# Community Issues of Charcoal Production and Land Tenure for SLM in the Cattle Corridor in Uganda.

PRELIMINARY NOTES

By

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## *The terms of reference (TORs)*

1. **OBJECTIVE:**
   Assess the ***situation*** at community / CBOs level (roles, capacities & needs) with respect to promoting SLM given the land-tenure & charcoal industry issues in the cattle corridor.
2. **SCOPE:**
   Focus on formal and traditional ***institutional*** support from community to higher level organizations.
3. **METHODS:**

*Documents, *Informants, ***Communities,*** & *Teams.

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## *Study themes – basis of the overview & district comparisons*

**In line with the TORs, a technical analysis on community issues was required focusing on:**

- ***Poverty*** and ***livelihood*** issues around charcoal production.
- Land ***use*** and ***tenure*** issues around sustainable CP and SLM.
- Formal and traditional ***institutional support*** issues.

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## *Underlying research questions:*

- Are *"community issues"* likely to affect the degree of investment into SLM practices? How?
- How could they be tapped into or circumvented so as to reduce the level of shorter-term resource mining (among others)?

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## Pointers to Threats – local quotes, traditional concepts & diverse realities

**1) VOICES FROM KAMULI**

- *"Wetlands don't vote…"*
- *"…There are multiple power centers…Many aspects of decentralization are centralized…"*
- *Bya mera byene…(they grew by themselves)"*
- *"…The number of groups formed was more than the population they served …groups were formed for getting money and disappeared when funding stopped…"*

**2) VOICES FROM NAKASONGOLA**

- *"When you see a tenant planting a tree, it is often the case that (s)he wants to take over the land…"*
- *"…To open up spaces for grazing their cattle, the land lords have supported tree cutting and charcoal burning…"*
- *"Wetlands have been fenced and some trespassing cows confiscated…"*
- *"…Groups are formed by the active poor and not the real poorest of the poor."*
- *"With the loss of GTax to the LG, charcoal licensing helped raise LG revenues…"*

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## *Poverty & livelihoods* – charcoal burning, diversification or devil?

**Poverty and vulnerability a threat to SLM:**

1. Kamuli & Nakasongola rank among the poorer districts – 38th & 25th (resp. out of 45) going by household consumption expenditure, (former below national average, UBOS, 2000).
2. They lie in the cattle corridor – vulnerable to risks of seasonal shocks and long term disasters – but both relying on some crop farming and charcoal production; the latter serving as a rather "newer" means of diversifying livelihoods.

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## *Land use and tenure – will land tenure significantly matter in SLM?*

- Customary & mailo land ***tenure*** unique to Kamuli & Nakasongola respectively but both suffer land degradation partly on account of charcoal burning (therefore putting in question the significance of any type of tenure in solely affecting SLM).
- Poor land tenure ***relations*** seen more of an issue in Nakasongola than Kamuli (*"in Busoga touch no wife and land"*).
- Spatial ***information*** not in frequent use at LG level - including use of GIS maps to capture land degradation trends.

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## *Formal and traditional institutions – do associations and membership matter?*

1. Center, LGs and NGOs play a major role in the direction of districts but integration & mainstreaming weakens the lower one goes the layers of governance.

2. A few CP and land associations exist, but overall community mobilization & organization for SLM remains weak in both districts:
   - Associations by invitation vs own volition, "whose groups"
   - Multiple memberships (across themes & purpose)
   - Strategic behaviours (active poor & risks of elite capture)

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## *Some preliminary conclusions - what priority threats, areas for action & GEF support.*

**Several policies, laws and regulations exist but unevenly understood, disseminated and enforced:**

- Economics is prioritized (over everything else – environment, institutional and social, etc). For ***sustainability***, the challenge for change is to minimize the shorter-term considerations (politics, land owners and users resource mining for quick gains) in terms of undermining SLM.
- Lacking concerted action and investments to reverse the above misfortunes, mobilize lower level social institutions and deal with weak civic ***competencies*** (grassroots-based awareness, skills, retooling, organization, governance) for holding local and political leadership to account on SLM.

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## *Some implications – towards developing a rangeland policy*

***Empowering community-based institutions and the general public:***

- ***Mainstream*** community-based SLM and DRR in all development and programme management – through better harmonization, integration and co-ordination.
- Advance SLM practices and philosophies that are based on working with and through ***existing*** agencies (LGs, NGOs, CBOs or associations) and ONLY resort to new ones should old / traditional ones be absent.
- ***"Participatorily"*** evolve and enforce ordinances and bye-laws – which would be a key measure central and district authorities should bring to communities and institutions – while investing in SLM (i.e. instead of solely relying on incentives, expecting people to do the right thing, etc)!

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## The unanswered questions

- How should we invest in the diverse communities to enable them adopt and promote SLM – any viable universal solutions - committees, outsourcing?
- What incentives and disincentives should be used to reduce the effects of shorter-term considerations on SLM (avoiding short political time horizons, resource mining for quick gains, etc…)?

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## Thank you

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