

\(^{44}\) Argument made by an officer with an environmental NGO during the Uganda Lessons Workshop.

\(^{45}\) Sentiments of a female participant from a grassroots organization during the Uganda Lessons Workshop.
promise followed by those that have decentralized, and thus have a local physical presence.

(d) Visionary leadership - The “bully” tag counterbalanced

Good and effective leaders were acknowledged as being key to networking, the “bully” stigma of some of their counterparts notwithstanding. Some networks were seen as owing much of their success, if not their very existence, to the energy and vision of their leaders. In giving a comparative picture of the role of leadership and the value for money consideration, an academic pointed out how FTPP implementation at country level had resulted in widely varying degrees of success - with some of the problems, like red tape, poor accounting procedures, lack of flexibility and innovation – directly attributable to poor leadership.

(e) Of staff turnovers and institutional memories

Most organizations visited acknowledged the erosive effect of rapid staff turnovers, and the need to put in place incentives to retain a critical mass of personnel in order to ensure continuity. An NGO representative, who has been a member of a research network for some 5 years decried the lack of continuity in leadership within the network, with almost all of the leaders having left “to study for their PhDs” over that five year period. He pointed out that there was no easy solution, but hinted at “setting rules” for the various stakeholders, the feasibility and efficacy of which are obviously debatable.

(f) Of funding and the politics of funding

As outlined earlier, the majority of the networks in Uganda rely on donor funding. The extent of dependence on donor funding is such that “local networks look at networking as a source of funding, which compromises their service functions”. But because most-donor funded projects are usually time-bound most networks are under pressure to secure reliable sources of adequate funding to keep themselves going. And such funding is reportedly not easy to secure, in part because donor interests and priorities are seen as “ever shifting”. Local organizations including networks have, nevertheless, become adept at navigating the funding trail to such an extent that “we now have a cycle in which networks recycle donors, whilst donors recycle networks”.

The dynamics of the negative interactions between aid money and project sustainability is often painted in simplistic terms. In giving a more nuanced picture an informant suggested that, contrary to widely held belief, the biggest constraint of donor aid on projects probably has less to do with the unreliability of its supply, than with the obsession with its acquisition on the demand side, which takes attention away from

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46 Interview with a female officer with an integrated rural development NGO.
47 Interview with a senior lecturer at the Faculty of Forestry and Nature Conservation, Makerere University.
48 Interview with an officer from a rural development NGO.
49 Interview with an officer from an environmental NGO.
50 Interview with an officer from an environmental NGO.
delivery and the search for alternatives. He went on to argue, “there is nothing like donor fatigue because aid is an industry”. The same informant also asserted, “I tend to believe what our President says, if Africa is ignored for some time, it will find its way out”.

The next section looks at policy, grassroots and other impacts in inasmuch as they present prospects and challenges for community forestry networks in Uganda.

12. Policy and other impacts at a range of scales

Policy impacts (of networks?)
The Uganda forest sector has experienced many changes at the policy, legal and institutional levels over the past 8 years. Notable among these are:

- The setting up, in 1998, of the Forest Sector Umbrella Programme, a sector-wide initiative to reform the forest sector through policy, legal and institutional changes
- The subsequent setting up of the Forest Sector Committee together with the complementary Secretariat
- The enactment of the 2001 Uganda Forest Policy
- Initiation of the process of drafting a new forest law, which is at an advanced Bill stage
- The development of a sector wide National Forest Plan
- The Plan for the Modernization of Agriculture (PMA) that provides a holistic framework for eradicating poverty through multi-sectoral interventions (including forestry) that enable people to improve their livelihoods in a sustainable manner
- The institutionalisation of collaborative forest management through a distinct unit within the Forest Department, etc

One of the underlying themes of this study was to understand the underlying drivers, as well as the role that international and other networks have contributed to such changes, which in Uganda, have unfolded at a rapid pace, and are still ongoing. Most informants were of the opinion that it was impossible to attribute the changes to the impact of a network or networks, or for that matter, any one factor alone – there being many factors that are thought to have acted in concert at different times and scales. The following were among the most frequently mentioned factors: pressure from donors; national interests, including political and other considerations; the momentum generated by related reforms in other sectors within the country (Table 5); the weight of related international conventions to which the country is signatory (Table 6); the sheer weight of tenurial, use and other pressures from the grassroots level; and the weight of shifting discourses including the international back-to-the people movement variously championed by a diverse array of actors, including community forestry and other networks.

Box 1. Recent key national and legal changes affecting the forest sector in Uganda (Source: Government of Uganda, 2001).

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Interview with an officer from an environmental NGO.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legislation or policy</th>
<th>Year enacted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constitution of the Republic of Uganda</td>
<td>1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The National Environmental Management Policy of Uganda</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The National Environmental Statute</td>
<td>1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Water Statute</td>
<td>1995</td>
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<tr>
<td>The National Policy for the Conservation and Management of Wetland Resources</td>
<td>1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Uganda Wildlife Statute</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Local Government Act</td>
<td>1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gender Policy</td>
<td>1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Forest Reserves Order</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Land Act</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Uganda Wildlife Policy</td>
<td>1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The National Water Policy</td>
<td>1999</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 Key international obligations that affect the forest sector in Uganda (Source: Government of Uganda, 2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International Convention</th>
<th>Year adopted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands</td>
<td>1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Convention for the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage</td>
<td>1972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species</td>
<td>1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bonn Convention on Migratory Species</td>
<td>1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agenda 21</td>
<td>1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The International Convention on Biological Diversity</td>
<td>1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Convention to Combat Desertification</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whilst people were wary of claiming direct causal linkages between their activities and changes in policy, AFRENA was of the idea that its activities, because of their cross-sectoral nature, had a direct bearing on the development and adoption of the Plan for the Modernization of Agriculture. With regards to relevance of the plan at the grassroots, an informant saw the plan as standing in contradiction with the customary tenurial settings and livelihood strategies in the peasant sector. Confining the analysis of change and related change agents, as in investigating the impact of network activities on policy changes is, however, rather restrictive. For instance, in emphasizing on potential reverse impacts Dr Peter Ndemere, during the Uganda Experiences Workshop, drew attention of participants to the second policy statement of the Uganda Forest Policy that emphasizes sustainable management of natural forests on private lands. He noted that the statement gave due regard to the hitherto mostly ignored aspect of community forest management on private lands, and that strategies listed for its implementation sustained the space and opened up challenges for community forestry networking. Some of the implementation strategies envisaged for that policy thrust include:

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52 Interview with a female lecturer at the Faculty of Forestry and Nature Conservation, Makerere University.
• Raise awareness of the ownership of forests and trees on private land
• Investigate options for economic, social and cultural incentives to encourage private owners to maintain and manage natural forests
• Develop capacity of institutions such as local governments, traditional institutions and user groups to sustainably manage the private forests
• Develop the capacity of individuals, including forest owners, women’s and youth groups to support the management of private forests and integrate trees into farming systems
• Encourage NGOs and CBOs to support private forest management
• Explore and promote options for management by owners themselves, with advice and assistance from the relevant service providers
• Review the Reserved Species regulations, etc

In general, no fundamental contradictions were envisaged or reported between the agendas of international community forestry networks and those of government. An informant from an advocacy organization noted that the framing agendas of networks, for instance, poverty alleviation, are usually based on, and are in line with existing government policy, and that conflicts only arose when government shifts these goals and principles, and that advocacy networks try to address bad policy.\(^{53}\)

Similarly, it was seen as untenable to establish direct causal linkages between network activities and a variety of changes at the grassroots level, as these are seen as the effects of many interacting factors. The magnitude of such change, (or lack) of change is next considered inasmuch as it represents the cumulative effect of complex sets of interacting factors. The assessments listed are those drawn directly from a broad and extended scooping exercise of forestry initiatives in the Uganda smallholder sector (Uganda Forest Sector Coordination Unit, 2001: page iii). The views were captured in a report appropriately titled “Voices from the Field”. It is important to highlight what was identified as well advanced or lagging because these have implications on prospects and challenges for community forestry networking in Uganda. The following is a verbatim list of some of the instructive observations made:

**Grassroots impacts**

(a) **With respect to poverty alleviation and equity aspects**
The impact of forestry initiatives on poverty has been weak. It is generally the relatively richer farmers that have been able to invest land, labour and cash that have been able to benefit from these initiatives. It seems the poorest of the poor are not being reached by forestry initiatives.

(b) **On coverage by service delivery institutions**
Delivery agencies targeting a few stakeholder groups and concentrating their efforts in a few specific areas.

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\(^{53}\) Interview with a senior executive of an advocacy NGO. The point was also reiterated in an interview with a senior lecturer at the Faculty of Forestry and Nature Conservation, Makerere University.
(c) **On differential dependence on forest resources**
Non-Wood Forest Product users are generally from communities living adjacent to the forest and are especially notable among the poor and emphasis needs to be put on them.

(d) **On access to technology and markets**
Improved processing technology adds value to the resources and makes a significant impact on livelihood but the market structure for new high quality products needs to be improved.

(e) **On value of local knowledge systems**
There are a number of traditional forest management systems but their significance tends to be under-emphasized

(f) **On land tenure**
Insecure, or poor awareness of, land and tree tenure regulations, which removed incentives for investment and good stewardship, etc.

Some of these constrains, including inequalities of access to resources based on ethnic lines, and elite domination in collaborative resource management committees are also reported in a wide range of case studies from Uganda (Kanyesigye and Muramira, 2001; Namara and Nsabagasani, 2001; Muhereza, 2002).

**Conceptual level impacts**

In line with Davies’s (2001) strand of analysis networking activities like awareness raising can influence people through attitudinal changes, whilst those like lobbying and advocacy elicit behavioural changes. The significance of attitudinal changes or “invisible” impacts is variously acclaimed in the literature through terms such as institutionalising, formalizing, internalising and mainstreaming – all of which are part of a toolkit that provides a vocabulary calling for alternatives and countering domineering, and often flawed, viewpoints.

13. **Synopsis**

**Contextual level remarks relating to the community forestry movement in Uganda**

9. Over 70% of Uganda’s forests and woodlands occur in the private domain, but current community forestry approaches appear to over-emphasize on protected forests, being mainly institutionalised through collaborative forest management, which gives a spatial bias.

10. Most of the collaborative forest management initiatives operate through project-based approaches. Restricted project timeframes constrain tracking of processes across temporal scales, whilst conditionalities associated with donor support inevitably erode autonomy.

11. Most of the projects are implemented at localized sites, which constraints the relevance of lessons learnt mostly across the spatial dimension.
12. Waves of political and fiscal decentralization have swept across Uganda resulting in the creation of a nation-wide superstructure of bodies for decentralized government – but much still needs to be done to give these decentralizations a democratic orientation.

13. Limited environmental decentralization has occurred, mainly through the superposition of environmental committees on administrative and local government structures – but it still lacks complementary elements necessary to democratise it. For instance the emphasis needs to shift from mere privileging through benefit sharing towards greater local decision-making and control. There needs to be downward accountability, and even in the current set-up the community dividends need to be more meaningful in terms of capita value to constitute a credible incentive, whilst the remittances need to be more regular and predictable, this applying especially so for schemes at the forest margin zone.

14. Environmental decentralization to local authorities is still highly circumscribed, and the authorities appear to be under tight administrative and fiscal control of the Forest Department – they are only allowed to control forests that are less than 100 hectares, and even in these forests permit issuing and revenue collection are done by FD officials, with revenue sharing arrangement skewed against the local authorities.

15. A policy has been put in place that broadens the scope of community forest management, emphasizing on community forestry management on private lands as well as the concept of multiple uses and multiple users as well as the roles of he various stakeholders including facilitators under whom networks fall. The policy is only recent but the challenge needs to be taken up.

16. The underlying causes of the policy and legal shifts and other changes cannot be attributed to one factor in isolation, these being the cumulative effect of many interacting factors.

Lessons learnt with respect to networking structures and processes

6. A variety of networks exist in Uganda at a variety of scales, which offers scope for cross-scale insights, but the constraints is that collaboration among them is considered weak.

7. Formalization was viewed as a liability to networking because a formal network “ends up in tension with its members”, and “impairs their visibility” as well as “eroding their identity and autonomy.”

8. No networking tool is necessarily better or worse than the other, and networking tools seldom work best in isolation but in combination with other tools.

9. In terms of vertical and horizontal links, no structure appears better than the other as they complement each other, with the question being, perhaps, that of balance.

10. Strategic points of intervention including, awareness raising, capacity building and advocacy are synergistic components of the whole process of seeking to influence change.
References


Putnam 1984?


Summers, 1948


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