Natural resource integrity: A resilient community on the degraded slopes of Mount Elgon takes on mending its broken landscape

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Natural resource integrity: A resilient community on the degraded slopes of Mount Elgon takes on mending its broken landscape

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Abstract

The once beautiful foothills of Mount Elgon, in eastern Uganda are today seriously degraded, with excessive water run-offs and landslides becoming regular occurrences. Restoring the health and productive potential of the agro-ecosystem had become a dire need of those, mostly women, who stayed to farm it.

By challenging the status quo and doing things differently, the Kapchorwa District Landcare Chapter (KADLACC) has been helping this farming community over the past fifteen years to manage its natural resources more sustainably, as well as more profitably. By building on the innovation skills of the community, by helping it address local challenges and by empowering the women of the community to manage their natural resources in sustainable ways, the platform has helped to restore much of what has been lost in recent decades.

Before the platform was established, crops, properties, infrastructure and even lives were regularly destroyed. Trees and other vegetation were removed indiscriminately to make room for farms and settlements. Fragile soils were exposed to the agents of erosion. Heavily sloped land was tilled. Women, although providing up to 90% of the agricultural labour force, had little decision-making power. Household incomes and food security declined steeply, along with soil fertility and women's engagement.

With the establishment of KADLACC, twin journeys towards land restoration and women's empowerment began. Community members were quick to support the entire process. Awareness of women's rights was raised through consultative processes from village to sub-county levels, engaging individual farmers, farmer groups, local government officials and external actors. Community members, through farmer learning cycles, were linked to trained facilitators. This helped farmers and farmer groups consolidate their grassroots understanding of the challenges they faced and the options they could employ to address them. Livelihood goals were linked to conservation goals. Local-level policy reforms helped define and encourage women's ownership and control over land.

Over these 15 years, community by-laws supporting watershed management, land restoration and agroforestry practices have been developed and implemented. Women have been given greater priority in natural resource management decision-making. Some 300 women displaced from their land have been granted access to collective land for organic and horticultural farming. And by improving this community's access to agricultural and information services, KADLACC has helped this farm community significantly improve its productivity, while restoring the integrity of its natural resource base.

Acknowledgements

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A fractured intellectual landscape

The view of Mount Elgon reveals its charisma progressively as it rises more than 10,000 feet above the plains. Its great breadth and gradual slope form a flat cone that can rarely be seen from below; rather, it is a mountain to be on for it offers a view of exciting landscape beauty. A reflection of this beautiful landscape three decades ago presents a helpless community in the middle of a degraded agro-ecosystem. Smallholder farmers no longer confident of providing for a growing population while maintaining the productivity of the basic resources, women in the community not able to provide for their families like before. What really happened? The mountainous extinct volcano was heavily cultivated and completely degraded. The terrain with high slopes experienced excessive run-offs and landslide were regular occurrences thereby destroying crops, property, infrastructure and even lives.

The need to restore the landscape became even more evident with every realization of how the livelihood of the community was getting worse by the day. A landscape that was the only hope for a community of more than 30,000 households, who had experienced long-term displacement and resettlement for three decades. A community characterized by severe poverty, high levels of illiteracy, food insecurity, and completely eroded lands was in dire need of sustainable solutions towards restoring their degraded ecosystem. A community keen to come up with a transformative process that would create new relations and collectively develop ideas to replenish their degraded resources. This led to overwhelming levels of community enthusiasm and collective action. Community groupings emerged in novel ways to agree on sustainable ideas for coping with these periodic crises. It is in this regard that the Kapchorwa District Landcare Chapter (KADLACC) was established as an innovation platform engaging multiple actors. KADLACC was established in 2003 with a shared vision for integrated management of natural resources.

Twelve years on, KADLACC stands out for challenging the status quo by doing things differently to ensure sustainable management of natural resources. The platform has brought about cohesion and trust amongst a community that was once separated by their adaptations to their resource bases. KADLACC has succeeded in linking local level decision-making to various levels of governance, and providing for the institutional capacity to improve livelihoods and landscapes. By building on the community innovation skills and empowering the women in the community to manage their natural resources in a sustainable way, the platform has helped restore much of what had been lost in recent decades. KADLACC has demonstrated that within the economic system characterized by cultural underpinnings, resettlement and land degradation, multi-stakeholder engagement is an essential precondition for the community to move towards more viable and sustainable livelihoods.

Can broken be better than new?

How it all began

Prior to the establishment of KADLACC, community members in Kapchorwa District, Uganda, had been struggling with complex natural resource management (NRM) concerns compounded by pressing social issues (Chemangei et al. 2007). Displacement and resettlement of communities from the lowlands and upland areas led to loss of common property. There was indiscriminate removal of vegetation cover to create farming and settlement land. This exposed the fragile soils to the agents of soil erosion which led to food insecurity and inadequate household incomes. Trends of declining soil fertility due to poor farming methods exacerbated by steep landscapes and recurrent occurrences of landslides were evident (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Fallouts of landslides and excessive runoffs

Photos: Chemangei Awadh and Simon Nyangas

Poor relationships between the forest workers and community members in the protected area of the Mount Elgon national park led to community eviction, arrests of livestock, and levying of heavy fines on livestock found inside the park. Forest encroachers took advantage of the poor communication between the community and forest workers to exploit the community and resources in these protected areas. This triggered conflicts between the community and forest management.

Gender inequality was a pressing social issue as women provided the majority of the labour force in agricultural production, yet they were not involved in decisions on the benefits of production. Women were only considered as custodians of household work such as cooking, caring for children and livestock. This limited their information base in technology development and microfinance. Consequently opportunities for improving knowledge were restricted to men. The cultural underpinnings in terms of inheritance, land ownership, access and use of new technologies influenced the power positions both at household and community levels. These traditional norms and beliefs hindered effective solutions as they were male-dominated and women were predominantly considered as caregivers.

The role of the central and local governments in interactive policy support process was minimal. This resulted in policy mismatches, poor implementation and compliance due to limited local capacity for policy interpretation and enforcement. Existing institutional practices undermined equitable and effective development at local level. Financial resources allocated for implementation and support to the management of natural resources were not sufficient, considering the high pressure on the available natural resources as a result of resettlement in the upland areas. Land insecurity resulting from de-gazettement of protected areas for resettlement of prior indigenous communities created problems of tenure insecurity, thus undermining land investments. Such structural constraints brought about poor market opportunities and infrastructure that made agriculture less profitable than other livelihood options.

The birth of KADLACC

Much of the challenges experienced were largely beyond the control of the community. They had spontaneous effects not only on the community members, but also on a wide range of stakeholders. Resolutions to these challenges were less effective when undertaken on individual basis, thereby required aggregated effects of several households. The realization that solutions to these challenges and hopes for the future would only materialize through a holistic approach became more evident. Box 1 provides an illustration of how lone ranger efforts had to be elevated into collective action for more effective solutions.

Box 1. Controlling run-off in Kapchorwa District, Uganda: from 'lone ranger' to collective action

'In the recent past years, I had been constructing soil and water conservation structures in an attempt to control the run-off on my fields. However, my fields continued to be affected by the ever-increasing run-off from my upslope neighbour's fields. I approached one of my neighbours from the adjacent village, Kissa Peter, and told him about the continued run-off affecting my fields. Kissa was also experiencing similar problems of soil degradation and declining crop yields and his maize yields had been reduced by about 60%. Kissa also noted that there were other farmers in other villages experiencing similar problems, despite the fact that they had adopted soil conservation structures on their fields. Together we approached two other neighbours about the problem and discovered that they were equally concerned. We decided to call for an urgent village meeting to discuss with other farmers on how we could deal with these challenges affecting livelihoods of the entire community. We convened a meeting in Tolil village to discuss strategies for controlling these run-offs. At the village-level meeting, community members suggested a broader meeting to be held between four of the most heavily affected villages. In that meeting, residents of the four villages resolved to form Village Watershed Committees to take responsibility for common NRM problems. Community by-laws governing common NRM issues were then formulated, and soil and water conservation technologies used to implement these by-laws.'

Alfred Akiti of Tolil village

Source: Adapted from German et al. 2012

In the year 2000, community members embarked on dialogue and discussions with various stakeholders to build consensus and mutual understanding to address the challenges.

Much effort was put on community mobilization through a consultative approach to gather evidence on the extent of damage these challenges had brought. Through the support of the local government, community facilitators were trained to support existing farmer organizations in strengthening their open learning and planning processes, as well as to make proactive linkages to leverage support for local development priorities.

The farmer-learning-cycles approach was employed; community members regularly met to exchange views on their different understandings through experience sharing and experiments in the farmer fields. These learning cycles were led by farmer innovators with expertise in topics of mutual interest. They consisted of groups of neighbouring farmers, usually not more than 25 in number.

These learning cycles played a key role in mobilizing local resources to meet local development needs and in enabling community members to proactively lobby for support from external actors. The participation of the local government at various levels (village, sub-county and district) allowed for community needs to be matched to service providers and resources. It also helped to legitimize local development efforts being undertaken.

The various farmer learning cycles embarked on awareness raising activities to gather more ideas on collective development and operationalization of action plans. With the action plans, the community members engaged in lobbying activities to seek support from external actors like funding agencies, NGOs, research agencies and local government towards the realization of the management of their resource base.

A series of consensus workshops involving the various farmer learning cycles, local government representation and other identified potential actors or service providers were held. These workshops were meant to develop a joint understanding of the deficiencies in the proposed conservation and development initiatives. The core strengths of the different partner organizations towards the goals and desired functionalities of the various farmer learning cycles were explored.

These series of workshops eventually aided the establishment of KADLACC in 2003. The platform was therefore a culmination of three years of collective action and collaborative effort championed by community members with the support of the local government and other external actors.

Organizational structure of KADLACC

KADLACC is a community driven platform that mainly operates on a voluntary basis. Individual champions from various organizations, including farmer groups, community-based organizations and local government departments form the internal organ that governs the operation of the platform. The main objectives of the platform were to create a forum for the various actors involved in management of natural resources to harmonize their activities and work collaboratively.

The platform builds the capacity of member organizations in planning, influencing policy and resource mobilization to enhance the performance of the district. KADLACC advocates for democratic processes for management of natural resources and land-use policies. The platform has three main organs with clearly defined roles: general assembly, steering committee, and the secretariat.

The general assembly is the supreme body of the platform. It is charged with responsibilities of making financial decisions on any matter pertaining to the chapter and electing the steering committee members. The general assembly comprises representatives of community-based organizations in the platform.

The steering committee consists of the chairperson, vice chairperson, secretary, treasurer, and three committee members; all elected by the general assembly. The local government is also represented ex officio in the steering committee. The steering committee is charged with the following responsibilities: the formulation and review of policies that govern the innovation platform, and the approval of work plans, budgets and accounts of the platform prepared by the secretariat.

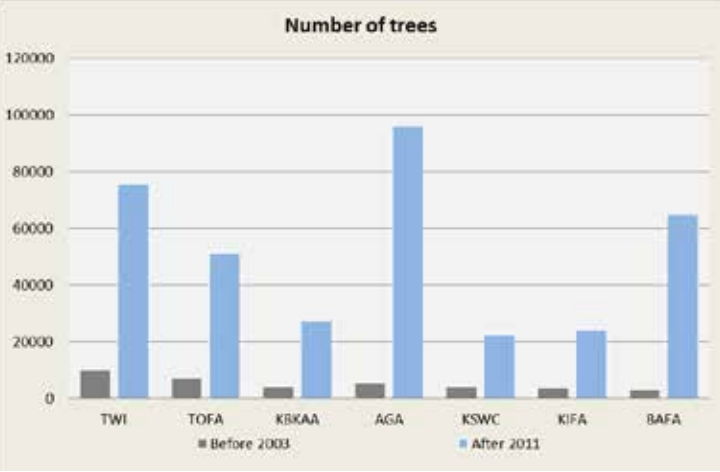
The secretariat is made up of representatives of the member organizations and local government departments which subscribe to KADLACC. They are selected during the general assembly. The secretariat is mainly tasked with the implementation and enforcement of policies and is the main administrative body that reaches the farmers through their representatives.

Besides the organizational structure of KADLACC, there exist external partners which support various aspects of the innovation platform. These external partners include research organizations, private sector investors, NGOs and funding agencies. KADLACC, therefore, provides a platform for negotiation and decision-making in the implementation of interventions on the management of natural resources.

Does repairing make better and more beautiful than new?

The starting point of KADLACC was the establishment of significant tree cover beyond farm level to address the problem of indiscriminate removal of vegetation cover to create farm and settlement land. The platform collectively engaged the various actors involved through consultations based on the collective concerns on the trend of natural-resource degradation and increasing household-level poverty. For the period 2003 until 2011, community members planted trees either as wood lots or trees on farm. Figure 2 presents the significant increase in tree cover after 2011 as a result of community groups mobilizing their members to plant trees on farmlands and as communal woodlots.

Figure 2: Tree cover before 2003 and after 2011 in the various community groups affiliated to KADLACC



See Appendix 1 for the full names of community groups

The tree count data collected indicated diverse trees had been planted to help in diverse uses including fuel, timber for construction, increasing soil fertility and human consumption, amongst other purposes. As evidenced from Figure 3 efforts towards restoring the land were starting to bear fruits. Community by-laws governing management of natural resource, soil and water technologies were developed and the mode of implementation agreed upon (Appendix 2). The platform has supported the community in its articulation and resolution of arising common NRM concerns.

Figure 3: Restored vegetation along the slopes


Photos: Chemangei Awadh and Simon Nyangas

The majority of the trees were exotic, like Eucalyptus and Grevillea. From Table 1, it is evident that there was a positive increase of tree cover. This was made possible through multi-stakeholder engagement and capacity enhancement to the local community, which empowered them to understand the impact of tree cover on food security and poverty reduction.

Table 1: Tree count for exotic, indigenous and fruit trees before 2003 and after 2011 in the various community groups affiliated to KADLACC

Community name	Exotic trees			Indigenous trees			Fruit trees			Total trees on farm land		
	Before 2003	After 2011	Change from 2003 (%)	Before 2003	After 2011	Change from 2003 (%)	Before 2003	After 2011	Change from 2003 (%)	Before 2003	After 2011	Change from 2003 (%)
TWI	6000	67000	1,017	4000	8000	100	0	350		10000	75350	654
TOFA	2500	17765	611	1800	12870	615	2765	20430	639	7065	51065	623
KBCAA	4050	20000	394	0	7250		0	0		4050	27250	573
AGA	2500	65340	2,514	2800	25620	815	800	5040	530	6100	96000	1.474
KSWC	1000	10000	900	1050	3500	233	2000	9000	350	4050	22500	456
KIFA	4000	24100	503	0	0		0	0		4000	24100	503
BAFA	3000	65000	2,067	0	0		0	0		3000	65000	2,067

Because of the steep landscapes, poor farming methods and declining soil fertility, KADLACC has supported communities in identifying the cause of all their issues as poor land management. KADLACC triggered the establishment of contour bunds and bench terraces, which helped address these constraints. From the period of establishment of these soil and water management practices, there has been a significant increase in land-use patterns. Table 2 below details the distance covered by these soil and water management practices and Appendix 1 lists the full names of community groups.

Table 2: Soil and water management practices before 2003 and after 2011 in the various community groups affiliated to KADLACC

Community name	Contour Bunds (Metres)			Bench Terraces (Metres)		
	Before 2003	After 2011	Change from 2003 (%)	Before 2003	After 2011	Change from 2003 (%)
TWI	0	6000	1,017	0	0	
TOFA	0	12000		0	8000	
KBCAA	250	20000	7,900	0	0	
AGA	0	4000		0	0	
KSWC	2000	10000	400	0	0	
KIFA	2200	8000	264	2240	8000	257
BAFA	0	8400		0	8400	

On average, communities created approximately 333 m of contour bands with a horizontal spacing of 30 m for each hectare of land. These were the standard specifications to enable stabilization of the contours. Figure 4 displays community members digging bench terraces to control excessive run-offs. Appendix 1 lists the full names of community groups.

Figure 4: Community members digging bench terraces

Photos: Chemangei Awadh and Simon Nyangas

By placing the community at the forefront of decision-making, KADLACC has facilitated community groups to take ownership and accountability of their actions under the common vision of improving the natural resource base. KADLACC has facilitated these activities through creating partnerships and collaborations with stakeholders at a range of levels within the community, and supporting cross-learning and knowledge-sharing activities, whilst promoting a conducive policy environment for these activities to take place through district-level government. Community groups operating through the KADLACC platform have their own objectives identified through participatory decision-making which they implement on their own accord, through the common vision of KADLACC as the parent network. Looking back to the ability of KADLACC to shape the innovation processes in addressing various challenges, Table 3 below presents the status of the district before and after the formation of KADLACC. The results thus indicate that the platform was effective in coordinating innovation because of the complementary skills and competencies that the various actors brought together to the platform.

Table 3: Added value of KADLACC

Before	After
1. NRM not mainstreamed in development initiatives but mainly carried out through lone ranger approaches	1. Integrated development and NRM planning from village to sub country levels, with the involvement and support of district Government
2. Limited access to development and extension services for a large number of households	2. Linking of farmer learning cycles to trained facilitators from various member institutions has improved wide spread access to services
3. An aid and problem-focused attitude towards community level development needs	3. An appreciative intervention process building on local level assets and a spirit of volunteerism
4. Development efforts delinked from natural resources conservation and equity	4. A defined process for linking livelihood goals to conservation objectives and enhancing equitable benefits capture advocated for by community based
5. Role of local government in pro-poor , ecologically-friendly policy support process undefined, or unclear	5. Strengthened role of local government structures in integrated NRM planning, involvement of community memebers in policy reform
6. No clear direction for market development; livelihood needs seen as contradictory to conservation objectives	6. Strategies under development for enhancing linkages to markets in the context of environmental conservation

Source: Tanui et al. 2007

Turning the crack into a feature

Fundamental to the vision of KADLACC was achieving sustainable resource management outcomes by means of addressing issues of soil and water conservation, agroforestry and watershed management. This vision was tackled from a systems perspective across the landscape, with individual member groups working on environmental issues relevant to their locality within the district.

Specific examples of positive environmental impacts achieved through the KADLACC platform include district support for forest protection, zero grazing initiatives to improve ground cover, soil fertility and watershed management activities and increased adoption of agroforestry practices. The platform has also put considerable effort towards supporting socio-economic and wellbeing achievements from the household units to the platform level. Considerable improvements in the land management activities including improved soil fertility, ground cover and zero grazing have been adopted. Empirically these efforts equate to improved food security; for example increases in average milk production per household by about 2.5 litres to 6.5 litres per cow. Maize yields increased from 13 bags to 25 bags of 100 kg per acre per season.

Increased production supported by crop diversification provides for surplus for sale and the platform has supported market access for bananas and coffee at local and regional levels. The platform has equally supported community members to accumulate high value assets, e.g. cattle dips, water tanks, biogas plants, milk coolers. A number of smallholder farmers have been able to earn extra income to support their families' health, education and purchase of food. Whilst these specific initiatives positively support social outcomes, such as income generation and improvements in food security including fuel sources and crop diversification, the most evident outcome is the reduction in landslides within the district. Through facilitating community ownership and resolution of issues, KADLACC has provided a framework that supports resilient and adaptable decision making processes at the grassroots scale (Figure 5). A prime example of this activity has been on the threat of landslides by looking at the cause of the issue as a result of degraded landscapes. To address the issue, community members have engaged in conservation farming and soil management practices, which have resulted in improved production and income generation.

Figure 5: Community members developing plan of action

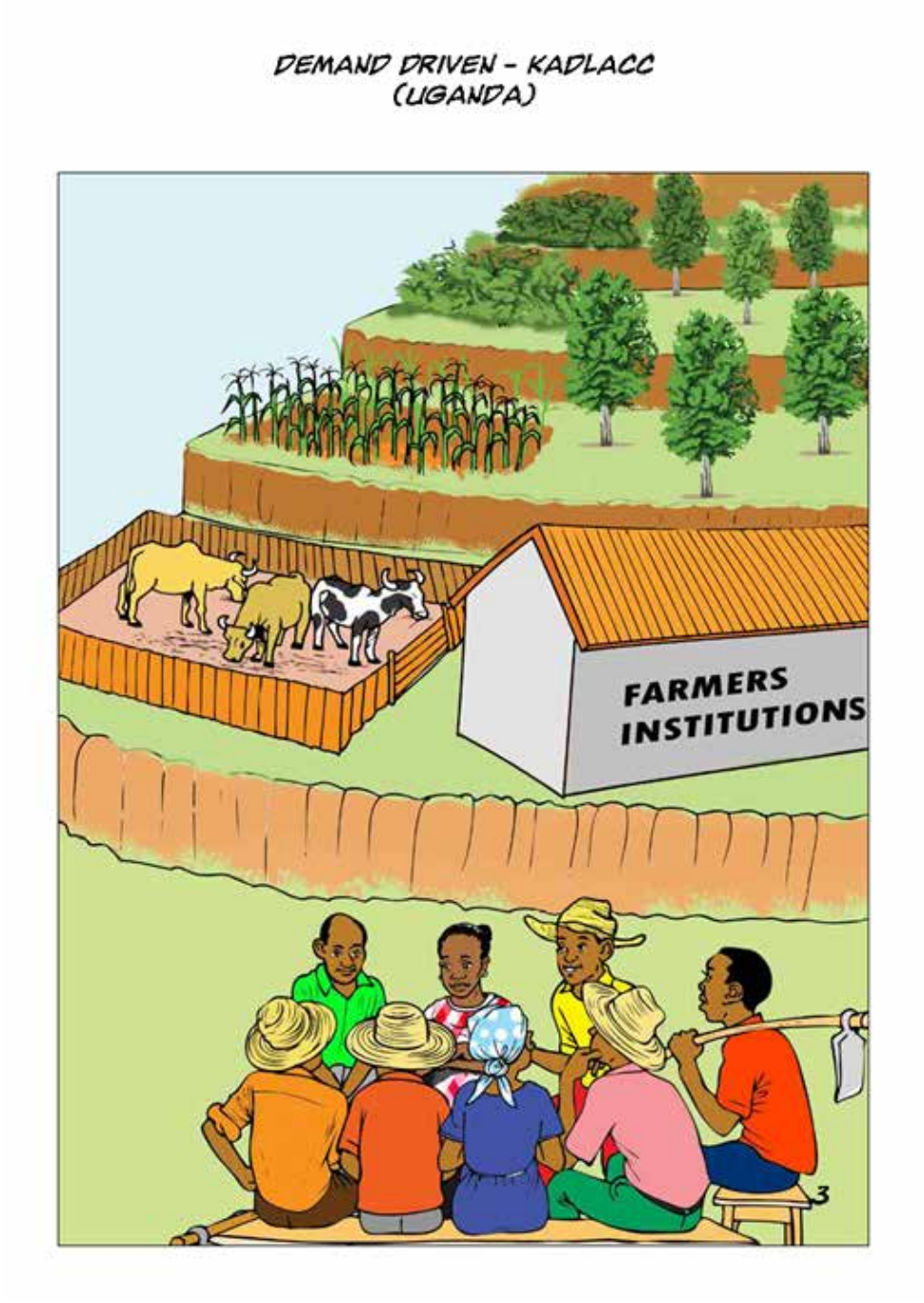
Photos: Chemangei Awadh and Simon Nyangas

KADLACC has empowered women farmers by recognizing and promoting their skills in positions of leadership within community groups. The platform has helped women to build confidence in themselves and be able to speak as equals with men on issues relating to achieving improved land management practices. A number of women-only groups have also been established under the KADLACC platform, based on the recognition and value of social interaction women offer to facilitate community collective action.

Through partnerships, KADLACC was involved in the formulation and enforcement of community by-laws within the Kapchorwa district council area, which recognizes soil and water conservation, animal management and tree planting (Appendix 2). These by-laws have supported the establishment of memoranda of understanding with member groups of KADLACC and the Uganda Wildlife Authority to access the forest in a sustainable manner, while supporting a continuation of traditional practices. Presently, the Kapchorwa district council has an ordinance in front of them to approve the Kapchorwa District Landcare Bill. This ordinance will provide formal support to continue scaling the adoption of sustainable land management practices across the district.

KADLACC operates on the premise of stakeholder input and ownership of the activities, and subsequently, the platform has a number of effective partner organizations. KADLACC has had a long standing partnership with the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) to assist in project activities, including the initial establishment of the group through the African Highlands Initiative project. The capacity of KADLACC has also enabled it to attract partners to engage with the platform in mutually beneficial activities. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has recognized the value of engaging with KADLACC to support its conservation activities within the Mount Elgon region and has provided financial and technical support for this, including the sponsorship of the by-law for soil and water conservation. KADLACC is also a member of the African Landcare Network and Landcare International, and subsequently has been engaged in the promotion and facilitation of their model in other fora, most recently in a Southern Africa Landcare Masterclass held in Lilongwe, Malawi in July 2013.

The sustainability of the KADLACC platform can be attributed to the foundations of the initiative established by the initial dialogue and discussions started in 2003. By engaging all the relevant stakeholders in natural resource management issues within the district, and placing the community at the forefront of the decision-making framework, the platform has ensured ownership and relevance within the district. Whilst the platform received financial assistance for establishment through the African Highlands Initiative and small grants received through the Italian and Australian governments, the alignment of the platform to the district council ensures that its operational costs are met and supported in the long term. There is substantial interest in expanding the initiative into neighbouring districts and other areas of Uganda. However, better communication and promotion of the achievements of KADLACC is required to facilitate this.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Going to scale: lessons learned

KADLACC so far has been successful in addressing the main challenges that brought about its establishment. As the KADLACC initiative was born out of climatically-induced natural disasters, the platform is at the forefront of local climate action activities. The objective of KADLACC was to build the resilience of smallholder farmers through crop diversification, income generating activities and conservation of natural resource management.

KADLACC operates on the premise that land degradation and improved productivity can only be reversed by long-term investment and by people working together across the landscape, demonstrating that social capital builds natural capital.

Ensuring responsiveness of actors and service providers to the needs articulated by the community requires commitment to demand-driven development that leverage on existing human and financial resources in response to demand. This takes a combined effort and time to develop. It also requires frequent monitoring and adjustments.

Effective representation in such processes can only be successful if bottom up efforts to mobilize potential community-level expertise are applied and integrated to district level efforts to address the demands.

Building the spirit of volunteerism and mobilizing facilitators from the community reduces the costs of investing in community organizations and ensures quality farmer representation and engagement in development planning and decision-making processes.

KADLACC has been able to scale out into the bordering districts of Kween and Bukwa and established similar principles of management for natural resources. Through documentation of successes and lessons learned, the three districts have been able to leverage existing KADLACC potential as a co-learning approach to ensure a wide scale adoption of the various conservation practices.

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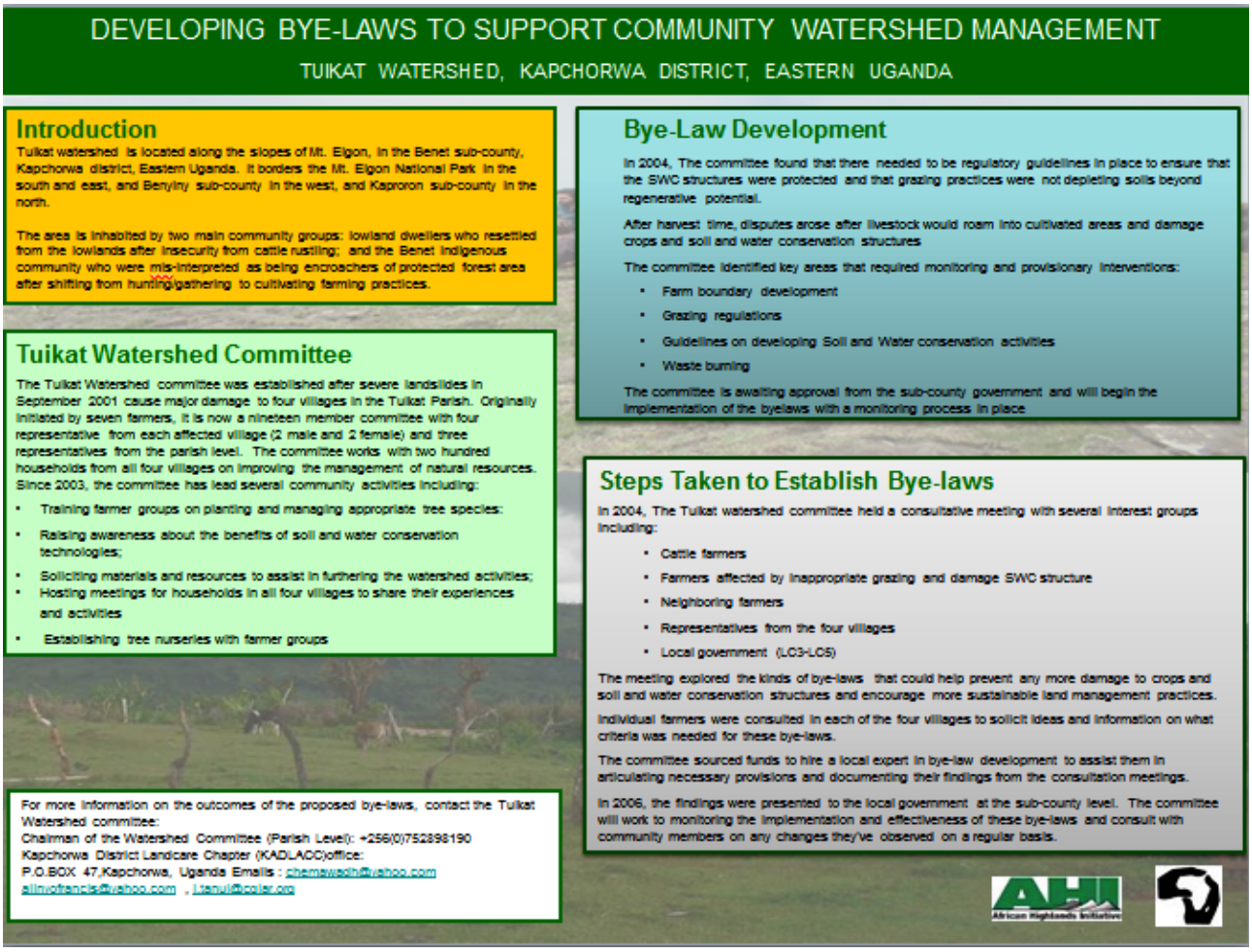
Appendix 1: Full names of community groups affiliated to KADLACC

TWI	Tuikat Watershed Initiative
TOFA	Tuban Organic Farmers Association
KBKAA	Kapchorwa Bee Keepers and Agroforestry Association
AGA	Arokwo Growers Association
KSWC	Kaseko Soil and Water Conservation
KIFA	Kaptoyoy Integrated Farmers Association
BAFA	Bukwa Agroforestry Farmers Association

Appendix 2: Plan of action for community by-laws



DEVELOPING BYE-LAWS TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

TUIKAT WATERSHED, KAPCHORWA DISTRICT, EASTERN UGANDA

Introduction

Tuikat watershed is located along the slopes of Mt. Elgon, in the Benet sub-county, Kapchorwa district, Eastern Uganda. It borders the Mt. Elgon National Park in the south and east, and Benyiny sub-county in the west, and Kaproron sub-county in the north.

The area is inhabited by two main community groups: lowland dwellers who resettled from the lowlands after insecurity from cattle rustling; and the Benet indigenous community who were mis-interpreted as being encroachers of protected forest area after shifting from hunting/gathering to cultivating farming practices.

Tuikat Watershed Committee

The Tuikat Watershed committee was established after severe landslides in September 2001 cause major damage to four villages in the Tuikat Parish. Originally initiated by seven farmers, it is now a nineteen member committee with four representative from each affected village (2 male and 2 female) and three representatives from the parish level. The committee works with two hundred households from all four villages on improving the management of natural resources. Since 2003, the committee has lead several community activities including:

- Training farmer groups on planting and managing appropriate tree species;
- Raising awareness about the benefits of soil and water conservation technologies;
- Soliciting materials and resources to assist in furthering the watershed activities;
- Hosting meetings for households in all four villages to share their experiences and activities
- Establishing tree nurseries with farmer groups

For more information on the outcomes of the proposed bye-laws, contact the Tuikat Watershed committee:
Chairman of the Watershed Committee (Parish Level): +256(0)752898190
Kapchorwa District Landcare Chapter (KADLACC)office:
P.O.BOX 47,Kapchorwa, Uganda Emails : chemwaskh@yahoo.com
allinotienis@yahoo.com , kenyi@tpolar.org

Bye-Law Development

In 2004, The committee found that there needed to be regulatory guidelines in place to ensure that the SWC structures were protected and that grazing practices were not depleting soils beyond regenerative potential.

After harvest time, disputes arose after livestock would roam into cultivated areas and damage crops and soil and water conservation structures

The committee identified key areas that required monitoring and provisionary interventions:

- Farm boundary development
- Grazing regulations
- Guidelines on developing Soil and Water conservation activities
- Waste burning

The committee is awaiting approval from the sub-county government and will begin the implementation of the byelaws with a monitoring process in place

Steps Taken to Establish Bye-laws

In 2004, The Tuikat watershed committee held a consultative meeting with several interest groups including:

- Cattle farmers
- Farmers affected by inappropriate grazing and damage SWC structure
- Neighboring farmers
- Representatives from the four villages
- Local government (LC3-LC5)

The meeting explored the kinds of bye-laws that could help prevent any more damage to crops and soil and water conservation structures and encourage more sustainable land management practices.

Individual farmers were consulted in each of the four villages to solicit ideas and information on what criteria was needed for these bye-laws.

The committee sourced funds to hire a local expert in bye-law development to assist them in articulating necessary provisions and documenting their findings from the consultation meetings.

In 2006, the findings were presented to the local government at the sub-county level. The committee will work to monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of these bye-laws and consult with community members on any changes they've observed on a regular basis.

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