



# Socio Economic Baseline Report for Agoro-Agu forest landscape.

Available options for REDD+ implementation in Uganda.



In partnership with



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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

IUCN would like to extend gratitude to DANIDA for the generous support towards the entire process of conducting this socio-economic baseline assesment for Agoro-Agu landscape which included various activities involving different stakeholders. The project partners (ECOTRUST, Environmental Alert and Lamwo District Local Government) are particularly appreciated for their active participation, technical guidance and ownership of the entire process.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

IUCN, ENVIRONMENTAL ALERT and ECOTRUST, are partnering to implement the global project “Towards pro-poor REDD+: Phase II in Uganda, which is one of the four countries in which the project is implemented. In Uganda, the project sites are Agoro- Agu and Mt Elgon landscapes.

The project aims at promoting the adoption of “pro-poor” principles and rights-based approaches, to strengthen the conservation, governance and sustainable management of forest landscapes at local, national and global scales. It is based on the recognition that local land tenure security enforced through democratic governance systems supports sustainable land use and reduced forest deforestation and degradation. In other words, the project aims at supporting the development and testing of responsive REDD+ social safeguard systems that also reduce forest deforestation and degradation.

This baseline study therefore is one of the project milestones that provide the basis for project implementation in the Agoro-Agu landscape. It highlights the livelihood status of the community, their level of dependence on forest resources, their land tenure arrangements, the factors that affect their land tenure, access and forest use and their governance arrangement that influence land tenure, forest use and livelihoods.

The study shows that the Agoro-Agu community is highly impoverished and is struggling to rebuild itself after a long extended period of war. The community’s remoteness and lack of infrastructure are some of the key factors that are hindering its progress. Therefore, the study shows that the most important livelihood base for the community is the natural resources. They were significantly used by all categories of the population.

However, the study shows that despite the important role natural resources play in securing the community’s livelihood, they are under growing pressure from the rising population and the growing cash based livelihood needs. Therefore their management visa-vis the community needs will be critical in shaping sustainable development in the Agoro-Agu landscape.

The study proposes that the democratic governance of the resources will be crucial in shaping secure community livelihoods. The three critical institutions that influence and will shape the democratic governance of the forest resources are the National Forestry Authority (NFA), the Clan systems and the Local government. The study proposes ways of building on the opportunities that exist among these institutions and addressing the potential risks there in.

The REDD+ project therefore can support the Agoro-Agu community transform and shape the management and use of their forest resources for their current livelihood security and posterity. The key issues for consideration include: Securing access to forest resources, securing land access and social support for the most vulnerable, avoiding pitfalls of degradation, building on local organizations, enhancing local government services and accountability through citizenship, empowering communities by working through their local government, clans and VSLA systems and regulating the market. The study therefore proposes some strategic actions for consideration by the project.

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# ACRONYMS

CDO	- Community Development Officer
CFM	- Collaborative Forest Management
CFR	- Central Forest Reserve
DEO	- District Environment Officer
IUCN	- International Union for Conservation of Nature
LG	- Local Government
NFA	- National Forest Authority
NR	- Natural Resources
NRM	- Natural Resources Management
Msc.	- Master of Science
M&E	- Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO	- Non-Government Organization
PRA	- Participatory Rural Appraisal
REDD+	- Reduced Emission from Forest Deforestation and Degradation Plus
VSLA	- Village Saving and Loan Associations
IGAs	- Income Generating Activities.

# 1.0 Introduction

The project “Towards pro-poor REDD+: Phase II: Promoting pro-poor REDD+ principles and rights-based approaches, to strengthen the conservation, governance and sustainable management of landscapes in Cameroon, Ghana, Guatemala, Papua Province of Indonesia and Uganda” is a four year initiative. It is coordinated by IUCN and funded by DANIDA. It commenced in 2014.

The project aims at influencing local, national and global REDD+ development processes. It is based on the recognition that local land tenure security enforced through democratic governance systems, supports sustainable land use and reduced forest degradation. Therefore the project positions communities at the center of REDD+ negotiations to avoid the negative REDD+ risks. Particularly, it aims at including the vulnerable, such as women, forest dependent communities and indigenous people in REDD+ negotiations.

The project is based on the rationale that whereas “forest dependent people’s livelihoods strategies” have been viewed as one of the major drivers of deforestation and degradation, addressing REDD+ should not compromise their livelihoods. It should instead, enable the clarification and security of their tenure and natural resources rights<sup>1</sup>. It should lead to the removal of imperatives that underlie “destructive” socio-economic strategies that expose people and forests to degradation. Therefore REDD+ should not risk but enhance security of vulnerable people’s livelihood.

The goal of the project therefore is “that by 2020, national climate change mitigation initiatives incorporate PPAs (Pro-Poor Principles) and HRBAs (Human Right-based Approaches) to deliver policies and have implemented programs that reduce deforestation and forest degradation whilst simultaneously contributing to the improvement of local livelihoods and long term security of forest carbon stocks in key forest-rich regions”.<sup>2</sup>

In essence, the project aims at supporting the development and testing of responsive REDD+ social safeguard systems that also reduce forest degradation. These safeguard systems have to emanate from the local, and be integrated in the national and global REDD+ design.

This baseline study therefore provides the basis of the project implementation in one of the two project sites in Uganda- Agoro-Agu landscape. It highlights the livelihood status of the community, their level of dependence on forest resources, their land tenure arrangements, the factors that affect their land tenure, access and forest use and their governance arrangement that influence land tenure, forest use and livelihoods.

## 1.1 Terms of Reference of the Consultancy:

The strategic aim of the assignment was to establish the baselines against which the project will demonstrate the value of integrating pro-poor principles and rights-based approaches into the Uganda National REDD+ Strategy, and other frameworks for sustainable management of forest resources in the country. It is expected that the “pro-poor” and human rights based management interventions for sustainable forest management, should simultaneously contribute to the improvement of local livelihoods and long-term security of forest carbon stocks in the Agoro-Agu landscape. The lessons from the project will be used to influence government processes.

<sup>1</sup> Uganda’s REDD Preparedness Proposal considers forest dependency as one of the seven key drivers of forests deforestation and degradation.

<sup>2</sup> REDD+ Phase II, Project document

The specific outcome of the baseline is to inform the designing of feasible pro-poor and human rights based interventions, of the REDD+ project component, that is to be implemented in the Agoro-Agu landscape. Particularly, it will inform the REDD+ interventions in the project that enable the design and implementation of equitable benefit sharing models. The assessment aimed at getting a better understanding of the following specific issues:

- a) The stakeholders within the Agoro-Agu landscape: their stakes in the resources, their current roles, responsibilities, institutional set-up, their current concerns and future aspirations as far as the natural resources management is concerned.
- b) Communities' socio-economic and cultural dimensions, including aspirations, emerging issues, and key economic activities within the landscape especially those that impact, or are impacted by the forest and natural resources
- c) The relationship between the people and the natural resources and how this has evolved over the time and lessons that have been learned
- d) The characteristics of the natural resources especially forest and how the resource is being managed, with special emphasis on the human rights and pro-poor considerations
- e) Future desired status of the resources in relation to possible management interventions considering the sustainable livelihood needs especially of the poor, their fears and aspirations.

## 2.0 Study Methods

### 2.1 The study site, the context<sup>3</sup>

Agoro-Agu Central Forest Reserve (CFR) is located along the border between Uganda and Southern Sudan, at 3°40'-3° 53N and 32°42'-33°4E, and an altitude ranging between 110-2700M A. S. L<sup>4</sup>. The forest reserve covers a total of 26,508 hectares<sup>5</sup>. It was gazetted in 1937, as a natural forest for biodiversity conservation.

Therefore the mandate for its management is with the National Forest Authority<sup>6</sup> (NFA). In theory, its designation as a natural forest implies that no commercial extraction of forest resources is allowed except for subsistence use under a framework of Collaborative Forest Management (CFM). However, in practice, the community accesses the resources for both subsistence and commercial purposes without the CFM framework in place.

The Agoro-Agu CFR lies in the sub counties of Agoro and Lokungu, in Lamwo district. Agoro sub-county hosts the largest part of the CFR, accounting for about 90%<sup>7</sup>. Consequently, it was the focus of the study. The CFR spans all the 6 parishes that make the Agoro sub county: Lopulingi, Ngacino, Rudi, which are smaller and located adjacent to the forest reserve and Pobar, Pawach, Potika, which are larger with some villages located far from the forest reserve. The six parishes are composed of forty-six villages. A village has an average population of 800 people or an average of 100 households<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> As synthesized from the sub county development plan

<sup>4</sup> Davenport and Howard, 1996 C.f Gorsevski

<sup>5</sup> Agoro-Agu Forest Reserves Management Plan 2009-2019

<sup>6</sup> NFA is a semi autonomous central government institution, mandated to manage all Central Forest Reserves (CFR) in the country.

<sup>7</sup> Consultant's own estimation from the discussions, literature review and field observations

<sup>8</sup> Primary data

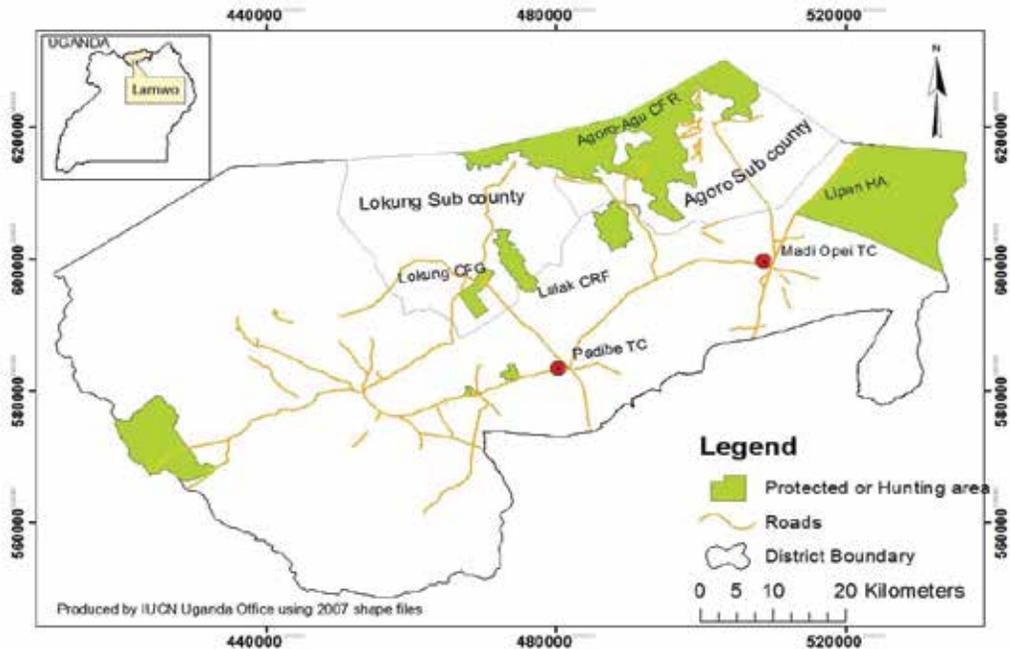


Figure 1: Location of Agora-Agu Forest reserve

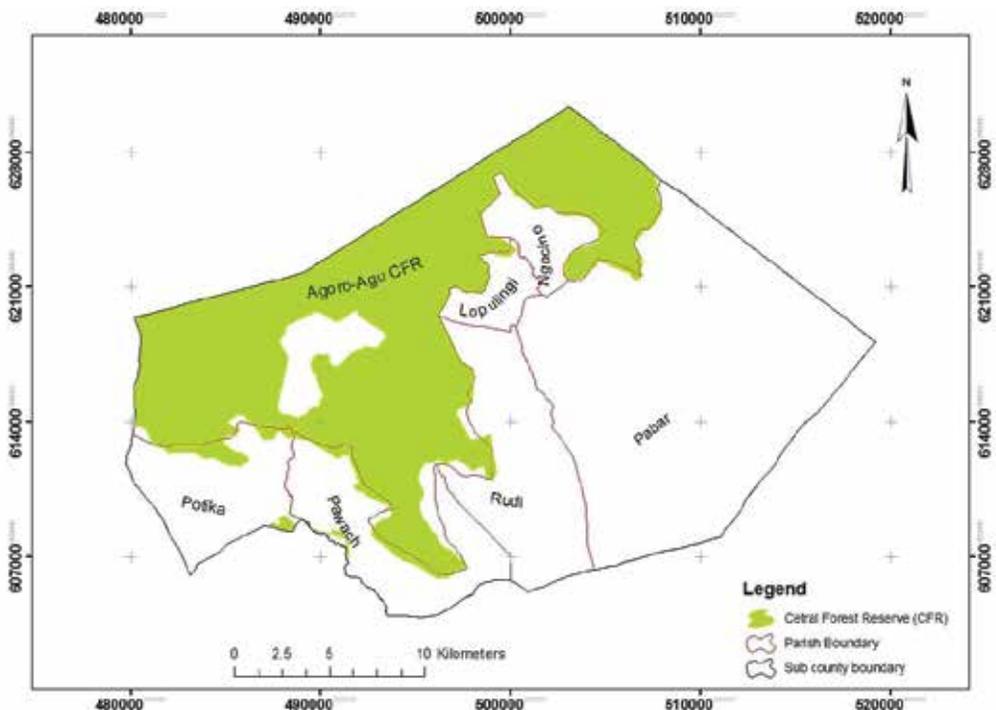
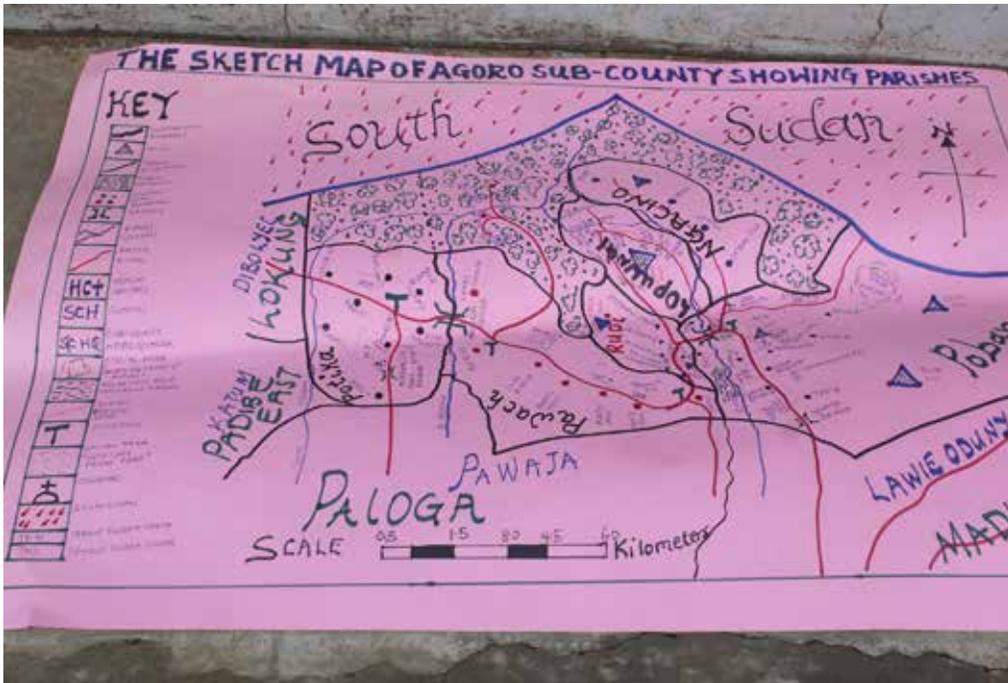


Figure 2: Maps showing location of the Agora-Agu landscape

Rocky hills and a mountainous relief characterize the Agora-Agu landscape in the North and Northwest and in the East and South are undulating plains with some valleys and swamps. The CFR occupies the mountain and hills. The community settlements and farmlands are located in the lower areas of the landscape.



**Figure 3: Community sketch of the Agoro subcounty**

The CFR is a catchment for two streams, the Okura, in the East of the sub county and Aringo stream in the West. The Okura flows down Southwards to the low lying plain across Agoro trading center, while the Aringo stream runs Southwards.

The vegetation of the landscape majorly includes Afromontane undifferentiated forest, Dry Combretum wooded grassland, Butyrospermum wooded grassland, Low land Bamboo, and Upland Acacia wooded grassland<sup>9</sup>. The CFR is also said to have endemic species of the Eastern Afro Montane hot spot<sup>10</sup>.

The temperature of the sub county averages at a minimum of 12°C and a maximum of 27°C maximum in the lowlands<sup>11</sup>. It is also indicated to have a fairly distributed rainfall pattern received twice a year March- June and August to November. There is a dry spell in the months of June-July and Nov-March<sup>12</sup>. However, the community reported increased variability of the climatic conditions.

The sub county hosts a total population of 29,940<sup>13</sup>, which is expected to almost double in 5 years to 42,548 people as indicated in the table 1 below. This correlates with the literature that indicates that the North of the country has the highest growth rates<sup>14</sup>. However, the population density of Agoro sub county is indicated to be only 29.3<sup>15</sup> persons per km<sup>2</sup> which is below the current national average of 174 persons per km<sup>2</sup>. The implication here is that land in the area is still quite abundant.

<sup>9</sup> Volume 11: Atlas and Tree Species Composition for Uganda

<sup>10</sup> Terms of Reference

<sup>11</sup> Agoro Sub-county Development Plan 2015/16-2019/20

<sup>12</sup> ibid

<sup>13</sup> The 2014 Provisional Census figures indicates 18,332

<sup>14</sup> EOTRUST Report 2009

<sup>15</sup> ECOTRUST report 2009

**Table 1: Population Statistics for Agoro Sub-county**

Parish	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
Pobar	6,789	6,968	7,207	7,966	8,809
Lopulingi	5,078	5,556	6,607	6,895	7,480
Ngacino	2,823	3,098	4,077	4,978	5,633
Rudi	3,845	4,652	4,893	4,901	5,076
Potika	6,424	6,905	7,659	7,777	7,946
Pawach	4,981	5,580	5,942	6,728	7,604
<b>Total</b>	<b>29,940</b>	<b>32,759</b>	<b>36,385</b>	<b>39,245</b>	<b>42,548</b>

The sub county infrastructure is very limited. It includes 2 markets in Potika and Pobar parishes, a health center II in Potika and Pawach parishes and a health center III in Pobar parish. It has 8 Primary schools but no vocational or secondary schools. It only has a 30KM all seasonal road. Important to note is the fact that the infrastructure is only located in Potika, Pobar and Pawach parishes which are farther away from the forest. Relatedly, it was determined that all the district and NGO programs are concentrated in the three parishes due to their proximity to infrastructure. The parishes that were in close proximity to the forest have much less developed infrastructure and government social services.

## 2.2 The Assessment Process

The assessment approach was designed to achieve three key objectives for the project. The first was to build capacity of the project team in undertaking pro-poor assessment using the PROFOR-IUCN Poverty-Toolkit <sup>16</sup>. The second was to establish the baselines that inform the project implementation. The third was to raise awareness about the project at the district and community level, while simultaneously mobilizing ownership and participation of the community. Consequently, the assessment involved four key steps, a) desk study b) training of key project actors – implementing partners and district staff, c) collection of data among the community and d) data analysis and report writing.

### 2.2.1 Desk Review:

The literature that the consultant engaged included, baseline reports that have been carried out in the area, the sub county development plans, the Agoro- Agu forest management plan, census reports, some scholarly articles, the baseline assessment reports of Mt Elgon and the project documents. The review informed the context of the study, the gaps and the tools of study. A synthesis report of the desk review is attached as Annex i

<sup>16</sup> The PROFOR-IUCN Poverty Tool Kit – developed by CIFOR, IUCN, ODI AND WINROCK is used to collect and analyze data that illuminates linkages between forests and poverty for particular communities ([www.iucn.org](http://www.iucn.org))

## 2.2.2 Training of key project actors.

**Table 2: Members of Assessment Team Trained**

Name of participant	Designation / Institution
Mr. Polycarp Mwima	IUCN Programme Officer
Mr Chris Lutankome	IUCN Field Assistant/Driver
Ms Aldrine Kirabo	ECOTRUST Programme Officer,
Mr Ceasar Kimbugwe	Environmental Alert Programme Officer
Ms Carolyne Nakajuubi	Monitoring and Learning Officer
Ms Auma Mary	Lamwo District Community Development Officer (CDO)
Mr Richard Komakech	District Natural resources Officer
Mr Ocan Jackeo	CDO
MrRichard Okuku	Uganda Local Government Association representative

In addition to the trained team above, the technical and political heads of the sub county joined the assessment team.

The training content included a general awareness about climate change; the global and national REDD+ processes, the “Pro-poor” principles and the Human Rights Based issues related to REDD+. The awareness was then followed by an introduction and practical application of the PROFOR-IUCN poverty Tool Kit as highlighted in Table 4 below.



**Figure 4: Assessment team in training**

Feedback on the training and data collection exercise indicates that all the members of the research team, acknowledged, to either have acquired or improved their knowledge about Climate Change in general, REDD+, and capacity to use participatory appraisal methods in undertaking baseline assessments. They appreciated the toolkit, and found it very productive in obtaining holistic information about a community.

That is, it enables the understanding of the linkages between livelihoods and particular resources; the differentials in society between genders, wealth categories and the differentials in the use of resources. One of the participants Ceasar Kimbugwe noted that he would use the tools for his Msc. data collection exercise. While other partners indicated that they would use the tool in other projects.

Since Lamwo district is relatively new and the district staff were in the process of planning and preparation of their development plan, they indicated that the participatory data collection process would complement theirs with more nuanced details that explain the condition of the population.

Partners noted that communities prioritized livelihood issues over conservation for project intervention. Therefore the tools helped in highlighting how to address livelihoods issues that directly enhance conservation. The tools highlight the cultural, institutional, as well as power dynamics in relation to livelihoods and resources and hence the entry points for project intervention. Basing on the capacity acquired, the team members recognized the possibility of employing the poverty tool kit in their M&E framework for consistency.

The team also noted that the tools enable inclusive participation of the community to reflect on own situation and to propose feasible solutions to their predicaments. They enable active participation of the community as well as forging consensus on the possible desirable vision and actions to achieve the vision. Therefore, the process had created awareness and the mobilization of a community consensus, capacity and vision to actively participate in the project.

Overall, the approach highlights many entry points of project intervention based on the differentials that the assessment approach reveals in the community. They help to show that the community is not homogenous and that there are some fundamentals that lead to equitable participation and benefit from the project.

### **2.2.3 The limitations of the Study Approach**

The limited time, in which the assessments were applied, only highlights key issues that may require further interrogation. Some of these are highlighted for consideration during the implementation process.

The approach is time consuming and requires engaging the respondents for long periods and up to 5 days. It therefore runs the danger of exhausting the respondents. For this assessment, the period was reduced to 2 full days. Therefore respondents were engaged for longer hours than recommended. In addition, some details such as gender analysis were modified.

The approach raised expectations that the project may not meet. It would have been even more challenging where there is no project to address the issues that emerge.

The team tried to moderate expectations. However, at the feedback stage, the community should be clearly helped to understand the limits of the project and avenues to address the larger issues that were raised.

The language was a barrier, however, dividing the district staff between each of the four research teams addressed this problem.

### 2.2.4 The Assessment Approach

The assessment was a Participatory Rapid Appraisal (PRA) and therefore provides a snap shot of the situation of the community on the ground. It highlighted areas that could need longer and detailed analysis. Nonetheless, it was rigorous enough to enable conclusive evidence that does inform the project implementation. The study employed the PROFOR-IUCN Poverty-Forest Linkages Tool Kit<sup>17</sup>, which allows inclusive participation of the target community in understanding and shaping the project. The approach allowed immediate feedback to communities on the outcomes and therefore the uses of the research results to inform the project and their own livelihood actions.

### 2.2.5 Sample Sites and Population

As already indicated, the study was carried out in Agoro sub-county in which the largest part of the CFR forest is located. The study unit was the parish. Out of the six parishes that make Agoro sub-county, a purposive sample of four was made, and from each, a representative village was selected. The sample selection was made by a focus group of district leaders and staff. This included the District Environment Officer (DEO), Community Development Officers (CDOs) at District and Sub county level, and the Sub county Chief and Chairman.

The criteria for the selecting the sample Parish/village included: proximity to forest reserve; the population size and the perception of the general well being of the population. Table 3 shows the parishes and villages that were selected.

**Table 3: Study Sites**

Parish /Village	Criteria:
PawachParish/Peny Buk Village	Located South of sub-county. The village is in close Proximity to the CFR and perceived to have high population of poor people. Hosts limited infrastructure
Lopulingi/Polucire Village	Located North of the sub county. The village and parish are in close proximity to the CFR select but perceived to have a richer population. Hosts limited infrastructure.
Pobar parish/Tegot Kwera North Village	Located West of the sub county. It hosts various infrastructure, health center, roads, and sub county main markets. The village is located far from the CFR and considered to have high population of poor people.
Potika Parish/ Cwingolonoyo Village	Located East, host various infrastructures. The select village is located far from CFR. It is considered to have a richer population.

<sup>17</sup> The PROFOR-IUCN Poverty Tool Kit – developed by CIFOR, IUCN, ODI AND WINROCK is used to collect and analyze data that illuminates linkages between forests and poverty for particular communities ([www.iucn.org](http://www.iucn.org))

The four villages provide a representation of the spread of the Agoro-Agu landscape. A Sample population of 160 households was made as indicated in table 4 below.

**Table 4: PROFOR-IUCN Poverty Toolkit and Sampling Size**

TOOL	What it is and how it was used in the study
1.Wealth Ranking	The tool discusses the perceptions of well being based on a package of indicators developed and agreed on by leaders and some community members (in each case an average of 30 people participated). Based on indicators, all households in a village are ranked into four categories: “very poor”, “poor”, “averagely wealthy” and “wealthy”. Once all households in a village were classified, a representative sample of 10 (5 men and 5 women) was selected from each category to form the a sample of 40 respondents per village. Hence and a total sample of 160 respondents. However in Pobar, the sample of the wealthy category was too low (2) that it was dropped.
2.Landscape Analysis	An informal tool that captures the visual and discusses the perception of the community’s value of the landscape. It captures the use of natural resources, the stakeholders, rules they apply and the services and infrastructure they access e.g roads, banks, schools, health centers and markets etc. it enables the study team familiarize with the key issues in the land scape that facilitate the discussion with the community. The process was carried out with about 10-15 community members of the community.
Stakeholder Analysis	A tool that visually represents the stakeholders in the landscape that affect the use of the natural resources and the general socio economic status of the population.
3.Timeline and Trends Analysis	It tracks the trends that have affected community livelihood over a period of time. It builds on other tools by explaining the critical reasons that underlie the changes that characterize a community. The tool highlights the stakeholders and the changes over time This tool involves the elderly community members.
4.Livelihood Analysis	This is the core tool of the study that analyses household dependency on various resources available to a community. It highlights the dependence in two categories for cash- and non-cash, by wealth category and by gender. The sample for this tool was 40 respondents per site
5.Household Income expenditure analysis	The tool helps us determine the capacity of a household to fulfill its economic needs. A sample of 2 respondents per wealth category at each site was taken to. Therefore a total of 40 respondents in all the sites was used.
6.Problem and Solution Matrix	A tool to enlist the major problems related to deforestation, forest degradation, forest conservation and management as well as reforestation and afforestation as perceived by the households, the solutions they propose against each problem, and the institution they feel can help them to address the problems. This was carried out by the 40 respondents that were selected

However, it is important to note that the process was open to the community. Therefore, more people witnessed and participated in the process. Apart from the livelihood analysis where the sample was strictly enforced, other steps such as the wealth ranking, land scape analysis and time trends, involved more community members. This was in fact encouraged as it enables transparency, open discussion, ownership of results, and triangulation and general awareness about the outcome of the research process.

# 3.0 Findings

The findings of the study are presented against the specific outcome of the assignment as highlighted in the Terms of Reference.

## 3.1.0 The Stakeholders within the Agoro-Agu Landscape

This section explores the stakeholders that have a direct influence of the management of the natural resources within the Agoro-Agu landscape. The analysis examines their stake in the resources, their current roles, responsibilities, institutional set-up, their current concerns and future aspirations as far as the natural resources management is concerned.

The key stakeholders that have a direct influence on the natural resources management in the Agoro-Agu landscape include the National Forest Authority, the local government, the central government, the Clan, NGOs, VSLA groups, Traders, and the Community. They are presented below.

### 3.1.1 The National Forestry Authority (NFA)

The National Forest Authority is the mandated institution to manage the Agoro-Agu CFR. As already indicated, it is a natural forest reserve. Therefore, in theory no off-take is permitted except for research and subsistence purposes. This is clearly indicated in the Agoro-Agu forest management plan, 2009-2019, viz “the forest adjacent communities are allowed to do only those activities that are non-destructive to the forests. These may include collection of firewood, water and other non-timber forest products (NTFP)”.

Further, the NFA policy indicates that community access to the CFR has to be based on the CFM. However, on the ground, there were no formal CFM agreements signed between NFA and the community. Nonetheless, the community did freely access the forest for both subsistence and commercial products.

At the time of the study, it was determined that NFA was incapacitated in its role of managing the forest reserve. In fact it was implementing no activities because of inadequate funding. The CFR budget deficit was four fold<sup>18</sup>. The NFA has allocated only one forest ranger to guard and protect the entire forest from encroachment. In addition to the low funding, the low capacity is attributed to the breakdown of all management systems during the war period. This was also the time when the sections of the forest adjacent to internally displaced peoples camps<sup>19</sup> were most degraded.

NFA staff also attribute the low capacity to the categorisation of the CFR as a natural forest as opposed to a production forest. This, they argued, does not afford them the opportunity to generate income from the forest products especially timber.

Besides the low capacity, it was determined that the challenges NFA faced, were due to a lack of collaboration and non-alignment of different government strategies. In the 1970s, following a government decree to increase crop productivity, the prisons department occupied part of the CFR to grow cash crops.

<sup>18</sup> Agoro- Agu Forest Management Plan 2009-2019 shows that out of the UGX 8,000,000 ( \$ 3200 ) it requested for annually, but was provided UGX 2,000,000. (\$800)

<sup>19</sup> However as Gorverski argues, that the larger part of the forest was recovered/protected by the war due to the limited human activity.

According to the sector manager, NFA has not succeeded to evict them even if they are treated as encroachers. The presence of the prison and its infrastructure attracted a sizeable community to move inside the CFR. The challenge for the NFA therefore is that this population is expanding and encroaching on more areas of the reserve. The area occupied is estimated to be equivalent to a village settlement that averages about 50 households<sup>20</sup>. The district has gone ahead to provide the community with a primary school and health center in disregard of the protection requirements of the reserve.

The non-alignment of government strategies is also demonstrated by district support to the cultivation of the new cash crops, wheat and barley within the CFR whose higher altitude conditions favour their growth. A production enclave is thus located in Lamwaka and Lopulingi parishes.

It was established that barley and wheat production is supported by the NAADS programme, which organized study visits for the community to other wheat and barley producing areas. This in turn served as a legitimization of the production system by the local government. Consequently, more community members have joined the industry. During this study, the community indicated that the entire parish population in Lopulingi is involved in the chain of barley production. That is either as owners or as laborers. The implication is that the destruction is not limited to forest deforestation and degradation and the resultant loss of the various goods and services, but it risks leading to dangerous effects such as erosion and landslides.

Despite the low capacity of the NFA to manage the CFR, it has not yet collaborated with the local government and the community to subsidize its management. Note that the main approach considered effective by NFA is protection through enforcing patrols and technical forest management. It can be argued to that effect that if NFA was well capacitated, it would have had patrols and evictions of all the encroachers. All use would have to be vetted by them.

## **OBSERVATION:**

NFA may not have taken advantage of working with communities under the policy provision of the CFM, because, it may have seen them as a threat to the forest, rather than as integral to the ecosystem. In other words, they may not necessarily have considered the community's relationship with the forest as crucial for their life and therefore with a right to shape how the forest is managed. This should be considered a missed opportunity that needs to be taken up.

It is critical to note that when a forest is enclosed, it transforms and risks undermining both individual and collective rights of communities. Therefore, rather than think that forests would be destroyed by a community, it should be recognized that communities have an interest in maintaining forests for their life. The imperatives that forces them to turn on this critical livelihood source should be considered first rather than address the symptoms. It should be considered that communities have a right to negotiate and decide their forest management role.

NFA indicates that it had not earnestly pursued the implementation of CFM in the area due to the insurgency and limited funding but has planned to pursue the CFM provisions in its 2009-2019 management plans. This is an opportunity that the project can support to ensure the rights and roles of the community in the use, management and security of the forest and livelihoods are demonstrated.

The other key challenge it highlights is the very limited income generating options for the community. Yet, increasingly, the population needs cash income to meet its key basic needs, such as healthcare and education that are insufficiently supplied by the government. This situation points at a need to consider how NFA and communities can work together to respond to these new pressures as well as conserve the forest for posterity.

The inadequate capacity of NFA therefore, would have implied that Agoro-Agu CFR is under managed and degraded. Yet, Agoro Agu is a largely intact forest, except for the degraded enclaves where barley is grown and the prison community has settled.

The other degraded portions are at the periphery where former IDP camps were located and where there is loss of some valuable trees like Teak and Mahogany to timber dealers. According to the NFA, Agoro Agu CFR still has diverse flora and fauna including the endemic Cycad plant and Bamboo<sup>21</sup>. The community boasts of the wide range of medicinal plants and vegetables that are accessible from the forest and the landscape around.

This reveals that the community has been involved in the use and conservation of the forest in the absence of NFA. Except for the areas where it is being turned into large wheat fields, the study shows that communities have never stopped using the forest. Therefore, the fact that most of it is still healthy, points to the agency of the community in conserving the forest. This is not withstanding the natural protection afforded it by the remoteness of the CFR and the availability of abundant community land that offsets the use.

### **OBSERVATION:**

It is important not to perceive the communities as a threat to natural resources which would have been a justification to separate them from the CFR, but to be seen as integral to the ecosystem. They use and manage it as a necessity for their life. This perception opens up and expands the opportunities for low cost and more sustainable ways for the co-management of the CFR.

It also helps to illuminate that the particular imperatives in their context, which force the communities to use the forest differently.

For example, it is important to consider that the sustainable coexistence between the growing population, infrastructure and the CFR may be threatened by a changing context that opens the space to private sector, cash based social services, which are imperatives that may transform livelihood patterns.

Therefore to address the transformation of livelihoods may not necessitate the separation of community and forest but negotiated transformation in the coexistence of people in the landscape as context change.

The response may involve the removal of imperatives that lead to negative transformation. As well the transformations that are negotiated with the community should take into account the individual and collective rights of community members to use and benefit from the forest for their livelihood.

These are issues that need to be taken into consideration as REDD+ is designed. The implication is that if NFA acquired adequate capacity through REDD+, it could consider a balanced enforcement of its strict protection and separation of the reserve and community. A drastic decision could transform the community livelihoods and their relationship with the forest.

It could change the community's conscious value of the forest as theirs and necessary for their own life's survival, to externalising the forest and seeing it as NFA land. As observed around all protected areas in the country, the lost conscious value of the forest among the community could result in lack of support for sustainable use which in turn into a contention between NFA and community. Therefore, the intervention of the program should enable the community sustain or increase its access to income to meet its immediate and long term needs as well as the access to the forest for basic livelihoods.

Currently NFA proposes to change the designation of the CFR from a natural forest category to a production category<sup>22</sup>. Where, it proposes to demarcate it into three zones, i.e. a Strict Nature Reserve (SNR), a Buffer Zone and a Production Zone. NFA proposes to allocate 99 hectares of the CFR to a production forest to generate income that would enable NFA fund its operations. That is to enforce the protection and conservation of the forest.

This proposal can be considered in two ways. It can be perceived as an opportunity to address some of the pressures that are undermining the communities' sustainable use efforts of the forest. Alternatively, this may risk community livelihoods, as NFA would be empowered to enforce the separation of community and CFR.

## Main Implication:

The key issue therefore, is that the REDD+ project can help to establish and demonstrate to NFA how its management intervention would impact on community livelihoods and rights. It should demonstrate that communities too have agency for the sustainable management of the forest.

The questions that need to be asked are; how would the production zone affect the current dependant livelihoods? The possibility is that many of these would be lost. So how would the mutual benefit between community and NFA be reached? In other words, how can the community livelihood be safeguarded from the risks of transforming part of the forest into a production forest? Do communities have a say in this process? As it is indicated in the next sections, these are important questions to engage NFA on since the most vulnerable depend on the forest for most of their livelihoods.

The opportunity is that NFA also proposes collaboration with the local population and the adjacent parishes in the management of the CFR through CFM. This is based on the policy that 10% of the CFR can be managed under CFM. However, the challenge is that evidence from other forest reserves like Budongo in Western Uganda, where CFM has been implemented the longest, indicates that NFA works through groups and not entire populations. If this is the approach that is taken in Agoro-Agu, what would the implication be on the rest of the population? Also, it needs to be recognised that NFA negotiations with the community, would be a relationship of exercising power.

Therefore, they risk reaching unfavourable agreements that may not benefit the less powerful. Therefore, the REDD+ project is an opportunity that can catalyse the establishment of a negotiation and governance process that enables respecting community's dignity, rights, interests and that builds trust between NFA and community. REDD+ project needs to establish an inclusive process to negotiate the CFMs. The question that needs to be asked is which CFM arrangement would include all the community's individual and collective interests? Is there a role for local governments?

### 3.1.2 The Lamwo Local Government (LG) <sup>23</sup>

Since Uganda operates in a decentralized dispensation, the local government is the other critical institution in the management of the local resources. It is the framework through which most government programs and social services are planned and implemented. It is through the local government that the population's interests are discussed and accounted for.

However, with regard to natural resources management, the LG is only responsible for resources outside protected areas. It is only responsible for community and district local forest reserves. The community indicated that there are a number of community forests in the area, however their number could not be ascertained. Most of these are community hunting and fallow areas. They are also under the mandate of the Clans as will be explained in the next section. Therefore the role of the LG is crucial in representing the population.

Lamwo district is relatively new. It was created in 2009 and therefore still in a process of establishment. By the study period, the political structure had been formally established but most technical posts had not yet been filled. For example only 10 out of 20 positions are filled at the Agoro sub-county level. This implies that whereas the community's aspirations can be discussed and expressed, the capacity to implement them is still very low. This challenge is easily discerned from the low infrastructure and social services provided to the Areas. The greater challenge for Lamwo is the low funding levels of the district.

With regard to the natural resources management, the Natural Resources Directorate is both underfunded and understaffed with only one out of four head of department staff. The District Environment Officer (DEO) indicates that his budget is only able to meet staff costs. He takes advantage of the NGOs and other central and local government programs to achieve his plan. The local government also provides for the creation of environment committees at the sub county, parish and village levels. However these are not functional.

Nonetheless, there are opportunities that the local government highlights. The first is that the district technical units try to operate in an integrated manner as a response to their low funding and staffing levels. The agricultural, sanitation and environment programs are implemented in an integrated way. This is also exemplified by the participation of the CDOs in this assessment.

There are also district programs and funding opportunities that REDD+ can form synergies with. These include, National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) Program; The Community Driven Development (CDD) program that allocated 3% of the district or sub-county budget to community development and the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF), that is available to support rebuild northern Uganda. Nonetheless, as can be discerned from the table 4, the big government program budgets are rarely realized.

The district has a number of NGOs that complement its capacity and provide most of the services as it is indicated in the table above. The sub county relies on NGOs to meet the larger part of the budget.

<sup>22</sup> As indicated in the draft 2009-2019 Agoro-Agu FMP. The proposal was before the NFA board for approval

<sup>23</sup> The local government structure includes District led by LCV as political head and CAO as technical lead; the district is divided into a number of sub counties where the governance structure at the political and technical structures at the district is replicated. At these two levels where most planning and implementation decisions are made. Each Sub county is divided into parishes and below Parishes are Villages. At each level, there is political representation.

**Table 5: Agoro Sub-county Budget FY 2013/14 and 2014/15<sup>24</sup>**

Source	FY13/13 Budget Uganda Shillings (1shs=\$2500)	Realised	FY 2014/15 Budge
Local Revenue	28,192,183	24, 851,800	43,990,572
LGMSD (from central government)	57,314,370	21,749,320	29,361,470
URF	6,940,000	6,500,000	7,757,872
CDD (3% of LGMSD)	12,118,024	16,777,171	12,383,940
Unconditional grant	12,118,024	9,262,360	14,053,000
NGO/Donor Funds	100,000,000	27,500,000	100,000,000
NAADS	96,000,000	-	100,600,564
NUSAFII	421,340,000 (5 years	-	-

With regards to the management of CFR the local government has no role, except in cases where CFM are established. Here, they are expected to represent the community in the planning and negotiation process that leads to a CFM agreement. However, the Agoro Agu has no CFM, which may explain the non-involvement and unsynchronized LG and NFA plans and actions.

This is demonstrated by the case where the local government implements NAADs, and provides social services to the communities living in the CFR. However, as already indicated, a local government that is expected to represent the community needs to engage with NFA on behalf of the people, to negotiate a win-win situation that secures people’s livelihoods. The current condition of NFA’s low capacity could be considered as an opportunity to demonstrate their representational role as key in the management of the CFR.

### 3.1.3 The Clan Systems

The Clan is a customary system of governance that is prevalent in the North and North East of the country. It exists alongside the local government system. The Agoro-community prioritised the clan over the local government as more important in making decisions that affect their lives. Overall the clan enforces social cohesion of the community. It was explained that each village comprises a clan. Its mandate involves managing property rights of the community in its jurisdiction, especially land, the most important livelihood resource.

All the village land is held in trust for the community by the clan. The community has user rights rather than ownership rights. The community members have no title deeds over land. The clan leader in charge of the land management is known as “Rwot Kweri.” He facilitates the land use planning and use with the rest of the community. Land use is usually divided into four main areas; Settlement; farming; hunting and fallow. For most villages, settlements were located far from the farming areas. Each year, the clan head equally distributes communal land to each household in the village. However as it will be shown latter, land utilisation differs according to the capacity of labour and farm implements of a household.

It was however shown that whereas the community claimed equitable land use among the members, a further interrogation of the land use system revealed that within the clan, land ownership falls within two categories. There is that owned by some individual elite family lineages called “Dogola” and that, which is communally owned and accessed by the rest of the clan. This could be considered a class structure within clan system. The elite families within the clan own individual land while the majority less privileged class clan members share the rest communally.

<sup>24</sup> Agoro subcounty development plan 2016/2019

Nonetheless, these were considered few in each clan. What is crucial though is that land transactions are more or less inexistent. Even that which belongs to individual family lineage cannot be transferred to any one outside the clan because they have no titles.

It reverts to the clan in case a lineage dissolves e.g. when the last of them passes on or migrates. It was also noted that this land ownership is patrilineal. It is allocated to sons by fathers however, though women do not own, they have access to land, Divorced women and widows too have access to land use.

Therefore for REDD+ project, the clan leadership will be an important framework to engage in negotiating rights, and determining areas of project implementation, since they decide land use. However, as will be explained later, there are potential risks that the REDD+ program will need to consider.

### 3.1.4 Non-Government Organizations

As already indicated, the NGOs have been instrumental in complementing the new local government in achieving many of its roles. However, these roles are not consistent since they depend on intermittent funding. For example, Worldlife Conservation Society WCS and Tree Talk, the only conservation NGOs have significantly reduced their activities in the area due to funding.

However, they have established awareness and frameworks that the project should build upon. The services are also concentrated in particular areas that are accessible. Below is an inventory of the NGOs, their areas of operation both territory and field within the Agoro sub- county.

**Table 6: Inventory of NGOs operating in Agoro Sub-county <sup>25</sup>**

NGO	Intervention Areas	Area of Operation
KIWEPI	Operates under the USAID-SCORE project, support women groups with IGA, Human right protection	Pobar, Rudi, Ngacino and lopulingi
IRC	Promotes Agricultural productivity and marketing such as opening land for rice growers; provision of inputs; capacity building, Construction of Bulk Stores and a drying Yard	Pobar. The Bulking Store is in Ngacino
KIDFA	Farmer Field schools-seed multiplication centre.	Pobar, Rudi
AIVI	Support Vocational training, Agricultural productivity and marketing	Pobar
AVSI	Improve Marketing-builds market stalls and produce stores, Cattle Crushes, Roads and supported the establishment of VSLA	Potika, Lopulingi, Ngacino
MERCY CORPS/TECHOSERVE.	Capacity building of farmers; Provision of farm inputs at subsidized rates;Market linkages	Pobar and pawach.
Tree Talk	Established tree nurseries in some schools in all parishes. It also established school environmental clubs and general awareness. Tree talk had initiated discussion to facilitate CFM in Agoro Agu but its operations have been since reduced.	All Parishes
Worldlife Conservation Society (WCS)	Through the WILD program, provision of alternative IGAs such as beehives; Creation and Training of Environmental committees. However, WCS has scaled down its activities due to funding	All Parishes
War Child	Human rights and child protection	Pobar
CPAR	Supports IGAs	Pobar and Ngacino

<sup>25</sup> Adopted from the Agoro sub county development plan

The key aspect to note from here is that most of the NGOs operate in the near to reach parishes and villages. As can be ascertained from the table, all the NGO projects are livelihood enhancement projects that should be viewed as potential synergies to reduce pressure on the forests especially those involved in agricultural productivity and marketing.

### **3.15 The Central Government**

The other stakeholders that need, to be critically considered the central government institutions. These include National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE), NFA, Prisons, Ministry of Agriculture, and Ministry of Education. These ministries and central government agencies establish various policies and programs that affect the community. In particular, MWE had established an irrigation scheme in Pobar parish. The purpose of the irrigation scheme is to increase and secure agricultural productivity from weather variability. As a result of the scheme, a Cooperative Society has been established to manage the use of the scheme and the irrigation water. Therefore the Cooperative Society is another important institution to consider.

The other is the National REDD+ Program that is under design within the MWE. It will shape how forests are utilized. Therefore, the decisions about Agoro Agu will be shaped and made at and by the central government level. The MWE will coordinate the process to determine Agoro-Agu status of use and this in turn will transformation the community rights and livelihoods with regards to the forest. It will be therefore important to support communities influence these decisions.

#### **3.1.6 The Village Saving and Loan Schemes (VSLA)**

The community is the main stakeholder that will be discussed in detail in the next section. However, here, the importance of VSLA schemes that are found in every village is highlighted. There are between 2 and 5 VSLAs in each village. VSLA are groups of village members who agree to pool resources on a monthly basis to enable their members access credit services for individual projects. Most groups average at about 30 members. Therefore VSLAs are a good framework to consider in engaging communities to expand their livelihood options. They are important channels to recognize and enhance community self-determination, respect, trust and rights since they are demand and self-driven initiatives. They have been resilient, which implies they have both reward and sanction systems that are respected by the members. However, it was determined that they are not inclusive. Men and the most vulnerable women are not included. It will be important to consider the excluded. It was determined that the SACCOs have very low capitalization and therefore their capacity to support diversification of livelihoods was limited.

### **3.2.0 Socio Economic Conditions of Communities in Agoro-Agu Land Scape**

This section, provides socio-economic and cultural dimensions, including aspirations, emerging issues, and key economic activities within the landscape especially those that impact on or are impacted by the forest and natural resources.

The landscape analysis reveals a community that is rebuilding itself after the extended period of displacement due to armed conflict that lasted about 2 decades between 1987 and 2005. It is a community that is still settled in camp-like setting, where households are located close to one another and far from the farmlands for security reasons. Most are located next to the hills, adjacent to the forest reserve. As such, resources around the periphery of the forest where the settlements are located have been significantly depleted. It is also a landscape with limited infrastructure and services. However, away from the settlements, it is an area that is still abundantly vegetated.



**Figure 5: Showing a settlement in Agoro s/county (Polucire village in Lopulingi parish**

### 3.2.1 Indicators of Community's Perspectives of Well-being

Using the wealth-ranking tool as described in table 4, a select group of leaders and community members identified the indicators suitable to assess the wellbeing of the community in the Agoro Agu landscape. The indicators also reveal a remote location of the community, whose livelihood is largely supported by agricultural and natural resources. Therefore the main categorisation of livelihoods emanates from the capacity of a household to access and utilise their resources especially land. Access to forest resources was very critical for most livelihoods in the community as most households were in process of rebuilding themselves. Also, the acquisition of housing and household assets such as radio, bicycle, and animals were important.

The indicators therefore include: Capacity of land utilisation in acres<sup>26</sup>; number and type of livestock owned; type and number of huts in a compound<sup>27</sup>; type and number of movable assets<sup>28</sup>; source of income; education level and in one site-Tegot Kwera, food security as a key indicator. Each village community was ranked into four categorises of well being namely “the very poor”, “the poor”, “the average” and “the rich”.

### 3.2.2 General Wealth Ranking in the Four Parishes

As shown in Figure 6 below, the “very poor” and “poor” categories of the community together constitute a significant majority of 70% implying a generally impoverished community.

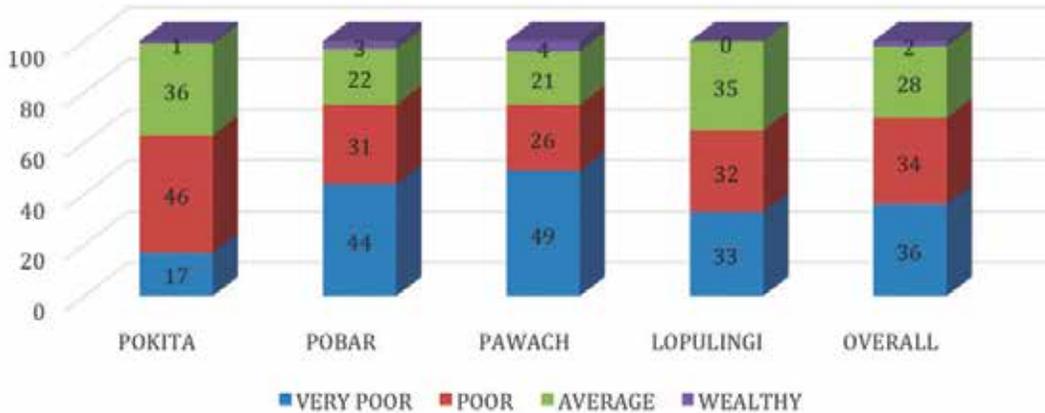
<sup>26</sup> As indicated all households are equally allocated the same amount of land annually (1 acre). However some individual families own and use larger areas compared to that allocated to rest of the community. The capacity to use an allocated area varies according to available labour in the household; ability to hire labour, member of the elite families or ownership of oxen.

<sup>27</sup> Type of roofing material better designed grass or use of iron sheets; Households can afford separate kitchens from sleeping rooms or older children separate from main house

<sup>28</sup> Oxen, bicycle, motorcycle, solar powered light, mobile phones

<sup>29</sup> Capacity to sustain food through dry season

## Percentage wealth ranking by households in 4 parishes



**Figure 6. Wealth Categories in Agoro-Agu landscape**

**a) Very Poor:** The group categorised as “very poor”, were unable to utilise all their allocated land each season (usually an acre). As a result many resultant challenges emerge that characterise them. These include a combination of the following indicators. They lacked any assets, very limited farm surpluses to sell and get income, no other sources of income except casual labour, they owned one house whose roof is usually leaking, they possessed no animals except a few poultry and most were illiterate or with very minimal education levels. For Tegot Kwera village in Pobar Parish, food insecurity was also an important indicator.

Study findings indicated that the 36% of the communities that fall in this category have their annual income standing at UGX 230,000<sup>30</sup>. Observation revealed that the majority of the population that fall in this category were the elderly, female-headed households who were either widows or divorcees. Most members of this category relied on the availability of social support from the extended family and clan structure. Therefore, the availability or capacity of extended family to support them also determined their condition.

It was discussed and agreed that presence of this category of population, is an indicator of a weakening social support system. This is partly attributed to the disruption of social systems by the war and displacement. However, the increasingly cash based, individualist system was another factor that was undermining the social base. The community members who belonged to this category and were located in villages that were farther from the CFR and community forested areas were most vulnerable.

Tegot Kwera in Pobar Parish and Peny Buk in Pawach Parish had the highest number of the “Very poor” category (49% and 44% respectively). This is despite the differential in their proximity to the forest. The implication is that the distance to the forest reserve in such a newly resettled area, with very limited infrastructure, was not yet a significant factor that determined socioeconomic status of the people. Therefore all the categories of the community primarily relied on the forest for their livelihood needs. For this category, it was their human capacity to use the abundant resources that hindered them. Though, Pokita parish stands out, with a very low category of “very poor” people.

<sup>30</sup> 1\$ is equivalent to 2900 Uganda Shillings

**b) Poor:** The population categorised as “Poor”, included those who were able to use all their allocated land for cultivation, had one or two animals and poultry; they have at least two huts, separate a sleeping house from Kitchen; some acquired cash income from sale of labour, surplus farm produce and forest products; they own a bicycle and radio and have primary level education. The proportion of this category is 34% of the entire community. Their annual income was not significantly different from the “Very poor” category standing at UGX 250,000.

Observation revealed that this category mainly included young families with few household members. Therefore, whereas this category was agile and able to exploit their land and resources around them, their quantity of household labour hindered their potential. They were mostly limited by the lack farming implements like oxen. Therefore the category carefully chooses the crops that they grow. Usually those that do not require large scale cultivation (especially vegetables that they sell and supplement their food crops). This category of the population is also very active. They usually complement their farm supplement with selling some forest resources like poles, Bamboo, honey, hand hoes, firewood, and other income sources like brewing and micro trading.

**c) The “Medium” or “average” category of the population,** use more labour especially animal traction for their production. So they are able to cultivate more land between 3-5 acres. They own more land but also sometimes rent from those who are unable to use theirs. They have better housing, at least three huts. They have more assets, at least radio, mobile phone, solar lighting. Their main source of income is produce surpluses, animals and other businesses. The total number of households belonging to this category constitutes 28%. Their annual income is similar to that of the “richer” category. It averages at UGX 2,242,250.

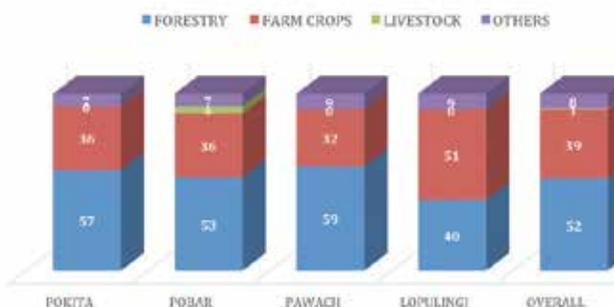
**d) The “Rich” Category- was the level of aspiration of the community.** It represents the elite family lineages of a village that own land. They use oxen and cultivate between 7-10 acres. They own an average of 2-3 pairs of oxen, 3-5 heifers, 10-15 goats, have at least two roomed permanent house or more than three huts in a compound. They had a number of assets, solar for lighting and phone charging, motor cycle, radio, phones and had the ability to diversify their livelihoods such as trading. They were able to take their children to boarding school. They constitute only 2% of the community.

Overall the statistics indicate that the majority of the population falls in the poor category and those considered to be rich were very few. Some villages like Tegot Kwera in Pobar parish, and Polucire in Lopulingi had only 1 or 2 households falling in the Rich category. Nonetheless, it is important to note that this was a relatively an equal community. They all had access to basic livelihood resources. That is secure access to land and the forest resources. This will be critical for REDD+ to monitor and sustain or improve.

### **3.2.3 Livelihood Activities Undertaken by the Agoro-Agu Population**

Figure 7 above shows the high dependency of the population on land and forestry resources standing at 91%. What is more is that forest resources provide the largest share of livelihood source even more than agriculture. Lopulingi parish stands out from the rest because the larger proportion of the community has adopted barley and wheat as a key income source. However, note that these crops are grown in the forest, hence its prioritisation of crop production to forestry resources despite its proximity to the CFR.

### Proportionality Of Livelihood Strategies in 4 Paris



**Figure 7. Proportion of livelihood strategies in Agoro-Agu landscape**

The statistics once again show a population that is highly dependent on the forest and land for their livelihood needs. More so the important role of forestry in securing vulnerable communities such as this one that is in a process of rebuilding itself. Therefore any decision that undermines or delinks the community from the forest or land resources, without removing push factors that cause them to use the CFR significantly increases their vulnerability to poverty.

The other implication is that, the mobility of the community in and out of these categories of well being mainly depends on capacity to use the land and access to the natural resources. These resources serve as the basic security against which communities base to improve their livelihood. Therefore for most of the community, any improvements build on, and not replace these basic sources of livelihoods for some time to come, until infrastructure and critical services are extended.

The other implication, already alluded to, is that despite the high dependency of the majority of the population on forest resources, the area is still relatively abundantly vegetated. This means that the community have demonstrated agency in sustainably using these resources because they determine their very life. It will be therefore important for REDD+ project to mobilise the perception of the communities as rational with capacity to participate in planning and managing the resources on which their own lives depend. It is a call for REDD+ to mobilise a view of communities with respect, dignity, and opportunity to self determine. In whole, it is a basis to respect community rights in the choices of their livelihoods. The role of outside agencies should be to support and work within local frameworks.

The situation reveals the opportunity presented by the fact that land and natural resources that are still in abundance are able to support a sustainable livelihood. However, it should be noted that the communities deliberately locate large areas under fallow. These are areas reserved for future generation but also areas rotated to control the soil fertility. Therefore the claim that land is underutilised needs to be contextualised<sup>31</sup>. In other words, more analysis during project implementation needs to be made to ascertain whether land is underutilised and the reasons for under utilisation. It is important to understand the lenses through which this question is asked.

As ECOTRUST's study indicates, their interest was to locate areas for carbon trading which may have caused them to consider the abundant land under forest or fallow as underutilisation. So would a commercial agent. However, a community or society that plans for future population expansion, may consider this as land allocated for future generations. Nonetheless, the increase in population and the limited improvement in the skills levels may imply exponential pressure on these same resources.

<sup>31</sup> As indicated by ECOTRUST 2009

The challenge for the project is how to treat increasing population not just as a threat that needs to be addressed but as a basis to engage the community in forward thinking and planning on how to address the factors that make this a challenge. It involves considering holistic factors such as the limited options for the community to diversify livelihoods. Therefore the focus would be to support in addressing the underlying causes that make high populations a threat. A high population would require a transformation in how resources are managed not to undermining the livelihood security that they already enjoy. For example, with increased population less land may be available to manage under fallow. New innovations will need to be established for sustainable management of the same land?

### 3.2.4 Sources of Cash and Non-Cash Income

Figure 6 and 7 below, further show that the community access the forest for both cash and non-cash income. It shows a community that is able to use the natural resources to meet its food and those needs that can only be acquired from the market in equal proportions.

However Figure 8 shows that the population that fall in the “very poor” is actually more vulnerable. They rely on sell of crops for most of their income yet they produce the least. As already indicated the “very poor” are usually unable to utilise all their land. Therefore, they grow less and yet sell more of it. Moreover it is the same category that relies on crops for their food needs. The “Very poor” also exploit the forest resources for income the least compared to the other categories. The implication here is that the category has a high potential to become food insecure in case of shocks.

It is also important to note that all categories significantly rely on these key resources because the other cash sources are not yet well developed.

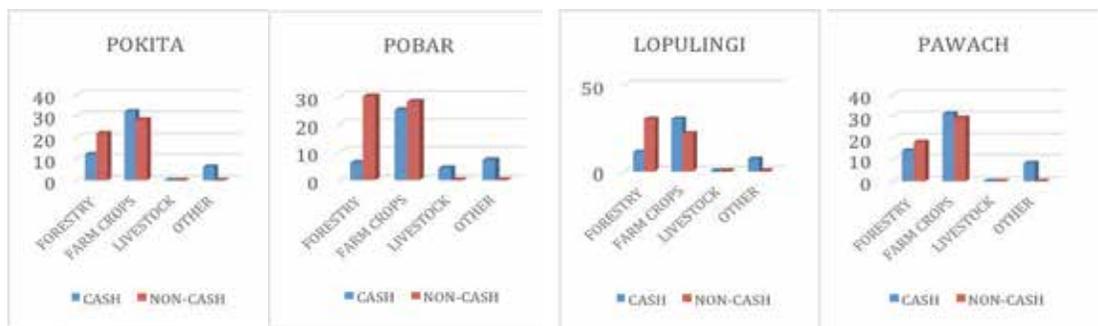


Figure 8. Proportion of Cash and Non Cash income in Agoro-Agu landscape

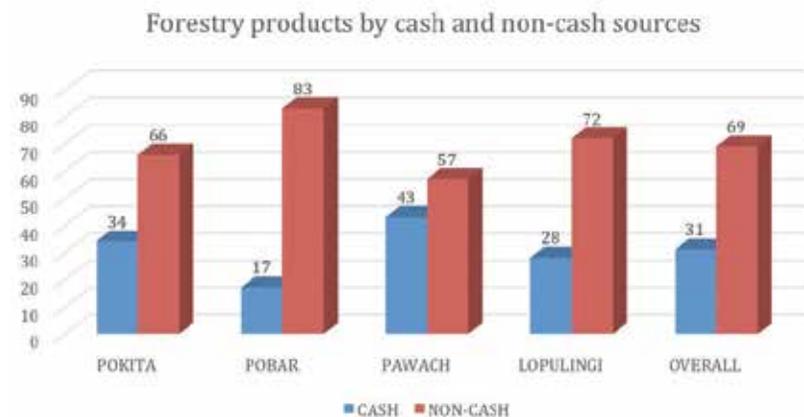
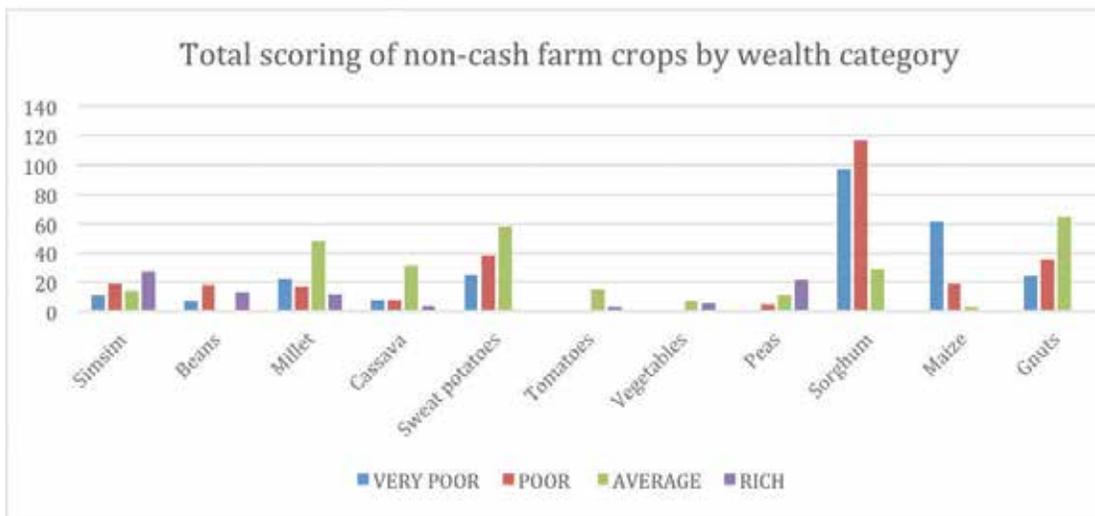


Figure 9. Use of forestry products for cash and non cash income



**Figure 10. Proportion of Cash and non-Cash by wealth category**

The abundant natural resources in the reserve and community land were found to be important in supplementing livelihood and income sources. However, it is important to note that “the well off” use these resources almost equally as those ranked to be poor. However, it was established for instance that the “very poor” category that are located far from the forest or hunting areas are unable to take advantage of the resources to improve their livelihood. Indeed the medium to rich benefitted more from the cash forest resources as it is illustrated in the combined analysis for all study sites in the graphs below (Figures 12). They access the higher value products poles and Bamboo.

This observation is important as it implies that as the communities’ income increase, so does their capacity to acquire higher value forest products. Yet some of the uses are extremely detrimental to the forest- land for cultivation or even charcoal burning. Therefore the weak enforcement of the forest by NFA coupled with increased needs for cash income; and increased opening up of the community to market imperatives is an impending pressure on the forest. The real risk is livelihoods of the poorest of the community who use it as a basic livelihood resource (83%).

The figure 10 and 11 show that whereas the Average and Rich can diversify and grow vegetables as cash crops. The Poor and Very poor rely on the same crops used for food as cash income. This is mainly millet and sorghum. Nonetheless, it was determined that each household in the community grows a diverse variety of crops. This helps to diversify their livelihood options, nutrition and the risks to crop failure. The range of crops includes, sesame seeds, Ground nuts, peas; varieties of Sorghum, Millet, Maize, Beans, cassava, a wide variety of vegetables (okra, cabbage, egg plant;) , rice, sugarcane. Recently barley and wheat have also been introduced to the range but the wealthier households grow it. Cash crops like Cotton that were prevalent in the colonial times is now only grown by average or richer households who have larger land holdings.

The “very poor” are also the “inactive poor” – the elderly who could not utilise all their land; yet they sell most of what they produce. The “poor” are “active”, but have limited options- they use up all their land, have limited combined household labour either with very young children or elderly. Many of these complement their living with forest products and cash income from micro trading.

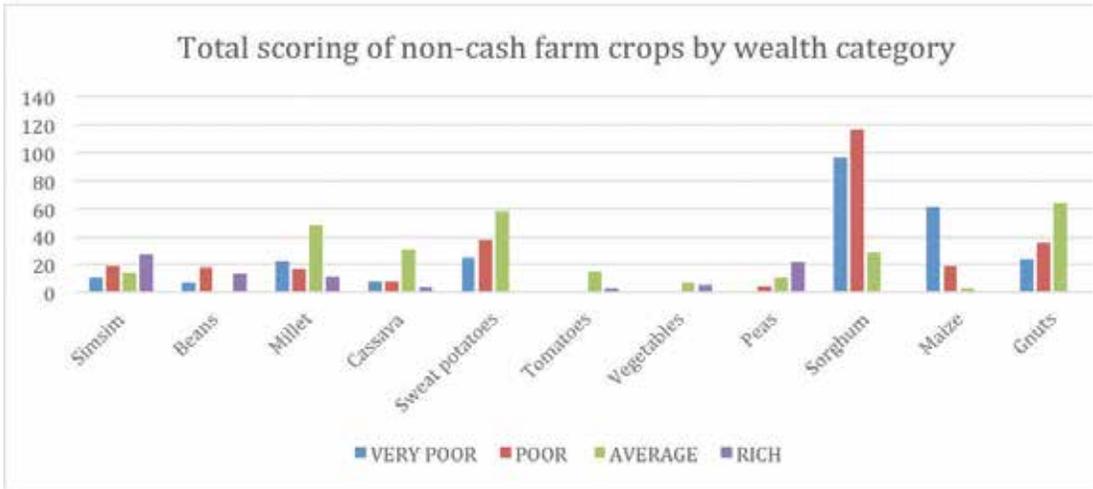


Figure 11. The main food crops by wealth category

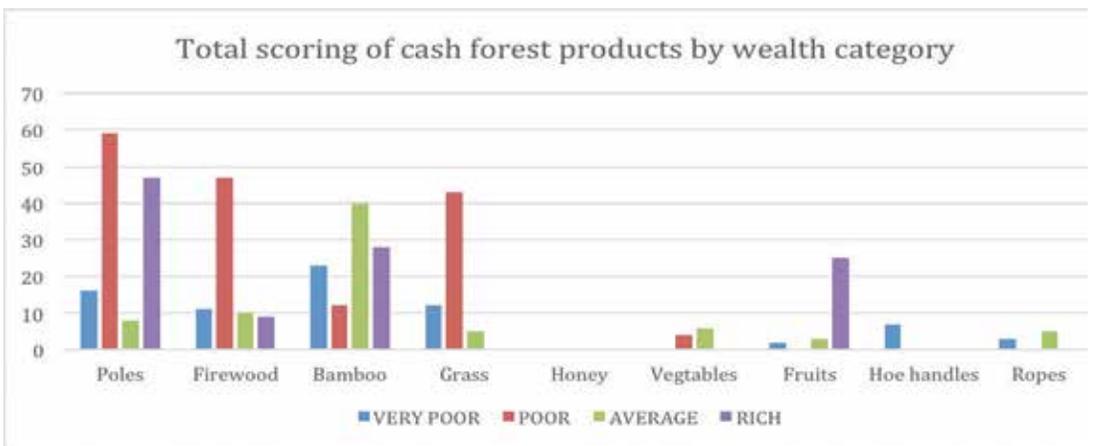
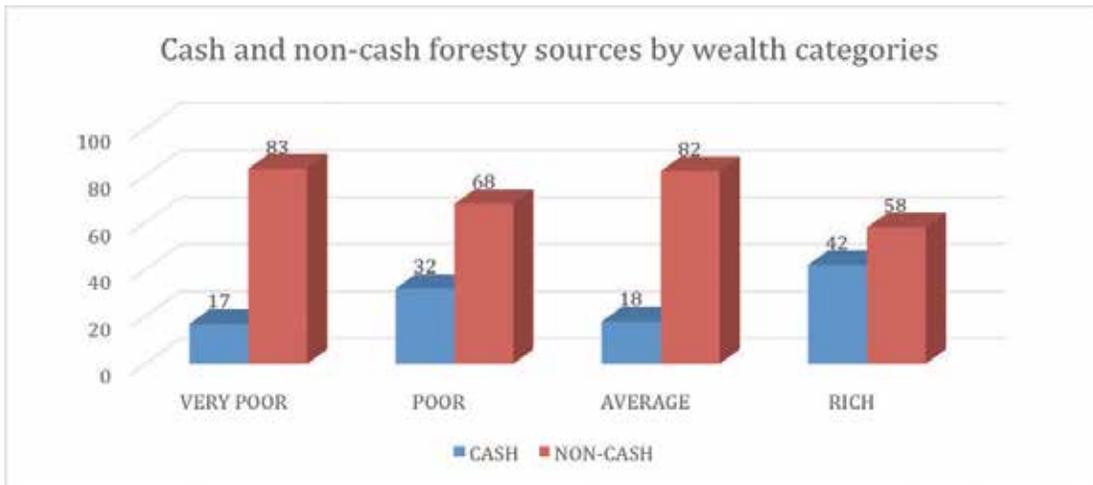


Figure 12 Comparison of The Cash and Non Cash forest sources by Wealth Category

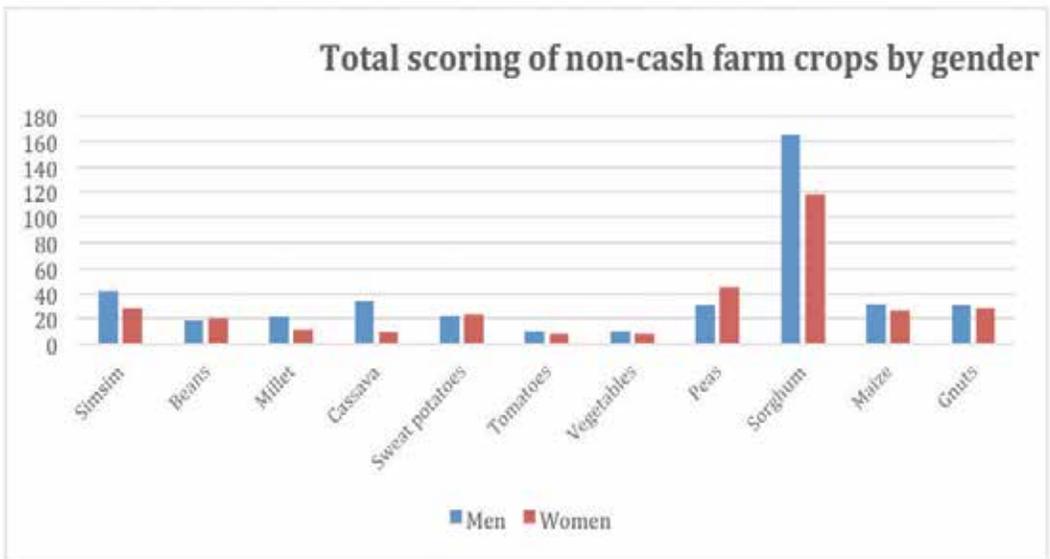
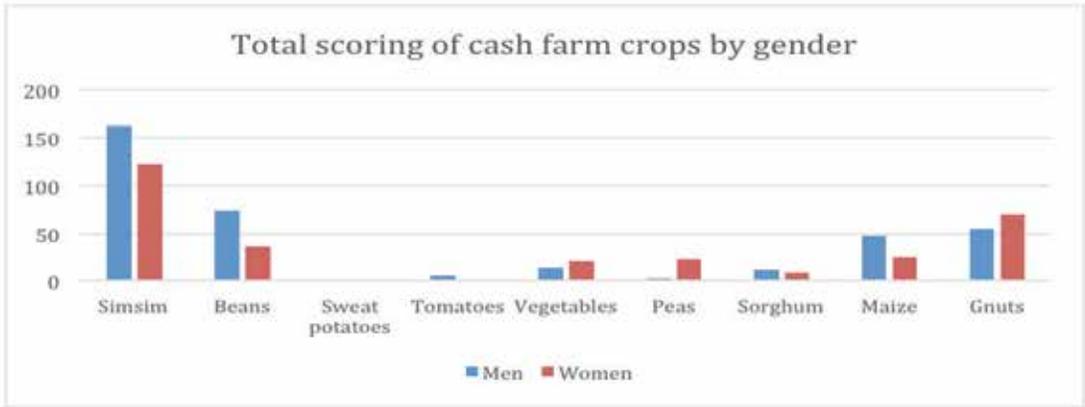


Figure 13 Comparison crops used for cash and non cash farm use by gender

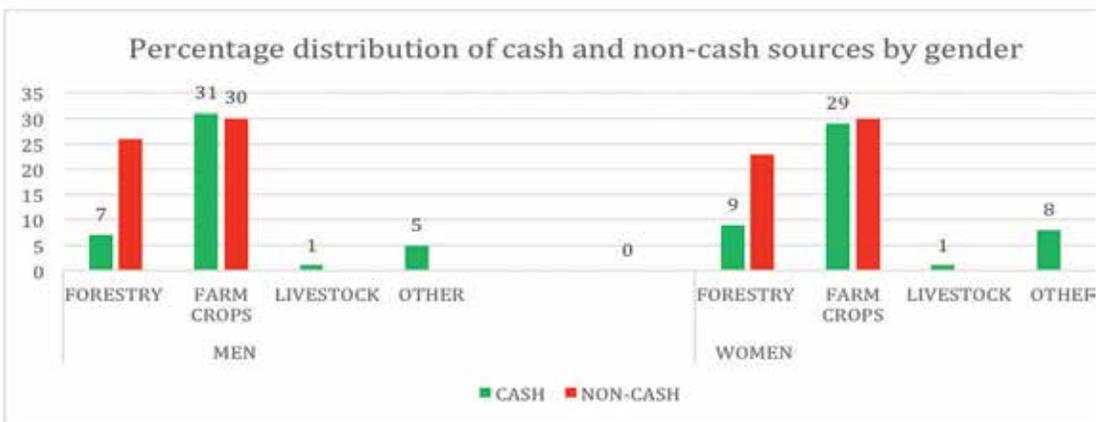
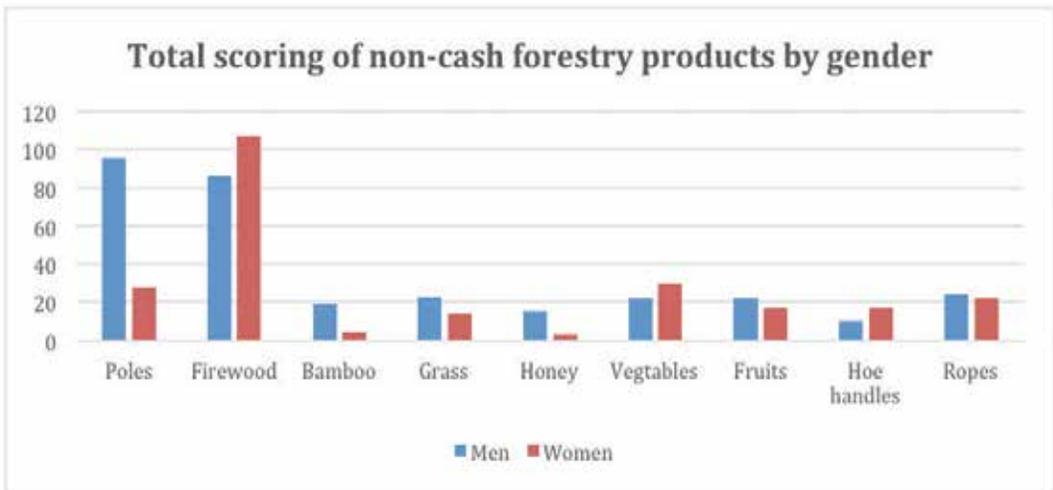
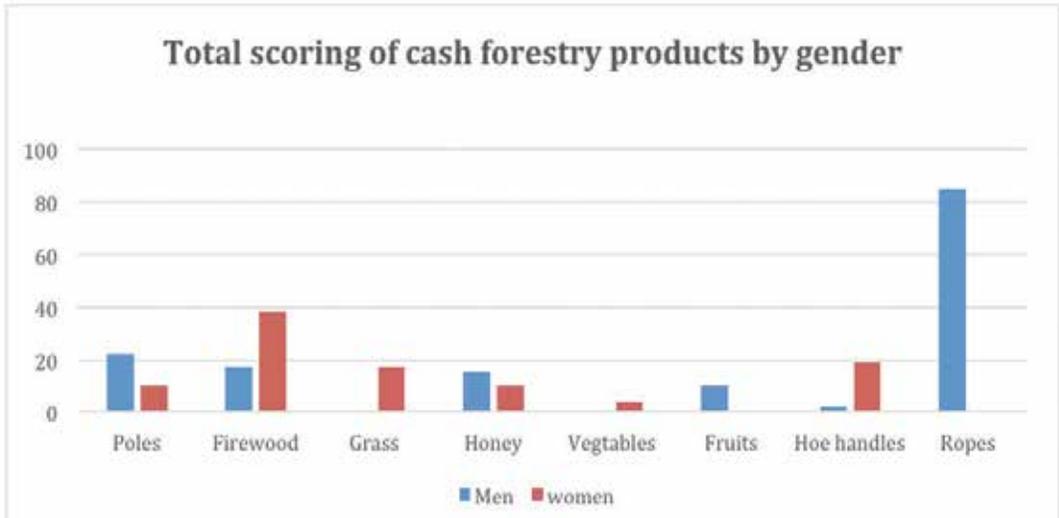


Figure 14 comparison between cash and non cash sources of farm products by gender



**Figure 15. A comparison between cash and non cash forest products by gender**

Figure 15 above shows gender differentials in access to forestry resources and how this differs according to the use. The products prioritised by men such as poles, ropes, honey and fruits have higher market value compared to firewood, grass and hoe handles that women prioritise. The non-cash also represents the gender role. Men are responsible for building homes, and managing animals while the women activities include feeding and providing for the home.

This once again provides another dimension of the factors that need to be considered in the management of forest resources and REDD+. It demonstrates a community that is not homogenous. Therefore generalised decisions affect the community differently. As such discussion and negotiations for REDD+ need to take into consideration all these differences through representation.

The community is still in process of restocking their livestock. The aspiration of the poorer households is to acquire animals. It is an important sign of security and wealth. The animals owned include cows; goats; sheep; pigs and poultry. Goats, sheep and poultry are mainly used for quick transactions in case of cash needs. Currently the wealthier households own cows. The poorer households own poultry and few goats.

As already indicated the community has very limited range of economic activities. The poor category supplement forest and land resources with casual labour and beer brewing; while the average and richer households include transport business using motorcycles, bricklaying and commodity trading. However, the extent of dependence on these other sources of income differs according to the location of the village. The communities such as Tegot Kweri in Pobar that is located close to trading centres potentially have more options due its proximity to infrastructure than those located farther as shown in figure 6. However, findings show Tegot Kweri had the highest category of very poor people. This can be explained by the populations constrained access to the forest resources for cash income. Hence, the conclusion that access to infrastructure does not yet have a significant influence on livelihoods.

It was also determined that the entire community had very low skill levels. The highest level of education for the entire community was a diploma holder and these numbered only 2 or 3 people in entire villages. The low skills imply that the population's capacity to diversify to other income activities is limited to agriculture and natural resources for advancement.

### 3.3.0 Changes in the Relationship Between People and Natural Resources Over Time

The relationship between people and natural resources of the Agoro-Agu is mainly influenced by the political and economic development of Northern Uganda. ECOTRUST (2009) rightly notes that Northern Uganda's historical developments explains the under development and hence the extent to which the population are still largely dependent on natural resources<sup>32</sup>.

ECOTRUST traces the interruptions of Northern Uganda's progress to the slave trade period in 1770-80s and the colonial rule that demarcated it as a labor reserve for the south. This meant that Northern Uganda was left under developed in pursuit of slave labour and labour supply to other regions as soon as the region was plunged into armed conflict since the late 1980s for almost 20 years. This disrupted settlement patterns, social rules and regulations and the development of the region's infrastructure. This explains the education levels, poor infrastructure, and the natural resources and land standing out as the main livelihood resources.

It further explains why land and natural resources management have not been significantly changed by the political decisions, as has been the case in the south. Whereas the south of the country has titled land issued by central government, Northern Uganda's land and resources are still managed under customary law which explains why the area is largely agrarian based subsistence economy. However, there is a generalized misconception that northern Uganda land is underutilized land. Suffice to note that land rotation is deliberate to allow for recovery of soil fertility while at the same time banking land reserves for future generations.

With regards to the CFR, the main changes here focus on control and use of land and the forest. Whereas the Forest was gazetted in the 1930s, it was surveyed and demarcated in the 70s. During this period, the government introduced new species such as Pine, Eucalyptus, Teak plantations. The plantation forestry was introduced at the prison farm. In the 1990s, intensive cutting of trees were introduced using more efficient tools such as power Saws by business men. Therefore, whereas there is still abundance of vegetation, the community members indicate that the some critical resources of economic value have diminished. For instance tree species such as Teak and Mahogany have diminished significantly. Communities also indicate that the forest is under increased pressure from a growing population for cash income which has led to the introduction of new activities such as charcoal production.

<sup>32</sup> ECOTRUST Baseline report 2009



**Figure 16 Charcoal production introduced in the area.**

Communities indicated the change in crops introduced by government. Whereas the colonialists introduced cash crops like Cotton, and cooperatives supported people to benefit from these crops, the latter were dissolved in the late 1980s with the economic liberalisation regime and war. In the 1980s and 1990s, the government introduced new food crops and improved varieties such as beans, maize, vegetables, Irish potatoes and carrots. The introduction of improved varieties was accompanied with technical support provided by extension workers, and currently NAADs which has introduced many new agronomic techniques. The most recent new crops introduced and supported include barley and wheat.

The community highlighted the sell of food and as new phenomena that was non-existent in the colonial and the early pre-colonial years. However, currently, there is no differentiation between food and cash crops.

Land access and ownership have not changed much but since the return from the camps, land conflicts have increased that need to be considered.

The community indicates that they lost most of their animals during the war yet they are important for livelihoods security and they are an important indicator of wellbeing. The cattle had been slowly restocked through the NAADs program.

The community also indicates they were already adjusting to climate changes that have become more variable. For example there is increased diversification of crops and cassava production- considered a food secure crop is increasingly grown.

The forested areas have been found very crucial in supporting communities to cope with change as they provide both cash and non-cash livelihood sources. However the degradation of the forest stands to expose this community. As well, forest management programs may risk closure and denial of access to resources that then compromises the communities adaptive capacity.

# 4.0 Synthesis Of Findings

The key characteristics of the Agoro-Agu natural resources especially forest, and how the resource is being managed, with special emphasis on the human rights and pro-poor considerations, are presented below;

- i. As already mentioned, the CFR and the surrounding landscape are abundantly vegetated apart from a few degraded enclaves. However, as population rises, and improvements in crop production are made, more land will be converted into agriculture. The key most important institutions that are shaping the Agoro- Agu land use are the market, the Clan, the local government and NFA.
- ii. It was also determined that the community was relatively food secure except for the very poor located far from forest resources who would risk food insecurity during the long dry season between December and April. The food security is also probably due to the wide diversity of crops grown, the secure access to land, the forest resources and the remoteness of the location, which limits the household food drain to the market.
- iii. The Clan was the priority institution that was shaping land use. It presides over a generally equitable land distribution and access and it also mediates conflicts within the community. It was found to represent a forum where all community members expressed a belonging. Hence, its prioritisation over all other institutions when considering local organisations to work with in REDD+.
- iv. As indicated, this community's secure access to clan land and natural resources is critical in determining their wellbeing. The fact that there is equal distribution of land to the households was an important attribute to build upon. However there exist differentials that need to be highlighted for further critical analysis and consideration during the project implementation.
- v. Since it was shown that elite families individually own some land, it is important to examine how they get to own individual land. It is important to consider the possibility that elites can compromise the clan leaders to individualise community land. This aspect was not ascertained during the rapid appraisal but stands to disempower and/or disenfranchise the poor. It also poses a risk of elite capture of the project.
- vi. Land is allocated to clan members. But because allocation is patrilineal, widows and divorcees are not prioritised. This is a potential risk to their secure access to land, though it was not found to be a big problem since land was still abundant. However, as population increases or as land is allocated to forest under REDD+, this category risks to be disenfranchised especially for cases of sharing benefits from REDD+ projects implemented on communal land. This aspect needs to be carefully investigated and negotiated during the project implementation.

- vii. Land conflicts have been mentioned to have increased and these mainly involving the elites. These are expected to increase as the area continues to be exposed to factors that increase the land value. These include REDD+ and market potentials. The capacity of the clan leaders to resolve these conflicts without compromising the weaker village members will be critical. These are aspects the REDD+ project should ascertain and work to enhance HRBA.
- viii. The National statutory system of land ownership aims at promoting individual land titling as the liberal means to emancipate people to access credit and improve their lives. This aspect needs to be carefully considered. This requires the project to compare the benefits between securing access rights and ownership rights. The challenge with individual property rights will be the capacity of people to easily sell the most secure asset they have; yet the skills and capacity to undertake other activities is limited.

Further this would compromise the future generations. Therefore these government efforts need to be critically evaluated. There are institutions like Uganda Land Alliance (ULA), Land Equity Movement Uganda (LEMU), which are engaging this issue for case of Northern Uganda. It will be important for REDD+ project to link and collaborate with these institutions.

- ix. It was determined that the Clan is an extremely important institution in this community. Therefore, it is important that it does not become despotic. It was established that the clan system is checked by election of leaders and the clan members do demand for accountability. However, it was observed that the clan leaders' decisions are not easily questioned. For example, the community agreed that the clans will provide community land on which the REDD+ can be implemented and they will oblige their members to plant and take care of the trees.

However, when asked about sharing the benefits, the community indicated that the Clan leaders would decide. The risk would be making the less endowed categories to bear the costs more than the elites. For example, the community land accessed by the most vulnerable in the clan (those from lineages that do not own land) may be allocated to REDD+ thereby reducing their areas for cultivation yet imperatives for cash (such as schools fees and medicine) are pushing them to increase acreage for production. Or REDD+ project may be allocated on the elite family land thereby excluding the larger community.

- x. The overall Risk of disempowerment may arise when the Clan system weakens. It may be usurped by the elite group, which can conflate and disempower the weaker community members. This was reported to be prevalent in the more urban town of the region. Therefore in the negotiated interventions under REDD+, processes to enhance accountability and citizenship of the community members need to be clearly considered. Increased interest by elites' management of benefits in clans should be monitored and managed.

Already fractures in the Clan system were visible where the social structure that supported the elderly had broken down - elderly are now left to fend for themselves hence their prevalence in the category of the very poor in the community. They indicate that before insurgency, clans looked after own population and it was rare to find a household that is as poor as the categories described.

- xi. With low funding and low capacity, the district local government were determined not strong enough to provide social protection (provides social services for vulnerable) yet the clan system needs to be analysed on how it handles issues of women inheritance, widows and divorcees. Apart from the limited provision of the social services, it was determined that the local government has minimal sphere of interference with the decisions of the clan. REDD+ process therefore should consider empowering local government to interface with the Clan and vice versa.
- xii. The local government is a critical institution to provide representation of the community. It is a framework that is available to the community to signal government, but it can also be used as the framework to check the Clans, VSLA, NGOs, because it is also the formal judicial framework available to the community. However, discussion with the community indicated that their local government were unresponsive to them.

A very good example is the recently constructed irrigation scheme in Pobar Parish under the Farm Income and Enhancement Project (FIEFOC). It was supposed to enable the community adapt to climate change during the long dry season. However, already the project appeared to have led to mal-adaptation to climate change. The community claims they had contested the design because it reduced the flooding of the river to water community farms and yet water from the dam has to be paid for. In other words the river was privatised. It is now only accessible to a small group.

It is currently managed by a cooperative system that seems to be more accountable to the MWE than the local government or the people. Given the poverty levels of the community, many have withdrawn and not benefitting from the project. The community argue that the local government was unable to adequately represent their interest.

The design of the scheme was not changed to sustain or improve what it was before, as such, the current design and management does not benefit the majority. This is one of the key examples where the local government was seen to be weak because it was unable to influence the design and management of the project.

Indeed the weak capacity of the local government to provide basic services has made the community to dis-engage. It was ascertained that the community relies more on the Clan system than the local government to meet their interests and rights.

Yet the local government remains crucial in coordination and mobilisation of government services even if they appear powerless in such centrally sanctioned schemes. All government and NGOs programs are legitimised and supported through local governments. Thus it has to be capacitated to act and the community has to be reinvigorated to hold the local government accountable to them.

- xi. The NFA is the other critical institution that controls a significant livelihood resource particularly for the “Very Poor “and the “active Poor”. It is a major source of both their Cash and non-Cash income. Strict enforcement of NFA rules therefore would significantly affect this category of the community. However, uncontrolled access also exposes the forest and their livelihoods to over exploitation as the population and the imperatives for cash income increase. Nonetheless, it is vital to consider communities as partners with interest in the sustainable management of the CFR rather than a threat. The planned CFM initiative provides an opportunity to refocus and plan for sustainable management of the

CFR that secures their livelihoods. It provides an opportunity to consider co-management and co-benefits as more cost effective solution to NFA capacities.

It is therefore important to consider that implementing REDD+ in the forest reserve, presents the opportunity to increase NFA capacity to manage the CFR. However, it may also lead to fencing off of areas and denying access to critical resources that have been sustaining people lives. More so the most vulnerable, the widows; and divorced with out capacity to farm rely on many of these forest resources for cash income and non-cash income.

- xii. The other important institution critical in shaping the use of natural resources was the VSLAs. They were empowering women to save and start up micro businesses to exploit land better or establish alternative income generating activities that relieve land. The challenge is that there were no men involved in VSLAs, hence excluding vulnerable men. It cannot be generalised that men are all not interested in the VSLAs or would not benefit from the VSLAs. The second important challenge with the VSLAs is that they are not inclusive; they are identity based involving few people in each. Many of the very poor categories do not belong to them because they lack the money to contribute monthly. Thus whereas this was found to be a good self-help initiative that was boosting the social systems, they stand to exclude the most vulnerable groups as well as the men. As well, VSLAs, need support to enhance their business services such as financial and entrepreneurial capacity if they are considered as a good framework to work through.
- xiii. Few conservation NGOs were found in the areas. Tree-Talk and WCS have scaled down their activities. However, there were many that undertake complementary activities to the REDD+. They either support income-generating activities; improvement in agriculture, marketing or human rights issues. The challenge was that most worked with organised groups and accessible areas thereby excluding many people especially those most in need such as the very poor. Nonetheless, they provide an opportunity to collaborate and synergise actions.
- xiv. The analysis reveals that critical rights that need to be supported include:
- Securing access rights to land and forest resources which are critical to the most vulnerable – the key institutions to engage with are the Clan and NFA
  - Securing rights, respect and participation of the community in NFA decisions with regards to the CFR management. Such as in shaping the proposed changes by NFA on the management of the CFR
  - Securing effective participation of the people in shaping decisions around land use for REDD+ implementation for both the CFR and the Clan land. Costs and benefit sharing – here the Clan and LG are critical in providing a framework for inclusive participation and enhancing accountability of either institutions
  - It is also critical to consider that communities are not homogenous. The representation should recognise differentials in the community.
  - The possibility of elite capture is high, but may be minimised through enhanced capacity for inclusive participation of the community- through such mechanisms as transparency.
  - The frameworks chosen should ensure inclusive participation in the project. VSLAs exclude men and most of the very poor. Further VSLAs need to be strengthened. The opportunity to strengthen the local government to represent the community in shaping district and national programs need to be demonstrated.

# 5.0 Conclusions And Suggestions

This section synthesizes the future desired status of the resources in relation to possible management interventions considering the sustainable livelihood needs especially of the poor, their fears and aspirations.

The indicators of wellbeing show, the community's aspiration (to belong to the "Rich" category") requires the acquisition of higher cash income than they have and the diversification of livelihoods. However, the community's savings are limited by their sources of income and the expenditures that draw on their resources. That is health care and school fees. Further, the skill levels and infrastructure that would facilitate the diversification of livelihoods are poor. Therefore a conclusion can be drawn that this community will be dependant on the NR for quite a significant time to come especially as the population rises. This implies a need to combine sustainable management to reduce degradation and sustaining this community's livelihoods.

The implication of growing dependence on NR given the growing population is that it may become unsustainable. Note that the poor are active and their aspiration is to move out of poverty supported by land and NR. It was also determined that as the communities' incomes increase, so will their capacity to increase the uptake forest products for cash income. Yet some of the uses are extremely detrimental to the forest- land for cultivation or even charcoal burning. Therefore, the very NR upon which they depend risks to be subjected to faster use than their current management practices can replenish it thereby making the dependence untenable. This requires a significant review and reshaping of NR management in this emerging context. The strategic rights to consider in sustaining both the resources and livelihoods include:

- a) Securing access to resources; Having established the high level of dependence on land and other NR, there is an imperative to restore degraded lands and maintain areas of value in forest and outside. This implies focusing efforts on enabling communities to sustain the health of their land and have equitable and controlled access to forest resources. REDD+ necessarily has to map the link between resources and livelihoods – to provide an entry point in livelihood but emphasize that given their location management of resources is vital and reduces future destructive tendencies.
- b) Securing land access for most vulnerable and social support: The unravelling customary social protection mechanism based in the clan structure implies that the state may need to step in and secure the rights of the most vulnerable including the elderly, widows, orphans and the landless. This is important because their disenfranchisement may lead to uncontrollable and unsustainable incursions into the forest to harvest products. Moreover, their land and NR rights could become a rallying point for REDD+.
- c) Avoiding the pitfalls of degradation: Unchecked degradation is a result of growing household demands for survival in the face of low skills, poor markets, unravelling social protection, population explosion, commercialisation of production, poor regulation/enforcement, unequal access to resources and several other factors. Thus it is crucial that the combination of these factors, which may conspire to spiral degradation is dealt with the urgency it deserves. REDD+ needs to address itself to these factors.
- d) Local organisations to build upon for secure livelihoods: Some of the known success factors for securing livelihoods so that NR are utilised sustainably include communication (public

education), local groups, skills development, pro-poor policies, market infrastructure and an accountable local governance. The study has revealed that self-organising institutions such as the clan system, VSLAs, NGOs and others are central players in building resilience and securing of livelihoods especially if they are participatory, fair, accountable and transparent. They should become the vehicles for delivering REDD+.

- e) Security of livelihoods starts with removing the root causes of vulnerability and securing the opportunities because insecure people will undermine NRM efforts in the long term. This presupposes that REDD+ will address issues of participation, equality, accountability, and local governance so that livelihoods are at the centre of implementation in a bid to drive up its results.

### 5.1 Proposed Sustenance and Diffusion of Initiatives

- a) Starting from the livelihood perspective: As it has been observed, insecure livelihoods will work to undermine REDD+ initiatives. As such, REDD+ needs to use a livelihoods approach, which emphasises enabling human, social, environmental, financial and infrastructural capitals. The suggested vehicles for delivering them are local organisations such as the clan structure, VSLAs and other informal groups that may be mapped. Note that communities will be sceptical to externally driven VSLAs since one prominent one that existed in the sub-county fleeced communities of all their savings. VSLAs should ensure that accountability is enforced from above (government\_ and below (communities).
- b) Enhancing Local government services and accountability through citizen action: It has been undeniably established that the local government is weak in the fulfilment of its mandate due to inadequate financial facilities and powerlessness. REDD+ could become a mechanism for driving up local government delivery of services through the enhancement of citizens' skills and disposition to demand quality and equality. The project is an opportunity to empower the local government to be responsive as well as enable it enhance citizenship and belonging among the people. The implementation scheme should enable a process that holds local government accountable. The district forums proposed under the project is a good endeavour already.
- c) Empowering and working through local government and the clans system: Similarly, REDD+ could become the driver for the enhancement of local government and clan structural capacity by programming for delivering its results through them. This implies a participatory action planning approach that would apportion hierarchical activities and responsibilities. The implementing partners should ensure transparency and accountability in the program to community even if implemented through these systems.
- d) Regulating the market: Recognising that markets may take away power from the vulnerable e.g. through land control; access to resources; (both REDD and other market based initiative) there is need to work through the system to control how to benefit from the market. There should be a balance between social forces and market imperatives in controlling land and resources use.
- e) Avoiding degradation is a major issue: The combination of several factors mentioned above that conspire to drive degradation should remain in focus so that REDD+ is targeted. If left unchecked, these factors tend to drive degradation in a snowballing effect that in turn quickly diminishes REDD+ results and goals. As such, currently degraded areas need to be restored and measures taken to curtail possible spiral degradation effect

# 6.0 Implications for REDD+ Programming

## Direct and indirect benefits of REDD+ (proposed)

- a) Direct benefits of REDD+ added benefits should be over and above already existing access, use and livelihoods support. At the very least REDD+ should result in landscape and forest restoration and added value of the forest. It should also enhance the co-management arrangement that NFA is yet to implement which should have aspects of participation and equality at the centre of programming. It should not compromise the livelihoods of the community as indicated.
- b) REDD+ should also aid in averting potential conflicts, which appear to be high given the likelihood of loss of access and ownership rights over land upon financial input for the conservation of the forest. NFA's conservation interests versus community access and use needs may disfavor some sections of the communities thereby brewing conflict. At the current and projected rate of exploitation of PA and the emerging land disputes REDD+ needs to address itself to the needs of those most in need of this protection.
- c) However, REDD+ is an opportunity to secure the projected degradation from such initiatives as wheat and barley cultivation in the reserve as well as the use of the forest by the Prison. Therefore a convergence can be reached through discussion and negotiations

## REDD+ and poverty-alleviation impacts

- d) REDD+ has the potential to directly address factors that influence poverty especially those that relate to NR that the poor use such as land and forest products. By devising mechanisms that ensure healthy resources, security of access and use for the weakest may lead to poverty alleviation impacts.

## REDD+, gender and diversity

- e) The current situation of livelihoods options and coping mechanisms pits the rich against the poor, the able bodied and frail (elderly) and women against men. For REDD+ to positively impact on food security and other basic needs that are the center of different social groups while at the same time protecting biodiversity it has to respond to this social and gender diversity in program design. For instance poor farmers may want to plant trees but have no access to highly priced species that are high yielding and quick maturing and thus become excluded.

## REDD+ performance – pro-poor indicators

- g) REDD+ has to ensure that pro-poor indicators are at the center of its performance measurement. These include;
- Participation (regular sharing platforms, fair benefit sharing; human rights observance; gender sensitivity and equality; poverty differentiation; vulnerability reduction);
  - Support (channeling through local organizations – clan structure, VSLAs & other informal groups, mitigation of negative impacts by NFA & LGs, skills development to diversify livelihood options to reduce NR dependence);
  - Promotion (good governance in local organizations – democratized decision making, inclusiveness in processes, accountability of implementation structures, empowerment of REDD+ implementation structures e.g. clan, community groups, LGs to challenge higher level structures)
- h) Incentive scheme (beneficiary maps, NR valuation and benefits) must be clear and negotiated. Alternatives must be weighed against current capacity of use. The incentives scheme should sustain current benefits (cash and non cash) and future benefits. Some activities that undermine the natural resources should be discussed and negotiated against interests of the larger community especially the weakest. Barley and wheat growing is compromising the livelihoods of the weakest and the future generations. REDD+ benefit sharing scheme should ensure inclusive distribution of benefits.
- The Benefit sharing schemes should also consider long-term and short-term benefits. The benefit scheme should be substantive to enhance benefits to key fundamentals that support mobility of a household to higher levels of wellbeing. Credit schemes do reduce the burden on household income to manage imperatives as health and education costs. Yet human capacity (skilled and health) are crucial for the advancement of any community.
- i) REDD+ institutional program management:  
The national level `REDD+ process should be fed by local level issues. Thus the participation of the forest dependent communities and local governments (livelihoods-forest linkages) should be promoted and devised in program management.
- j) The proposed framework for consultation and feed back should link with district, region and national level

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