

WETLAND AND COMMUNAL LAND FACT FINDING ASSESSMENT REPORT, LANGO SUB - REGION.



Written by the Land and Equity Movement in Uganda (LEMU) for District Environment Offices of Lira, Apac, Amolatar, Kole, Oyam, Otuke and Lango Cultural Foundation.

October, 2012

1. BACKGROUND TO GRAZING LAND ASSESSEMENT.

In collaboration with International Development Organization (IDLO), Land and Equity Movement in Uganda (LEMU) implemented a two year community land titling pilot project in Oyam district from 2009 to 2011.

At the end of the pilot project in Oyam district, LEMU initiated the discussion with Lango Cultural Foundation – LCF and all the District Environment Offices in Lango sub region and it was revealed that this was a problem being faced by all the communities with grazing lands and wetlands around Lango sub-region and there was need to start a collaborative effort towards addressing this problem. In 2011, LEMU together with Lango Cultural Foundation and district environment Offices in Lango sub-region, sent radio announcements to inform communities with conflicts over wetlands/grazing land to report their complaints to their respective district environment offices. In response, the communities reported encroachment/conflicts on a total of 74 wetlands/community grazing lands around Lango sub-region. It was against this background that LEMU in collaboration with LCF and District environment offices in Lango sub-region conducted this fact finding assessment (May-June 2012) on the status quo of these communal lands.

Specific Assessment objectives

- a) Determine the previous users/owners of the communal lands before encroachment.
- b) Establish the nature of complaints being raised by the communities over communal lands use and

Document community and stakeholders' recommendations tabled as alternatives to resolving the reported cases of encroachment and best ways to protect the land.

Geographical scope of Districts that were involved in the assessment exercises

Amolatar, Lira, Apac, Oyam, Kole and Otuke.

2. METHODOLOGY

After the district environment offices received the 74 complaints from communities around Lango sub-region in October 2011, LEMU compiled the list and categorized the communities in each district into two; those that are wetland and those that are not. A planning workshop was held in January 2012 between LEMU staff, LCF and environment officers and it was agreed that the first step to respond to the registered complaints was to conduct a fact finding assessment. LEMU was tasked to mobilize resources for this exercise and draw a work plan. Another workshop was held in April 2012 for LEMU to present the proposed work plan and budget to carry out the exercise. In this workshop, the work plan and budget presented by LEMU was approved by the above stake holders.

Since the communities are located in different districts, it was agreed that the lead facilitators for the fact finding assessment visits to communities be the district environment officers but they would be assisted (co - facilitators) by the community development officer of the sub-county where the community is located. LEMU staff sent radio announcements to inform communities and leaders about the dates and venues for community meetings and also visited a few of the communities during the assessment especially those in Apac, Amolatar and Otuke districts.

The facilitators held community meetings and facilitated focus group discussions by asking the questions that were listed in the guide/questionnaire. They also gave educative information to the communities regarding the management and protection of the wetlands and community grazing lands. They visited sites of the encroachment and took photographs. At the end of each assessment, the facilitator recorded notes of community discussions and filled the questionnaire guide¹ for data collection. In particular, Focus group discussions, observation and interviews with key informants were used to collect data. These methods were chosen because they not only describe but they also solicit cause –effect opinions from respondents regarding communal lands encroachment.

During the fact finding assessment meetings held in 47 communities around Lango sub – region, a total of 40 women and 299 men (339 people) participated in the fact finding assessment. They include; community members with rights to the community lands and wetlands - both men and women, encroachers, members of the grazing land management committee, clan leaders and other local government leaders.

3. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS OF THE ASSESSMENT.

Table 1: Is the community grazing land adjacent to a wetland?

Community response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	33	82.50%
No	7	17.50%
TOTAL	40	100.00%

Table 2: Are there rules governing the use of the land, other than State Laws?

Community response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	10	25.64%
No	29	74.36%
TOTAL	39	100.00%

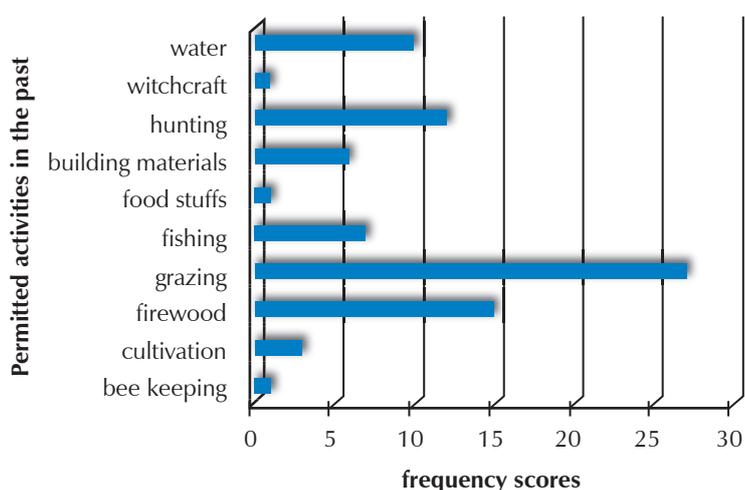


Figure 1: Permitted activities in the communal lands in the Past

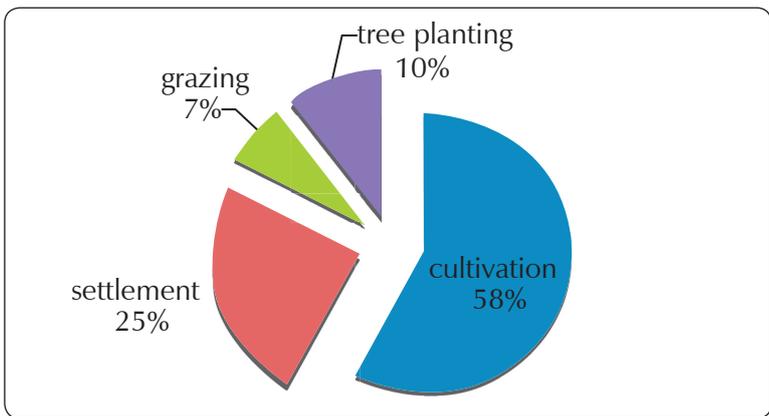


Figure 2: What was not allowed to be carried out in the land?

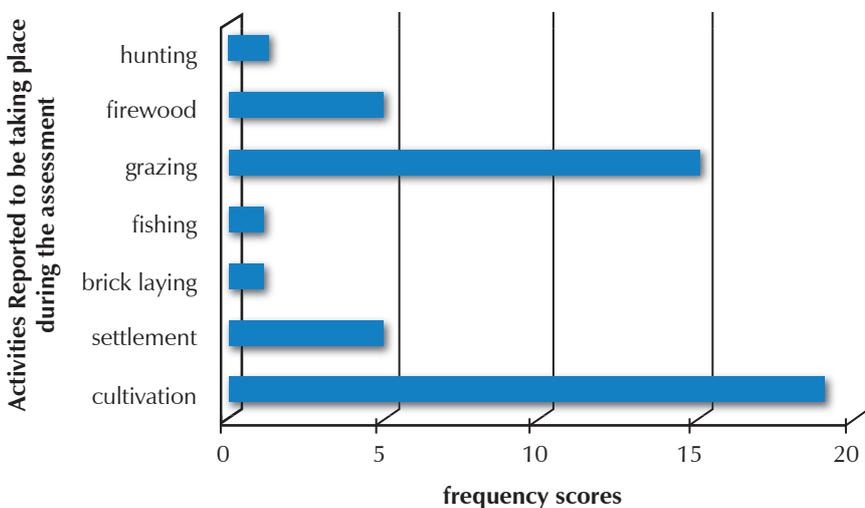


Figure 3: Current activities taking place in the communal lands.

Table 3: Are the people who made the local rules still alive?

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	13	46.43%
No	15	53.57%
TOTAL	28	100.00%

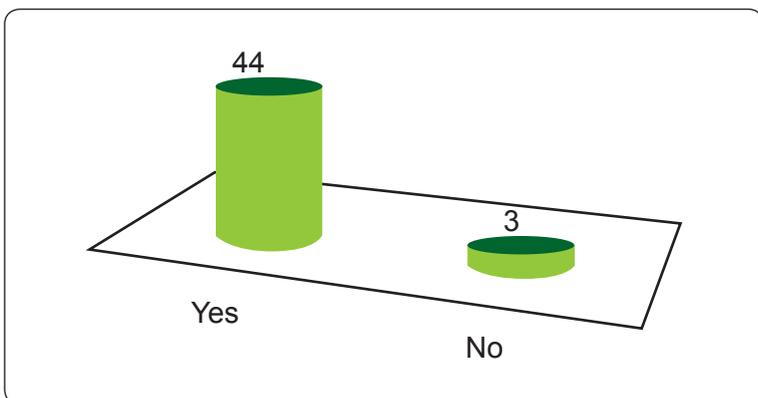


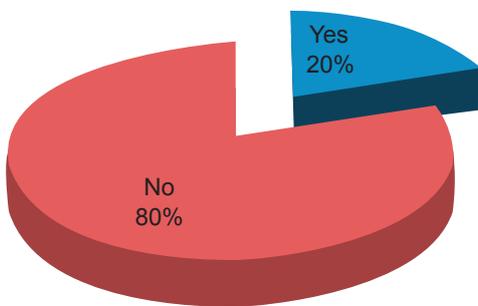
Figure 4: Has the size of your community wetland reduced over the last 20 years?

Table 4: Availability of other community grazing lands

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	21	44.68%
No	26	55.32%
TOTAL	47	100.00%

Table 5: Presence of a leadership set to manage the grazing land

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	17	38.64%
No	27	61.36%
TOTAL	44	100.00%



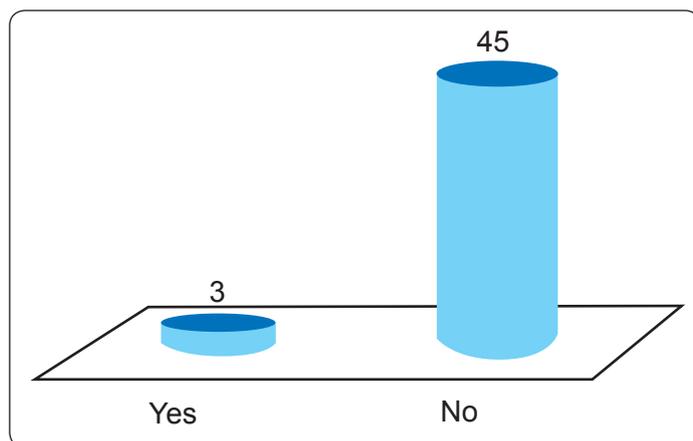
	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	9	20%
No	36	80%
TOTAL	45	100

Figure 5: Have you marked the boundary of your community land?**Table 6: what is the complaint about? sources of complaints regarding communal land use.**

Individual ownership of land; conflict between grazers and cultivators; brick making, tree cutting; women not allowed access for water; charcoal burning, settlement on grazing land; refusing others access to wetlands; fencing off wetlands by people cultivating it; encroachment; fencing, cultivation and introduction of exotic trees.

Table 7: Was the conflict resolved?

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	7	17.50%
No	33	82.50%
TOTAL	40	100.00%



	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	3	6.25%
No	45	93.75%
TOTAL	48	100.00%

Figure 6: Were there any conflicts over this land in the past?

No of households that use communal land.

The highest users of communal land lie between 98 - <113 households per communal land resource point. Followed by households number of 83 - <98 and 488 - <503 per communal land in Lango Sub-region.

4. LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE FACT FINDING ASSESSMENT EXERCISE.

Boundary tree planting

- In Amolatar District, a community attempted to demarcate the boundaries of a wetland by planting tree seedlings, unfortunately all the seedlings were uprooted by unknown
- During the assessment exercise, communities expressed concern over following this project through to the very end. The project should not end only at assessment. This means communities are willing to be part of the solution in tackling communal lands encroachment and grabbing.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMUNITIES ON HOW TO RESOLVE PROBLEMS.

Awareness campaign conducted; setting bye laws; registering the land; election of new wetland management committee; call the encroachers and if the refuse, they should be arrested; mediation meetings; community dialogue, enforcement of wetland laws; eviction of encroachers; forward cases to courts; demarcate communal lands.

6. STRATEGY FOR OPERATIONALIZATION OF FINDINGS OF THE ASSESSMENT.

A feedback workshop was held for stakeholders in which it was agreed the following: a) Stakeholders agreed to;

- 1) Start work with the 7 sites without conflicts;

- 2) Train all community stakeholders so that they are informed of the laws on land rights and wetlands.
- 3) Lobby for Lango Regional land policy promoting boundary trees and sketch maps.
- 4) Environment officers will use this report to lobby the districts and NEMA for more money to environment support.

LEMU has designed a three year community land protection programme for Lango sub-region. This will involve setting up a community land protection field office in Lira and equipping it with the required staff to implement the proposal above. The programme will focus of the 34 communities LEMU worked with in Oyam district in phase 1 of community land titling project and the 74 communities that have reported complains from all the districts around Lango sub – region.

Signed:



Judy Adoko

Executive Director (LEMU)

26th November, 2012.



Making land work for us all

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