

**Responsive Forest Governance Initiative (RFGI)**  
Supporting Resilient Forest Livelihoods  
through Local Representation

# **REDD Stakeholder Consultation**

**Symbolic or Substantive Democratic Representation  
in Preparing Uganda for REDD+?**



**Robert Mbeche**

## REDD Stakeholder Consultation

## **Responsive Forest Governance Initiative (RFGI) Research Programme**

The Responsive Forest Governance Initiative (RFGI) is a research and training program, focusing on environmental governance in Africa. It is jointly managed by the Council for the Development of Social Sciences Research in Africa (CODESRIA), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign (UIUC). It is funded by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). The RFGI activities are focused on 12 countries: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, DR Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda. The initiative is also training young, in-country policy researchers in order to build an Africa-wide network of environmental governance analysts.

Nations worldwide have introduced decentralization reforms aspiring to make local government responsive and accountable to the needs and aspirations of citizens so as to improve equity, service delivery and resource management. Natural resources, especially forests, play an important role in these decentralizations since they provide local governments and local people with needed revenue, wealth, and subsistence. Responsive local governments can provide forest resource-dependent populations the flexibility they need to manage, adapt to and remain resilient in their changing environment. RFGI aims to enhance and help institutionalize widespread responsive and accountable local governance processes that reduce vulnerability, enhance local wellbeing, and improve forest management with a special focus on developing safeguards and guidelines to ensure fair and equitable implementation of the Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) and climate-adaptation interventions.

REDD+ is a global Programme for disbursing funds, primarily to pay national governments of developing countries, to reduce forest carbon emission. REDD+ will require permanent local institutions that can integrate local needs with national and international objectives. The results from RFGI Africa research will be compared with results from collaborators in Asia and South America in order to enhance RFGI comparative scope, and to broaden its geographic policy relevance.

# RFGI Working Paper Series Editors' Note

---

James Murombedzi, Jesse Ribot  
and Gretchen Walters

Struggles for control over and access to nature and natural resources; struggles over land, forests, pastures and fisheries, are struggles for survival, self determination, and meaning. Natural resources are central to rural lives and livelihoods: they provide the material resources for survival, security, and freedom. To engage in the world requires assets that enable individuals, households, and communities to act in and on the world around them. The ability to accumulate assets and the ability to access government and market services depends partly on such resources along with the political-economic infrastructure – rights, recourse, representation, markets, and social services – that are the domain of government. Democracy, which both enables and requires the freedom to act, is predicated on these assets and infrastructures. Since the 1980s, African governments have been implementing local government decentralization reforms aimed at making local government more democratic by making them responsive and accountable to citizen needs and aspirations; in many places this has been done through a decentralisation of natural resource governance to local administrations. In order to be responsive to individual, household and community demands, local governments, too, need resources and decision-making powers. There must be a public domain – a set of public resources, such as forests or fisheries, which constitute this domain of democracy, the domain of decisions and services that citizens can demand of government. Natural resources, when decentralized into the domain of local authority, form an important part of the resources of individuals, households, communities and governments, making possible this move toward local democracy.



Natural resources provide local governments and people with wealth and subsistence. While nature is not the only source of rural income, the decentralization of natural resources governance is a core component of local government reform. However, governance reforms have been implemented in a context broadly characterized by an enduring crisis of the Western economic and financial systems, which in turn has stimulated privatization and liberalization in every sphere of life, including nature. The process has deprived local governments of public resources – depriving individuals and communities of a reason to engage, as a powerless government is not worth trying to influence. Privatization is depriving forest-dependent peoples of their access to formerly ‘public’ or traditionally managed resources. National governments, as well as international bodies such as the United Nations programme, titled the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD), further this trend as they collaborate with private interests to promote the privatization of natural resources. The resulting enclosures threaten the wellbeing of resource-dependent populations and the viability of democratic reforms.

The specter of climate change is deepening the crisis of enclosure. A key response to climate change has been the attempt to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions through enhancing the capacity of forests in the developing world to store carbon, ostensibly for the benefit of the atmosphere as well as the communities who use these forests. UN REDD seeks to pay communities, through their national governments, to conserve their forests as carbon storage. A plus ‘+’ was added to REDD, forming REDD+, to call for improved ecosystems services, forest management, conservation, forest restoration and afforestation to enhance the capacity for carbon storage. Designed on the basis of similar payments for environmental services (PES) schemes, REDD+ has the potential to inject vast new sums of money into local resource use and governance. In the context of fragile local governments, nascent democracies and powerful private interests, such cash inflows result in the commercialization and privatization of forests and natural resources and the dispossession of local resource users. This financialization of natural resources grossly diminishes the scope for democratic natural resource governance schemes. To be sure, the implementation of REDD+ can also learn from and avoid the pitfalls experienced in these PES schemes, especially if they represent local interests in natural resource governance decision making.

The Responsive Forest Governance Initiative (RFGI) is an Africa-wide environmental-governance research and training program focusing on enabling responsive and accountable decentralization to strengthen the representation of forest-based rural people in local-government decision making. Since January

2012, the programme has carried out 33 case studies in 12 African countries, with comparative cases Nepal and Peru, to assess the conditions under which central authorities devolve forest management and use decisions to local government, and the conditions that enable local government to engage in sound, equitable and pro-poor forest management. Aimed at enabling local government to play an integrative role in rural development and natural resource management, these case studies are now being finalized and published to elicit public discourse and debate on local government and local democracy. This Working Paper series will publish the RFGI case studies as well as other comparative studies of decentralized natural resources governance in Africa and elsewhere that focus on the intersection between local democracy and natural resource management schemes. Using the concepts of institutional choice and recognition, the cases deal with a comprehensive range of issues in decentralized forest management in the context of REDD+, including the institutional choices of intervening agencies; the effects of such choices on accountability and representation; and the relationships between local government and other local institutions. The series will also include syntheses discussing the main findings of the RFGI research programme.

Based at CODESRIA, and funded by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), the RFGI is a three year collaborative initiative of CODESRIA, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). RFGI working papers and documents, including the background papers, the RFGI programme description, and the RFGI Methods Handbook, can be found on line at:

- <http://www.codesria.org/spip.php>,
- [https://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/forest/fp\\_our\\_work/fp\\_our\\_work\\_thematic/locally\\_controlled\\_forests/lcf\\_projects\\_partnership/responsive\\_forest\\_governance\\_initiative\\_rfgi\\_\\_/](https://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/forest/fp_our_work/fp_our_work_thematic/locally_controlled_forests/lcf_projects_partnership/responsive_forest_governance_initiative_rfgi__/)
- <https://sdep.earth.illinois.edu/programs/democracyenvironment.aspx>



**RFGI Working Paper No. 29**

RFGI Series Editors: James Murombedzi, Jesse Ribot and Gretchen Walters

**Responsive Forest Governance Initiative (RFGI)**  
Supporting Resilient Forest Livelihoods  
through Local Representation

**REDD Stakeholder Consultation**  
**Symbolic or Substantive Democratic Representation**  
**in Preparing Uganda for REDD+?**

Robert Mbeche





© CODESRIA 2015

Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa  
Avenue Cheikh Anta Diop, Angle Canal IV  
BP 3304 Dakar, CP 18524, Senegal  
Website: [www.codesria.org](http://www.codesria.org)

ISBN: 978-2-86978-690-5

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording or any information storage or retrieval system without prior permission from CODESRIA.

Typesetting: Alpha Ousmane Dia

Cover image: With permission from Marc Ribot for his *Ceramic Dog: Your Turn*  
(2012 Northern Spy Records/Yellowbird Records)

Cover design: Ibrahima Fofana

Distributed in Africa by CODESRIA

Distributed elsewhere by African Books Collective, Oxford, UK

Website: [www.africanbookscollective.com](http://www.africanbookscollective.com)

The Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) is an independent organisation whose principal objectives are to facilitate research, promote research-based publishing and create multiple forums geared towards the exchange of views and information among African researchers. All these are aimed at reducing the fragmentation of research in the continent through the creation of thematic research networks that cut across linguistic and regional boundaries.

CODESRIA publishes *Africa Development*, the longest standing Africa based social science journal; *Afrika Zamani*, a journal of history; the *African Sociological Review*; the *African Journal of International Affairs*; *Africa Review of Books and the Journal of Higher Education in Africa*. The Council also co-publishes the *Africa Media Review*; *Identity, Culture and Politics: An Afro-Asian Dialogue*; *The African Anthropologist and the Afro-Arab Selections for Social Sciences*. The results of its research and other activities are also disseminated through its Working Paper Series, Green Book Series, Monograph Series, Book Series, Policy Briefs and the CODESRIA Bulletin. Select CODESRIA publications are also accessible online at [www.codesria.org](http://www.codesria.org).

CODESRIA would like to express its gratitude to the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the Ford Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation of New York (CCNY), the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), the Danish Agency for International Development (DANIDA), the French Ministry of Cooperation, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Open Society Foundations (OSFs), TrustAfrica, UNESCO, UN Women, the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) and the Government of Senegal for supporting its research, training and publication programmes.

# Contents

<i>About the Author</i> .....	xi
<i>Acknowledgements</i> .....	xiii
<i>Abstract</i> .....	xv
<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	1
<b>2. Linking Choice of Institutions to Representation</b> .....	5
<b>3. Methods</b> .....	9
<b>4. Representation in Preparing Uganda for REDD+</b> .....	11
A Brief Background to the Case .....	11
REDD+ Policy Representation Rhetoric .....	12
Institutional Choices in Uganda's R-PP.....	13
The Practice of Representation in the R-PP Participatory Process.....	15
<b>5. Discussion</b> .....	25
<b>6. Conclusion</b> .....	29
<i>Notes</i> .....	31
<i>References</i> .....	33



## About the Author

**Robert Mbeche** has a PhD in International and Rural Development from the University of Reading, UK. He is a lecturer in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics at the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology in Nairobi, Kenya.



## Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank James Murombedzi, Jesse Ribot, Gretchen Walters and several researchers with the Responsive Forest Governance Initiative (RFGI) for their comments on previous versions of this article. Special thanks also go to two anonymous reviewers for their intellectual insights on earlier drafts. Finally, I thank the Swedish International Development Agency for its financial support to this research.





# Abstract

Many developing countries are joining REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Deforestation) through the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) or the United Nations REDD programme. To receive the REDD+ finance, the financiers (World Bank and UN REDD) require that interested developing countries must prepare for REDD+, through a process that provides room for input from indigenous and forest-dependent peoples and to ensure that the projects are responsive to their needs – their substantive representation. Uganda developed its REDD+ preparedness Proposal (R-PP) between 2009 and 2012 through what was described as an 'inclusive' and 'highly participatory' process. This paper examines the choice of institutions for R-PP development and the extent to which the consultation process for REDD+ preparation created conditions for substantive representation. The study finds that despite the intervening agencies' (World Bank, National Forestry Authority and the Norwegian Embassy) stated intention of inclusive stakeholder engagement, experts from the NGO fraternity and the responsible government Ministry controlled the R-PP design process. Efficiency and delivery of outputs were overriding considerations in the recognition of central and upwardly accountable institutions rather than representation as such. Thus representation in the R-PP development process was far from being substantively democratic. Rather, because representation was performed merely to meet requirements, it was largely symbolic.

**Key words:** Participation; substantive representation; safeguards; indigenous and forest-dependent people; REDD+; Uganda



---

## Introduction

Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD+) is an instrument for sequestering carbon from developing countries' forests. While REDD+ focuses on emission reductions, it is also expected to improve forest governance through a system of safeguards that will ensure accountability and responsiveness to forest-dependent communities (UNFCCC 2010). REDD+ projects may generate benefits such as direct payments for the carbon stored in trees, income from employment, or non-monetary benefits such as infrastructure investments or improved local environmental quality, but they may also present potentially serious risks to local communities (Larson 2011). These risks may emerge because REDD+ is a governance process with multiple actors, interests and activities, which all influence each other and may or may not coincide with the interests and visions of the local communities regarding forest and climate governance strategy (Corbera and Schroeder 2011).

Thus, there is a growing emphasis on the development of social safeguards for development interventions so that REDD will not adversely impact vulnerable groups. One safeguard promoted for the design and implementation of REDD+ is to recognise the 'full and effective' participation of relevant stakeholders, in particular indigenous peoples and local communities (UNFCCC 2010). Despite these commitments, a number of civil society organisations and indigenous peoples organisations are concerned that indigenous people<sup>1</sup> and other forest-dependent communities lack political power. As a result, their interests may not be taken into account when project designers or implementers make decisions over forests (Corbera and Schroeder 2011; Anderson 2011). Further, the strengthening of local rights can change relations between local citizens and the state and therefore change can often face political resistance (Ribot 2007).

The safeguard policies developed by the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) and the UN-REDD programme require that national REDD+ policies should meet some minimum requirements to ensure the 'participation' of indigenous and forest-dependent peoples. These include providing room for input from indigenous and forest-dependent peoples in the design of REDD+ projects, and to ensure that the projects are responsive to their needs (FCPF and UN-REDD 2010). These requirements represent an endorsement of substantive representation. Substantive representation occurs when representatives act in the best interests of the represented (Pitkin 1967) and are accountable and responsive to them (Manin *et al.* 1999). Corbera and Schroeder (2011) stress that involvement of constituents in REDD+ decision making can be ensured through: (1) being informed of facts and outcomes; (2) being consulted and invited to provide input or feedback; (3) being involved as a junior partner and ensuring that views and concerns are reflected in the outcomes; (4) being invited to collaborate on equal footing; and (5) being empowered and conferred with decision-making authority. To appreciate the achievement of these goals in the context of REDD+, we must investigate who participates at different levels of governance and how these actors exercise their agency.

Therefore this paper examines whether the choice of institutions and/or actors and the design of the consultation process in R-PP preparation created conditions for substantive representation. Specifically, which institutions and actors were selected to prepare Uganda's R-PP? What rationales were given by the higher-level actors designing and implementing projects, here referred to as intervening agents, in the choice of institutions made? Did the choice of actors to participate in developing the R-PP enhance or undermine local democratic representation? The achievement of goals producing substantive democratic gains can entail improvement in the dimensions of well-being that can then allow citizens to make claims for better representation and greater inclusion in decision-making processes.

The study finds that despite the stated intention of inclusive stakeholder engagement, experts from NGOs and the responsible government Ministry controlled the R-PP design process. Efficiency and delivery of outputs were overriding considerations in the recognition of central and upwardly accountable institutions rather than representation as such. Thus R-PP representation was far from being substantively democratic, rather it was largely symbolic. Substantive democracy is trumped in Uganda's REDD+ R-PP by a focus on instrumental outcomes of REDD+ which were: i) to 'educate' the participants in REDD+ - particularly on its 'technical' aspects; ii) to legitimize the REDD+ strategy in the

eyes of the donors; iii) to promote and ensure the speedy achievement of the REDD+ programme's objectives. But, because democratic procedures are required by the program, these are put in place for show, producing a kind of symbolic representation that legitimates projects allowing the continued implementation of its project goals.

Section 2 of the article presents the conceptual underpinnings of the study; Section 3 presents the methods used in the study; Section 4 assesses issues of representation in Uganda's R-PP development and Sections 5 and 6 present the discussion and conclusions.





---

## Linking Choice of Institutions to Representation

Following on from Ribot's (2007) Choice and Recognition (C&R) framework, institutional 'choice' is defined as the decisions made by intervening agencies (governments, donor agencies, NGOs etc.) about which local institutions they work with and therefore transfer authority or offer support to. Choice gives recognition, which is a form of acknowledgement as a result of the choices made by government or by international agencies. Acknowledging an authority through enhanced powers and resources makes it more meaningful in the local arena and therefore legitimizes it over others that have not been recognised (Ribot 2007) (ibid). Institutional choices are therefore mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion (Ribot et. al 2008) but even more important is the fact that they [choices] have an implication on the nature of democratic outcomes (Blair 2000; Houtzager and Lavalle 2009; Larson *et al.* 2010; Ribot *et al.* 2008). Specifically, the choices could impact on the direction of the selected partners' accountability, which can be upwardly to their donors and/or downwardly to the people and how responsive they are to their needs. Following Manin *et al.* (1999), democracy is defined by the accountability and responsiveness of the leaders to the people. Accountability is defined as the rewards or sanctions in response to the leaders' actions while responsiveness occurs when leaders are able to respond to the needs and aspirations of their people. Representation which is a core part of democracy occurs when leaders are responsive to their people and the people under their jurisdiction are able to hold them to account (Manin *et al.* 1999).

The international REDD+ policy discourse regarding representation claims are wrapped in the language of 'participation' and social safeguards (FCPF and UN-REDD 2010). The World Bank's Learning Group on Participatory Development defines participation as 'a process through which stakeholders' influence and

share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affects them' (World Bank 1996:3). But, does 'participation' lead to substantive representation, particularly of marginalized groups? In the context of REDD+, who participates and what kind of mechanisms of participation are promoted by the donors are important institutional choices.

The objective of undertaking participation in REDD+ policy processes is to incorporate 'local' input, particularly from indigenous and marginalized groups, a substantive rationale. However, experiences from large-scale participation exercises show that actors are invited because of the contributions they are thought to be able to make, an instrumental rationale (Ayers 2011). This often means that those invited are those with access to political assets who are also likely to be among the least vulnerable of any group (ibid). As Mosse (2001) argues, such participation would serve instrumental goals, including to create ownership of policy processes and to legitimize them in the eyes of the donors. Mosse observes that, 'due to the pressure from funders for projects and reform processes to incorporate public participation, it [participation] has become a legitimising idea. Participatory exercises are significantly oriented upwards (or outwards) to legitimize action, to explain, justify, validate higher policy goals or mobilize political support rather than downwards to orientate action' (Mosse 2001:29). Thus, while increased participation has democracy characteristics, often participatory exercises are neither representative nor binding (Mosse 2001). Crook and Sverrisson (2001) observe that a distinction should be made between participation, which permits representation or directly active involvement, and mobilisation, which, despite involving large numbers of people right down to the grassroots, has nothing to do with enhancing responsiveness of government bodies.

According to Pitkin (1967), there are three main types of representation<sup>2</sup>; Pitkin states that symbolic representation occurs when we (represented) let ourselves be influenced by emotional ties in spite of our doubts about whether our interests are being served. The downside of this conception is that it is open to manipulation by representatives, particularly because it relies on whether the representative is believed in by the represented (Pitkin 1967). Alternatively, this conception is limited in so far as it presents practical challenges of empirically studying the attitudes and beliefs of the represented in a large-scale policy process such as R-PP development. Consequently, I employ Murray Edelman's (1985:23) conception of symbolism in political decision making. He argues that, 'if a regulatory process is examined in terms of divergence between political and legal promises on one hand and resource allocations and group reactions on the other hand, the largely

symbolic character of the entire process becomes apparent'. Edelman's assertion suggests that when the rhetoric is not matched with practice, the outcome would largely be symbolic.

Substantive representation occurs when representatives act in the best interests of the represented (Pitkin 1967). People's interests are neither homogeneous nor static which poses a great difficulty in employing this conception in empirical research. Following Manin *et al.* (1999), it is assumed that leaders would have acted in the citizens' best interests if they are accountable and responsive to them. Thus, robust and thorough representation, which I consider substantive, is democratic, where representatives are accountable and responsive to the represented. Following Houtzager and Lavallo (2009), the following are generally accepted institutional accountability mechanisms: the basis of the claim, whether there is a mandate from the represented (e.g. through membership, awareness); public participation in planning and executing activities of the representative and feedback mechanisms. In practice however, many actors lack politically sanctioned mechanisms to authorize and hold accountable their representation, in what Houtzager and Lavallo (2010) call 'assumed' representation. They caution, however, that even when the mandate is lacking, commitment to the represented is a vital component of representation. However this type of representation would not be democratic. When the population can sanction their leader so as to hold the leader accountable, then the representation can be considered democratic (Manin *et al.* 1999; Ribot 2004).



# 3

---

## Methods

The study examined how and why the elites and intervening agents (donors and development agencies) involved in R-PP development choose certain actors or institutions they will work with and how they justify these choices, and what were the effect of the organization or R-PP on representation (following Ribot *et al.* 2008). It used a ‘studying up’ approach (Nader 1974) involving participant observation and interviews of the high-level actors organizing and implementing the R-PP consultation. The study combined different data collection methods that include key informant discussions, face-to-face key-informant interviews, email and telephone interviews, document analysis and observations. In total, 47 face-to-face interviews, 15 email correspondences and 10 telephone interviews were conducted. The researcher also observed, took notes and opportunistically interviewed participants in sixteen policy meetings/workshops. Where it was not possible to construct meaning from observations, follow-up discussions with participants was done to help establish the meaning of these events. The focus of the R-PP document analysis was on the discourses regarding ‘democratisation’ i.e. representation, participation or any implicit or explicit intentions regarding involvement of local forest-dependent communities in the REDD+ process. The study was conducted in Uganda between January 2012 and June 2013.





---

# Representation in Preparing Uganda for REDD+

## **A Brief Background to the Case**

In 2009, Uganda received support of US\$ 200,000 from the World Bank (2009), henceforth 'the Bank', to help in developing the R-PP.<sup>3</sup> The Bank acts as a trustee of the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility fund, providing technical support for the REDD country participants, conducting due diligence<sup>4</sup> and ensuring environmental and social safeguards<sup>5</sup>. The main objective of the funding was to assist the country in laying out and organizing the steps needed to achieve 'Readiness' to undertake activities to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+). For three years (2009-2012), Uganda prepared a proposal for preparation of an assessment of the country's land-use, forestry and governance policies to inform REDD+ development;<sup>6</sup> it put in place an institutional and legal implementation framework necessary to inform REDD+ implementation; it designed a monitoring system to measure, report and verify (MRV) the effect of the strategies; and conducted multi-stakeholder consultation and a participant plan outlining how the stakeholders would participate in the planning and decision making process related to REDD+ (Republic of Uganda 2011a:12).

This study focuses on the R-PP stakeholder consultation, in particular the involvement of local groups, forest-dependent and Indigenous Peoples. According to the FCPF and UN-REDD (2010:1), 'these stakeholders are often not engaged in public decision-making processes, yet they depend on forests for their social and economic livelihoods as well as cultural and spiritual wellbeing'. The paper therefore seeks to examine the R-PP development process in terms of the extent

to which the expressed intentions regarding representation are actualized. The next section presents the R-PP intervening agents' expressed intentions towards representation.

### **REDD+ Policy Representation Rhetoric**

The main intervening agents in Uganda's R-PP are the government through the Ministry of Water and Environment and the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility. Both of them espouse democracy goals in policy and project development, through participation of people in decision making. The Uganda Constitution sets the context for democratic goals by stating that 'power belongs to the people and should thus be exercised by them through involvement in decision making' (Republic of Uganda 1995:1). Thus in order to actualize this constitutional provision, the Local Government Act (Republic of Uganda 1997) provides for decentralization of state power to allow for local representation. In the forestry sector, the country is committed to decentralization of management of forest resources (Second Schedule) from the central to the local government. The aim of this move was to improve service delivery and foster local participation. The National Forestry Policy (Republic of Uganda 2001:19) also sought to establish robust community institutions to ensure transparent decision-making, adequate representation and participation of women, men and vulnerable groups and the equitable sharing of forest benefits and responsibilities. The policy provided for provision of a mechanism for the participation of all interested parties in forestry development through clear legal agreements (Republic of Uganda 2001:28). Consequently, collaborative forest management is promoted as means to provide appropriate representation of rural people dependent on forests (National Forest and Tree Planting Act 2003). It can thus be inferred that the government of Uganda commits to substantive democracy goals in the forestry sector and in public decision making more broadly.

The World Bank, a trustee to the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) funds, also espouses democracy goals through their social and environmental safeguards (World Bank 2012), relating to external projects and policies for which REDD+ can be assumed to be part. The Bank claims that funds financing projects are provided only where the process results in broad community support for the project by the affected Indigenous Peoples. Similarly, the joint UN-REDD and FCPF guidelines on stakeholder consultation (FCPF and UN-REDD 2010) espouse not only a process characterized by transparent information sharing but also where the represented reserve the right to elect their own representatives:

Representation of all stakeholders, including indigenous and forest-dependent people through their own existing process (e.g. council of elders, headmen and tribal leaders) including through representatives chosen by themselves through

their own processes...consultations should facilitate dialogue and exchange of information, and consensus building reflecting broad community support should emerge from the consultation (FCPF & UN-REDD 2010:3).

In addition, the guidelines espouse that the consultations would be all inclusive: 'the consultation process should include a broad range of relevant stakeholders at the national and local levels. Specifically, the national-level working group should be established on the basis of a comprehensive stakeholder identification process to provide for broad representation. Beyond the national level, participatory fora need to be established (or existing ones used) at the local level to ensure active engagement of local stakeholders' (FCPF and UN-REDD 2010:3).

The focus of the subsequent analysis is to examine the extent to which the representation rhetoric in R-PP development was translated in practice. Translation of the expressed procedural goals would lead to substantive democracy, otherwise the outcome would be symbolic.

### **Institutional Choices in Uganda's R-PP**

In this section, I present the choices intervening agencies made with regard to the institutions they preferred to work with in developing the R-PP, their rationales and the effect of the organization on representation. To a large extent central and upwardly accountable institutions were recognised in Uganda's R-PP development largely based on efficiency despite expressed intentions of recognition for representation.

The World Bank chose to work with the National Forestry Authority, a parastatal authority charged with managing the country's national forest reserves, hereafter referred as the Authority to lead the R-PP development. This is despite the mandate of policy formulation residing with the Forest Sector Support Department within the Ministry of Water and Environment. Moreover, unlike the Authority whose mandate did not require them to implement their activities through decentralized units, FSSD's mandate required it to work directly with decentralized District Forest Services, an institution which is subject to the control of locally elected leaders. This meant that unlike the Authority, FSSD's structure was subject to citizen control through their elected leaders. A World Bank official<sup>7</sup> involved in Uganda's R-PP observed that the Authority was perhaps the most credible institution in the Ministry of Environment to lead the process at the time because it was less bureaucratic, had been fairly successful in managing the country's forest reserves and had good technical capacity which represents

recognition for efficiency. This perception was confirmed with other respondents<sup>8</sup> who termed the first five years of the Authority<sup>9</sup> (2004-2008) as 'glorious' mainly because of its perceived efficiency and capacity to implement its mandate of sustainable<sup>10</sup> forest management. Efficiency is itself a 'good' reason to choose a partner but as Ayers (2011) argues, technical arguments are often used as a means to exclude local populations.

The FSSD was denied recognition by the World Bank, arguably because it lacked the technical capacity to lead the R-PP development, largely because it was under staffed and under resourced. By the time the Authority was formed in 2004, most senior forest officials with the former Forestry Department officials choose to move to the Authority due to better remuneration and less bureaucracy<sup>11</sup> which might explain the privileged position that the Authority enjoyed. As if to acknowledge that FSSD had been misrecognised in R-PP development, and on the insistence of the Bank, the responsibilities of leading the next phase of the REDD strategy development were transferred to the Forest Sector Support Department in mid-2012. FSSD was seen as a better institution justified by a Bank official<sup>12</sup> on the basis that it was 'well placed to bring all state actors into supporting the R-PP'. This decision was perhaps based on a perception that the R-PP under the Forest Authority was being run like 'a one man show', which meant that few in government 'owned' it (ibid). And as if to acknowledge the capacity challenges within the department, the Bank committed to supporting the recruitment of more staff within the FSSD and to meet their training needs at a cost of US\$ 200,000.

The Authority as the REDD+ focal point had the responsibility to constitute and manage the R-PP structures in conjunction with the Bank. Three institutions were created to spearhead the R-PP preparation: the REDD+ Working Group, hereafter the Working Group, the REDD+ Secretariat and the Steering Committee. The Working Group's role was to provide input to develop the R-PP and review drafts prepared by consultants. The Working Group was initially constituted through a call through the Forest Working Group<sup>13</sup>, a large network of NGOs and private stakeholders working on climate change projects. As a result, the majority (27 out of 30) of the initial members of the REDD+ Working Group were selected from the NGOs. The Authority justified its choice on the basis that this network had organizations that were already working on climate change projects and therefore had technical 'expertise' that could benefit the REDD+ R-PP formulation. The choice of the working group members (NGOs) was primarily an instrumental choice, as the members were selected according to their capacity to support REDD+

programme's 'technical' goals which included assessing the status and drivers of deforestation, sensitizing stakeholders and increasing awareness of REDD+ and reconfiguring national structures for REDD+ readiness. Later on, the Working Group was extended to include 27 officials from ministries and another nine from universities, research institutes and private forest companies.

The Secretariat was made up of private consultants recommended by the World Bank and a REDD focal person who was an Authority official. Its role was to provide technical guidance in the R-PP formulation and to synthesize information from the working group and other consultations into a document that would be submitted to the Bank. The Secretariat was on the one hand answerable to the REDD+ steering committee under the Ministry of Water and Environment. The committee's membership came from various government ministries to provide strategic direction and policy guidance to the R-PP. On the other hand, and perhaps more importantly, the Secretariat and other R-PP structures were answerable to the Bank. Clearly, the choice of R-PP institutions sidestepped both locally elected leaders and forest-dependent populations, the effect of which would be symbolic representation of local groups. In addition, the way in which these institutions were constituted provided only for upward accountabilities. Downward accountabilities are necessary if marginalized groups are to be substantively represented.

### **The Practice of Representation in the R-PP Participatory Process**

In this section I focus my analysis on how the participatory processes actually worked, and in particular, who participated and who did not and the rationales by the organizers for including some actors and not others. Three separate but inter-related stakeholder consultation processes were organised by the REDD+ secretariat as part of the R-PP development. They include the initial World Bank supported stakeholder consultation, the extended consultations funded by the Norwegian Embassy in Kampala and the development of the Participation and Consultation plan funded as part of a project by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). I present the three stakeholder participation activities in turn, beginning with the World Bank-funded regional consultations. As I will show next, the participatory processes did not provide conditions for substantive representation of forest-dependent communities.

### ***Regional R-PP Consultations, 2010***

The R-PP development grant agreement between the Bank and the government of Uganda (World Bank 2009) required a comprehensive stakeholder consultation and with a specific focus on forest-dependent local communities. However, in practice, invitation and participation in the workshops organized by the REDD secretariat appeared to have privileged ‘experts’ from central government, local government and NGOs.

Between May and June 2010, the REDD+ Secretariat invited 154 participants to the four regional<sup>14</sup> R-PP consultation meetings to represent the 115 districts at the time with a population of over 24 million people. There were 36 participants in the Eastern region, 44 in the central region, 38 in the Western region and 36 in the North of the country (NFA 2010a, 2010b, 2010c, 2010d). Although there were slight variations in the number of participants in each stakeholder group, overall there was a higher proportion from central government ministries and agencies (32%); local government forestry and environmental officers (28%); NGOs (12%) and private company representatives (10%). Interestingly, representatives of local forest-dependent people accounted for only 6 per cent of the participants and even lower were locally elected representatives (5%). A total of seven locally elected district councillors (average of two per region) were invited out of 2,372 elected councillors in the rural districts of Uganda (Republic of Uganda 2011b).

According to a senior member of the REDD+ secretariat<sup>15</sup>, participants were selected who would best represent interest groups<sup>16</sup>. As an example, the secretariat selected district technical officers to represent forest-dependent people on the basis that the forestry and environmental officers understood the local issues well. However, most of the district staff interviewed did not see themselves as representing local people but rather their departments. As one forest officer<sup>17</sup> exclaimed, ‘How can I represent people whose interests I don’t know and on a new intervention that I don’t know well about?’ The REDD secretariat claimed that local government forestry and environment officers were representing local forest-dependent people, a claim they rejected. Thus the secretariat’s representation claims are just symbolic. This finding illustrates the difficulty of identifying representatives for the consultation meetings. How do you know who could represent the interest of a particular stakeholder group? What is the chance that the individual and or institution selected will represent the interests of the stakeholder group they are representing or even be aware of their interests? What chance do the public have to hold to account ‘representatives’ selected without their knowledge and/or mandate?

In an attempt to resolve the dilemma of local representation, the Local Government Act (Republic of Uganda 1997) suggests that local government elected leaders<sup>18</sup> represent the local population on all matters of public interest at the local level. However, local leaders are often side-lined, a common argument by intervening agencies being that they lack capacity. The practice of sidestepping locally elected leaders is not new in Uganda. In the environmental sector, people running projects prefer to work directly with local government forest and environmental officers, sometimes without informing the elected leaders<sup>19</sup>. This represents a repertoire of domination (Poteete and Ribot 2011) where those that are used to dominating use technical and other arguments to maintain their dominating position.

Three reasons were identified from interviews for preferring to invite experts to these meetings despite a commitment to include a wide range of stakeholders both at the national and local level. The first reason was that REDD+ was a highly technical process and that local people might not understand. This might explain why the secretariat invited over 80 per cent of the participants from 'expert' groups. As observed by a Forestry Authority official<sup>20</sup>, 'REDD+ is still technical and having many civil society organisation officials helped take it forward'. But even for the majority of district 'experts', the exercise was more of a training session than a consultation on REDD+. In all the regional workshops, over a half of the time was taken to 'teach' the participants on what REDD+ is, how it would work and why it was necessary for it to be supported. To ensure they had understood the content, a question and answer session followed the lectures. Participants were then put into groups where they were tasked to reflect on the drivers of deforestation. Most of the participants were in agreement that the training was necessary before consultation due to what they termed as the 'technical' nature of REDD+.

Second, the Bank had given the REDD+ secretariat a limited period of time to develop the R-PP and therefore it would have been practically and logistically impossible to include all stakeholders from the grassroots. In that vein, a senior REDD+ secretariat official observed<sup>21</sup>:

We were given three months to produce a draft R-PP report but I refused after looking at the expected outcomes... too high expectations, which were mechanistic. For example how can you engage stakeholders countrywide, at policy level, forest-dependent communities and so on within three months and still produce a report?... We did not have the kind of resources that would have made the exercise more participatory. We therefore had to focus on getting the output.



According to a member of the REDD+ Steering Committee<sup>22</sup>, a Bank Carbon Specialist had suggested that the R-PP be prepared by consultants as part of their strategy to get the R-PP delivered on time.

Thirdly, it appears that the funds availed did not match the comprehensive stakeholder participation commitments. As a senior REDD+ Secretariat official observed, it was impossible to organize comprehensive stakeholder participation with the US\$ 75,000 provided for by the Bank against their proposed budget of slightly over US\$ 300,000. Interestingly, out of the US\$ 200,000 provided for R-PP development, US\$ 120,000 was allocated to consultants, while the actual costs of organizing the regional workshops was just over US\$ 33,000. A simple calculation would show that the budget utilized for stakeholder consultation was about a quarter of consultant costs and just over a sixth of the total available budget. Clearly, allocation of material resources appears to privilege ‘experts’ over the ‘locals’ during the regional consultations.

There was a consensus from interviews and also noted in the R-PP (Republic of Uganda 2011a) that one-day workshops in each of the four regions of the country were not sufficient to cover all the issues on REDD+. In the same vein, an external review of Uganda’s R-PP for the World Bank<sup>23</sup> noted that, ‘the participation of different stakeholders consulted during R-PP preparation seems to have failed to reach the key local governments’ representatives, the District forest services and local opinion leaders who are crucial in decision making at community level. It is not clear how, if at all, their views have been taken into consideration during regional consultations’ (FCPF 2011:6). The R-PP could not be approved on the basis of this exclusive stakeholder involvement (ibid). It is on this basis that the Norwegian Embassy in Kampala provided support to the REDD secretariat to carry out extended consultations (Norway-Government of Uganda 2010) especially with forest-dependent communities. These findings suggest that the participants chosen (largely experts) for consultations and the mechanisms of participation (training on REDD) indicated that the consultations were based on and promoted symbolic representation. The consultation did not even achieve its goal of getting input from forest-dependent communities, thus requiring ‘extended consultations’.

### ***Extended Consultations: Second Chance to Deliver Substantive Representation***

Upon a recognition that the regional consultations described above did not reach key local stakeholders, the Authority successfully applied for funding to extend

the consultations to local communities. Thus in August 2010, the Norwegian Embassy provided US\$ 183,500 to fund extended consultations to include the interests of forest-dependent people, that is communities within or surrounding forest resources and in particular, marginalized groups such as the Batwa of South Western Uganda (Norway-Government of Uganda 2010). An official with the Embassy observed 'we expected a process where not a few people sit in Kampala and decide on the people who depend on the forests. REDD is about those people and the forests where they live, so its decisions cannot be made without involving them'. However, as a condition for the funding, the Norwegian Embassy instructed that the Forestry Authority enter into implementation agreements with selected NGOs to carry out countrywide consultations with forest-dependent communities; in total ten NGOs carried out extended consultations.

Two rationales emerged from the choice to work through NGOs and not the Forestry Authority. First, a Norwegian Embassy official confirmed that they could not fund the Forestry Authority directly because of the corruption scandals<sup>24</sup> in the organisation that led them to cancel an earlier grant agreement with them. As the Embassy official observed<sup>25</sup>, 'when we thought that we were empowering the authority to deliver on its mandate, individuals within it were enriching themselves. As a result, we closed cooperation with NFA since 2010 and they have refunded a large proportion of the US\$ 1.6 million that we gave them'. However, since they were still interested in the R-PP, they agreed to fund the extended consultations but pay directly to the facilitating NGOs. Secondly, the Embassy believed that the NGOs could be more transparent and efficient in the utilization of the resources but more importantly, they would deliver the outputs on time. The same embassy official observed that the Authority was weak...the speed at which they were doing things was painfully slow. Coordination was lacking and it was more of a one-person activity than an NFA project.

These findings suggest that the preference for NGOs was in part based on efficiency around utilization of funds and delivery of outputs. Of importance, however, is that this choice had a bearing on the nature of representation as will be shown later in the paper. Needless to say, these consultations involved many more local people than the previous ones but the way in which representatives were selected added to the symbolic nature of the R-PP participatory processes. As already mentioned, ten implementing NGOs were selected to facilitate extended consultations. Each of them was required to work in areas where they have ongoing projects. Interviews with officials from seven of the ten NGOs showed that they selected individuals to represent various interest groups based on their knowledge of the communities. All the participating NGOs confirmed that they

selected participants from communities adjacent to forest reserves and in areas where they run projects. In Northern Uganda for example, the facilitating NGO selected participants largely from areas with a high level of deforestation. Based on their previous knowledge of these communities, they selected representatives for smallholder farmers, bricklayers, charcoal dealers, timber traders and some local government officials.<sup>26</sup>

In the Mt. Elgon area of Eastern Uganda, the facilitating NGO invited groups formed under a previous project to be part of the consultations. These facilitating NGOs operate on very small scales, in a few villages at most which suggests that these extended consultations may have been limited to these areas. Nonetheless, over 2,400 local forest-dependent people were invited to the nine consultation meetings (three each for Northern and Western Uganda; two for Eastern and one for Central region). The selective way through which participants were chosen raises questions as to whether the REDD secretariat and the facilitating NGOs were committed to a 'comprehensive' stakeholder identification and involvement to ensure representation. Similarly, from the point of view of the REDD Secretariat, representation occurred when a 'representative', often a person who shares some form of identity with preconceived categories of actors (commonly called 'stakeholders') was present in decision making. This understanding of representation is flawed because aggregating people as stakeholders or 'community' e.g. charcoal dealers, fishermen etc. masks the differences between them and makes it difficult for all their interests to be catered for. People's needs and aspirations need to be understood and addressed. If possible local people should select their representatives who should in return provide them with feedback on their representation.

### ***The Development of the Consultation and Participation (C&P) Plan***

The development of the Consultation and Participation plan was a condition for approval of the next phase of REDD strategy development funding. The overall objective of developing the C&P plan was to provide frameworks for continuous free, fair and transparent nationwide multi-stakeholder consultations to enhance inclusiveness and participation of all relevant stakeholders in REDD+ processes (Republic of Uganda 2012). The initial drafts of the C&P plan were developed by a sub-group of the REDD working group. The drafts were then presented to the working group for consideration and eventually to a national validation workshop consisting of a wide range of stakeholders (see Table 1 below). The participants to

these workshops were invited based on their earlier participation in the REDD+ Working Group and the extended consultations as shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1:** Number of Participants in C&P stakeholder workshops

Stakeholder group	Participation and Consultation Sub-working group	National REDD+ workshop	National Validation Workshop
Government ministries	4	11	6
NGOs	19	20	20
Private companies	1	5	4
University/research	2	2	5
Local government technical staff	-	-	93
Elected representatives	-	-	1
Donors	-	-	3
Cultural institutions	-	-	1
Total	26	38	133

*Source:* Republic of Uganda 2012.

From Table 1, it is clear that representatives of NGOs were overrepresented at the design stages of the participation plan. This is not surprising considering that the initial invitation to the working group was done through a largely NGO network, the Forest Working Group. It also appears that NGOs are motivated to come to these since they have the chance of being funded by being involved: as one International NGO official<sup>27</sup> observed, ‘we see it as an opportunity to acquire expertise in a new area as well as to be relevant. The bottom line is that civil society organisations have to find work to survive and officials have to be on the lookout for new projects’. Moreover, the requirement set by the REDD secretariat was that the institutions had to have some involvement in carbon forestry and rural livelihood programmes around the country<sup>28</sup>. Of interest is that the Secretariat was working closely with these international NGOs who also funded the initial setting up of REDD+ structures. This might explain the requirement that membership of the working group be pegged on some experience implementing carbon forestry projects which in effect closed out local government actors from the design stage. Interestingly, over 90 participants from local governments were invited to validate policy plans that they were not part of from the beginning, suggesting that they were used to ‘rubber stamp’ the plans.

Nonetheless, interviews with seven of the ten NGOs that were involved in development of both the extended Participation plan viewed themselves as representing the interests of local people. Officials from six (all based in Kampala) of the seven NGOs interviewed claimed to represent local people in R-PP development justified on the basis of providing access for the local people to public decision making, i.e. mediation. They argued that their ability to mediate the interests of the local community was because they operated at both local and national scales. One NGO based in Northern Uganda, on the other hand, claimed to represent local people based on their shared identity and interests with those that they represented. The officials of this particular NGO considered themselves 'indigenous' based on their ethnicity and therefore 'mirrored' those that they represented, hence the descriptive representation. Following Houtzager and Lavalley (2009), the claims are assessed based on the following criteria: the basis of the claim; whether there is a mandate from the represented (e.g. through membership, awareness); public participation in planning and implementation of project activities; and feedback mechanisms.

All the NGO officials interviewed reported having memoranda of understanding with the district authorities where they work, allowing them to implement projects with the communities concerned. Despite these agreements with local governments, none of the NGOs had formal membership with the communities they claimed to represent. All the NGOs confirmed that they had not been explicitly mandated by 'their' communities to represent them in R-PP participatory processes. They argued that community members may not have heard of the R-PP in the first place and were therefore justified to represent their interests in this high-level policy process. Despite all the NGOs claiming that their target communities 'almost always' participated in planning and implementing their activities, none had been involved in planning R-PP consultation but a limited number participated or were involved in the extended consultations. This was largely attributed to the short time frame provided for them to complete the exercise.

In all the consultations conducted, no feedback has been provided to those that participated. This is despite the World Bank outlining that those consulted should be provided with feedback, not least being informed on how the output of consultations have been taken into account (World Bank 2012). However, the Consultation reports were submitted to the National Forestry Authority, the Norwegian Embassy and subsequently to the World Bank. As one NGO official<sup>29</sup> observed, 'I have on more than one occasion been asked, what happened of the R-PP that you consulted us about? ...it is difficult to have correct answers to these

questions because the process has been slow and uncertain'. He went on to add 'if you focus too much on engaging with stakeholders but fail to achieve the expected outputs, most funding agencies will withdraw the project funding and you may not be funded in future'. These implicit demands put on NGOs by donors often lead to a situation where they focus on outputs such as consultation reports as opposed to the processes that generate those outputs. The incentive to focus on the R-PP outputs might also be because donors assess the success of processes (e.g. stakeholder consultation) through outputs<sup>30</sup>. Interestingly, despite the World Bank and the Norwegian Embassy funding the extended consultations on the basis of widespread local stakeholder involvement, they did not put in place any local mechanisms to monitor the process. Instead, they relied on the reports from the REDD secretariat and external reviews to conclude that the consultations were 'good'<sup>31</sup>.

Thus an assessment of the representation claims made by NGOs shows that mechanisms to hold them (NGOs) to account are lacking. This raises the question of how NGOs should work: should they collaborate with representative institutions? Or should they be more downwardly accountable and representative themselves? The most ideal would be for NGOs to work under representative institutions (see Ribot 2008) but if they claim to represent the public in decision making, then they would have to be subjected to key accountability mechanisms. The most basic of these would be a mandate by the represented or at least awareness on the part of the represented of the existence of a representative. This should then be followed with feedback on the actions taken to allow for either sanctions or rewards from the represented. Without such mechanisms, the claims towards representation are at best symbolic. Since it might not be possible to sanction NGOs, even when their actions deserve sanctions, it is reasonable to argue that they (NGOs) should not be allowed to take decisions or implement programmes that require leadership by representative institutions. Rather, they can work with or through representative institutions.



---

## Discussion

REDD+ and other forest carbon programmes are being presented under the guise of substantive representation: acting in forest-dependent people's best interests and accountable and responsive to them. The paper sought to investigate the choices made by intervening agents in Uganda's R-PP development and whether these choices are likely to deliver substantive representation of marginalized groups.

Despite seeking to deliver representation of forest-dependent communities, through a process that provided room for input from indigenous and forest-dependent peoples, the intervening agencies (The World Bank, government agencies and Norwegian Embassy) in Uganda's R-PP development preferred to work with 'experts', largely NGOs and consultants. The underlying rationales behind the choices were technical based on expertise, efficiency (the desire to complete the R-PP development on time) and delivery of outputs. Consequently, the choice of representatives to take part in R-PP design reflects tensions between the expressed intentions regarding representation and the actions that emphasize delivery of outputs. As Mosse (2001:25) rightly points out, donor demands for participation produce a characteristic dual logic. One logic in project documents emphasizes participation, capacity building and sustainable development and the other logic emphasizes upward accountability and delivery of programmes. Two main rationales emerge from the intervening agents' rhetoric on 'inclusive participation' (following on Mosse's logic on participation). First is the need to safeguard the interests of marginalized groups: forest-dependent communities through a process that not only receives their input but also responds to their needs. The second rationale is that inclusion of forest-dependent communities would enhance 'ownership' of the policies made (see for example UNFCCC 2010), in effect co-opting the local people into REDD+ implementation.



However, the tensions espoused in Mosse's second logic are reflected in practice with three rationales emerging. First is an argument that with the technical nature of REDD, it was necessary to utilize experts and organisations with technical expertise. This might explain the Bank's choice of the National Forestry Authority to lead R-PP development (due to the perception that it had capacity) in place of the legally mandated Forest Sector Support Department. Similarly, the technical rationale is reflected in the criteria for joining the REDD working Group: individuals or organisations had to demonstrate experience in designing and implementing 'technical' programmes in the forestry sector. Needless to say, these requirements excluded stakeholders that were considered to lack capacity adding to the symbolic nature of R-PP development.

The second and perhaps most apparent rationale of the choices made are around efficiency and delivery of outputs. The Authority's selection was for example justified on the basis that it would be less bureaucratic since it was a semi-autonomous entity outside the ministry; the World Bank preferred a small number of experts to work with the Forestry Authority to deliver the R-PP within the three-month timeline they had set. Similarly, the Norwegian Embassy chose to recognize a group of NGOs to conduct extended consultations, the justification being that the Authority which was leading the process was inefficient, corrupt and was not likely to deliver the outputs as expected. Similarly, locally elected authorities were largely denied recognition in R-PP development, justifications being that they did not have capacity and that they would slow down the process. As Ribot *et al.* (2008) argue, non-state actors are often preferred by intervening agents to avoid the slow and often messy decision-making process associated with elected authorities. The tendency to sacrifice local actors' involvement in favour of the expected outputs presents a potential challenge of designing a REDD+ strategy that may not address the critical safeguards necessary to secure vulnerable groups. Achievements of REDD+ will depend on effective representation and participation of local communities in governance which will determine its equity, legitimacy and viability (Anderson and Zeriffi 2012).

The third and perhaps implicit logic relates to the nature of powerful actors in policy processes to employ strategies that exclude less powerful actors in order to maintain their dominating position (see Poteete and Ribot 2011). The self-selecting strategy by NGOs to the working group was one such strategy. But even more apparent was the perception that local stakeholders were incorporated to validate outputs that had been developed by experts, an example being the invitation of district officials to validate the Consultation and Participation plan. Similarly, the extended consultations might have offered some degree of access for

the poor in the REDD+ process. However, while the R-PP claims that the voices of the poor are beginning to be heard, the process which merely informs the local people of how REDD+ would benefit them probably serves to co-opt them into the process (Crook and Sverrisson 2001). As argued by Mosse (2001:9), 'project actors are not passive facilitators of knowledge production and planning; they shape and direct these processes'. Accordingly, participation without influence of decisions made is tantamount to subjection (Cooke and Kothari 2001). Even the district officials who attended the validation workshop appeared not to have any influence on the process consistent with Mosse's (2001) argument that despite increased participation having democracy characteristics, it is often neither representative nor binding. As argued by Cooke and Kothari (2001), unless participatory processes take into account the relative bargaining power of the so-called stakeholders, they are in danger of merely providing opportunities for the more powerful.

It is clear from this paper that delivering substantive democratic representation is more difficult than the claims from intervening agents might suggest. The expressed intentions espoused by intervening agents seem to suggest that comprehensive stakeholder participation would safeguard local people's interests. The study highlights two key challenges with this assumption. First, how do you identify stakeholder groups? The process employed was for the facilitators to stratify communities according to geographical zones or according to their perceived interests (e.g. charcoal dealers, fishermen etc.) and then selecting individuals or institutions that were perceived to be representative of those stakeholders. The challenge is that the articulation of the notion of 'communities' conceals power relations within communities and further masks biases in interests and needs based on, for example, ethnicity, gender and religion. Even some of those selected (for example, district technical officials) were not aware of the expectation to represent local people.

Second, how do you ensure that 'representatives' do actually represent the interests of the represented? As argued by Houtzager and Lavalley (2009), formal institutional mechanisms are both necessary and desirable to ensure that the claims to representation are not displaced or lost. For example, although some of the local people participated in the REDD+ consultations, the analysis shows that the participation occurred on the facilitator's terms and feedback on the participatory activities has not been provided. But even more important is the fact that consultation has been done for readiness of a REDD+ programme that was designed at a global scale perhaps without input from the forest-dependent people that it seeks to safeguard. In addition, commitments to substantive representation need to be accompanied

with mechanisms to enable that the safeguards are adhered to. This could be in the form of real-time assessments on the implementation of safeguards. It appears that intervening agents in Uganda's R-PP relied on reports and external reviews of reports (in the case of the Bank) to assess the extent to which funded programmes addressed the commitments towards representation. In fact, both the Bank and the Norwegian Embassy indicated that it was the role of government agencies to ensure that the safeguards were adhered to. Accordingly, intervening agents act as if it is not within their remit to 'enforce' their own safeguards or to evaluate 'participatory' processes that they have funded. This is not a new position. Similar arguments were made by the World Bank relating to enforcement of its project implementation guidelines; a notable example being its projects in Lesotho in the 1990s (Fergusson 1994).

Moreover, commitments to substantive representation ought to be matched with allocation of resources for their implementation. As shown in the paper, both material resources and time provided to develop the R-PP presented challenges to the REDD+ authorities to organize stakeholder consultation that would be substantively democratic. This allocation of material resources clearly privileged experts, the effect of which would be symbolic representation.

# 6

---

## Conclusion

The commitments to implementing democratic representation are espoused by all intervening agents in Uganda's R-PP development, albeit through the language of 'inclusive' and 'comprehensive' stakeholder consultation. Yet despite these commitments, the choice of institutions or actors to help design the R-PP largely focussed on 'expertise' (e.g. prior experience in climate change), efficiency (e.g. ability to complete the process within the three month timeline set by the World Bank), and delivery of outputs (based on the limited material resources). Consequently, substantive democracy is trumped in Uganda's REDD+ R-PP by a focus on instrumental outcomes of REDD+. These include: i) to 'educate' the participants in REDD+ – particularly on its 'technical' aspects; ii) to legitimize the REDD+ strategy in the eyes of the donors; iii) to promote and ensure the speedy achievement of the REDD+ programme's objectives. But because consultation procedures are required as safeguard mechanisms by the program, they are put in place for show, producing a kind of symbolic representation that legitimates projects allowing the continued implementation of its project goals. The emphasis on delivery of project outputs, coupled with widespread perception by participants in consultation exercises that they could not influence the outcome, meant that the participatory processes were oriented toward national level actors to legitimize the R-PP outputs.

This paper also highlights two main challenges arising from 'representation' claims by NGOs and experts. First, despite claims to mediate the interests of the local people, who often do not have access to policy processes, their 'representation' lacks widely accepted mechanisms by which the represented ensure the accountability and responsiveness of those who ostensibly represent them. Accountability and responsiveness mechanisms are both necessary and

desirable to ensure that the claims to representation, particularly by NGOs are substantive, resulting in actual democratic process. Their lack therefore raises an important question about how NGOs should work with regard to representation. Since it might not be possible to sanction NGOs, even when their actions deserve sanctions, it is reasonable to argue that NGOs should not be allowed to take decisions or implement programmes that require leadership by representative institutions. They should not be allowed to make public decisions, which belong under representative authorities. Rather, they should work with or through public representative institutions. The second main issue shown in this paper is that the intervening agents' focus on outputs allows for the perpetuation of existing power relations. Experts are framed as being necessary and having competence. Local people in contrast are framed as lacking the ability to understand REDD+ issues and therefore in need of experts to mediate their interests.

In addition local people and institutions are largely excluded from decision-making processes on the REDD+ strategy development and when they are involved, they do so to validate pre-determined plans and policies. They are involved more as subjects, having low influence on the leaders and decisions affecting their lives (see Mamdani 1996). This management of local people as subjects does not deliver the promise of substantive representation of the forest-dependent groups. The operationalizing of substantive representation will require a system that seeks to challenge existing power hierarchies rather than working around them for more technically efficient delivery of outputs. Negotiation of REDD+ rights or claiming forest user rights to representation must therefore begin through a system that works with forest-dependent people's institutions i.e. institutions that are under citizen control; otherwise, expressed democracy intentions shall remain symbolic.

# Notes

---

1. The use of the identity 'indigenous' is contentious. Although the R-PP referred only to the Batwa and Benet as indigenous, the Uganda constitution (1995) describes all groups of people that were in the country by 1902 as indigenous. A REDD+ stakeholder workshop in Kampala in February 2012 agreed on using the connotation Forest-dependent Communities (FDC) instead.
2. The kinds of representation include (i) descriptive representation which is 'standing for' or making present of something absent and representatives 'stand for' values and commitment to the represented (ii) symbolic representation which is an aspect of descriptive representation with emotional ties but is devoid of substantive content and (iii) substantive representation which is acting in another's best interests at the same time giving them a stake in the action itself. I limit myself to symbolic and substantive representation, which is the focus of this study.
3. The process began with the country expressing its interest to participate in REDD+ by drafting a Readiness Proposal Idea Note (R-PIN) in 2008. The R-PIN served as a formal request for Uganda's participation in the World Bank process.
4. Refers to a process conducted by the World Bank mission to ascertain that the country's policies, procedures and structures have been sufficiently prepared to receive the Bank's funding, in this case US\$ 3.4 million for R-PP strategy development (Personal Communication with a World Bank Carbon Official 18 February 2012).
5. The Bank collaborates with 37 countries, seventeen of which had submitted R-PPs as of March 2012 (see <http://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/fcp/node/283> (accessed 10 June 2012)).
6. See also <http://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/sites/forestcarbonpartnership.org/files/Documents/PDF/Jul2010/Uganda%20-%20TF095015.pdf> (accessed 1 February 2013).
7. Interview with World Bank's FCPF official, Sheraton Hotel, Kampala, 18 February 2012.
8. Interviews with two former senior NFA officials in Kampala on 25 April 2012; Norwegian Embassy official in Kampala on 5 July 12; proceedings of the forestry governance symposium in Kampala on 17-18 April 2012.

9. NFA was formed following reforms in the forestry sector and the enactment of the National Forestry and Tree Planting Act, 2003+.
10. Many of those interviewed from both state and non-state actors viewed sustainability from a narrow preservationist perspective i.e. keep trees standing.
11. Less bureaucratic by virtue of its status as a semi-autonomous state corporation and therefore not expected to go through bureaucratic ministerial procedures.
12. Interview, World Bank Carbon Specialist, 21 February 2013.
13. The Forest Working Group is a professional network of organisations and individuals working in the forestry sector largely from Kampala.
14. Uganda is sub-divided into four administrative units called regions, which are further subdivided into districts: a total of 112 by 2012 (Western – 26; Northern – 30; Central – 24 and Eastern – 32).
15. Interview, REDD+ Secretariat, 21 June 2012.
16. Interest groups or stakeholders identified for the regional consultations included central government officials, NGOs, local forest-dependent people, private forest companies, district technical officers, locally elected officials and cultural groups (specifically cultural kingdoms such as Buganda).
17. Interview, District Forest Officer, 6 February 2013.
18. The Local government in Uganda consists of representatives elected under a five-tier system, from the village LC1 to the District LC5. The other levels are Parish – LC2; Sub-county – LC3 and County – LC4.
19. Interview, International NGO official, 28 June 2012.
20. Interview, National Forestry Authority Official, 4 October 2012.
21. Interview, Secretariat Official, 21 June 2012.
22. Interview, REDD+ Steering Committee member, 28 June 2012.
23. Available at: <http://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/sites/forestcarbonpartnership.org/files/Documents/PDF/Mar2011/Uganda%20R-PP%20TAP%20Revised%20Synthesis-Track%20Change%20-March%2009,%202011.pdf>.
24. It was reported in two of Uganda's leading daily newspapers in February 2012 that the Authority's Executive Director had allegedly defrauded the organisation with an equivalent of US\$ 346,000. The issue was still pending in the High Court by the time of writing this article.
25. Interview, Senior Norwegian Embassy Official, Kampala, 5 July 2012.
26. Interview, Facilitating NGO programme officer, Kampala, 23 June 2012.
27. Interview, International NGO Executive Director, Kampala, 23 June 2012.
28. Informal discussion with an official from the REDD plus coordination team, 21 June 2012.
29. Interview, National NGO Programme officer, 23 June 2012.
30. Interview, former REDD+ Secretariat Official, 21 June 2012.
31. Interview with senior Norwegian Embassy official in Kampala on 5 July 2012.

# References

---

- Anderson, E. & Zeriffi, H., 2012, Effects of REDD+ on Forest people in Africa: Access, distribution and participation in governance, a draft working paper for the RFGI programme, Dakar: CODESRIA.
- Anderson, P., 2011, *Free, Prior and Informed Consent in REDD+: Principles and Approaches for Policy and Project Development*, Bangkok: The Centre for People and Forests (RECOFTC) and GIZ.
- Ayers, J., 2011, 'Resolving the Adaptation Paradox: Exploring the Potential for Deliberative Adaptation Policy-Making in Bangladesh', *Global Environmental Politics*, 11, No. 1 pp. 62-88.
- Blair, H., 2000, Participation and Accountability at the Periphery: Democratic Local Governance in Six Countries, *World Development*, Vol. 28, pp. 21-39.
- Cooke, B. & Kothari, U., 2001, *The Case of Participation as a Tyranny*, in B. Cooke & U. Kothari (eds.), *Participation: The New Tyranny?*, London: Zed Books.
- Corbera, E. & Schroeder, H., 2011, 'Governing and implementing REDD+', *Environ. Sci. Policy*, Vol. 14, pp. 89-99.
- Crook, C.R. & Sverrisson, A.L., 2001, Decentralisation and Poverty Alleviation in Developing Countries: A Comparative Analysis or, Is West Bengal Unique?, IDS Working Paper, No. 130.
- Edelman, M., 1985, *The Symbolic Uses of Politics*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- FCPF and UN-REDD, 2010, Guidelines on Stakeholder Engagement in REDD+ Readiness with a Focus on the Participation of Indigenous Peoples and Other Forest-Dependent Communities, draft, 17 November 2010.
- FCPF, 2011, Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) Readiness Mechanism Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) External Review Template, available at: <http://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/sites/forestcarbonpartnership.org/files/Documents/PDF/Mar2011/Uganda%20R-PP%20TAP%20Revised%20Synthesis-Track%20Change%20-March%202009,%202011.pdf>. Accessed 23 May 2012.
- Fergusson, J., 1994, 'The Anti-Politics Machine: Development and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho', Vol. 24, 5, 176-181, *The Ecologist*, Vol. 24, pp. 176-181.
- Houtzager, P.P. & Lavalley, A.G., 2009, Participatory Governance and the Challenge of Assumed Representation in Brazil, IDS Working Paper, No. 321.



- Larson, A.M., 2011, 'Forest tenure reform in the age of climate change: Lessons for REDD+', *Global Environmental Change*, Vol. 21, pp. 540-549.
- Larson, A.M., Marfo, E., Cronkleton, P. & Pulhin, J.M., 2010, *Authority Relations Under New Forest Tenure Arrangements*, in A.M. Larson, D. Barry, G.R. Dahal & C.J.P. Colfer (eds.), *Forests for People: Community Rights and Forest Tenure Reform*, pp. 93-115, London: Earthscan.
- Mamdani, M., 1996, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Manin, B., Przeworski, A. & Stokes, S., 1999, *Introduction* in B. Manin, A. Przeworski & S. Stokes (eds.), *Accountability, and Representation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mosse, D., 2001, *People's Knowledge, Participation and Patronage: Operations and Representations in Rural Development*, in B. Cooke & U. Kothari (eds.), *Participation: The New Tyranny?*, London: Zed Books.
- Nader, L., 1974, *Up the Anthropologist: Perspectives Gained from Studying Up*, Berkeley: University of California.
- NFA, 2010a, Regional Consultation for Eastern Uganda, 18 May 2010, Mbale Resort Hotel, Kampala, REDD Secretariat, National Forestry Authority.
- NFA, 2010b, Regional Consultation for Western Region Uganda 24 May 2010, Kolping Hotel, Hoima, National Forestry Authority.
- NFA, 2010c, Regional Consultation for Central Region Uganda, 2 June 2010, Ridar Hotel Seta Mukono, National Forestry Authority.
- NFA, 2010d, Regional Consultation for Northern Uganda 20 May 2010, Kakanyero Hotel, Gulu Municipality, National Forestry Authority.
- Norway-Government of Uganda, 2010, Support to Sustained National Forestry Authority with Enhanced Focus on Northern Uganda, Kampala, Norwegian Embassy.
- Pitkin, F.H., 1967, *The Concept of Representation*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Poteete, A.R. & Ribot, J.C., 2011, 'Repertoires of Domination: Decentralization as Process in Botswana and Senegal', *World Development*, Vol. 39, No. 3, pp. 439-449.
- Republic of Uganda, 1995, The Uganda Constitution.
- Republic of Uganda, 1997, The Local Government Act.
- Republic of Uganda, 2001, The National Forest Policy, Kampala: Ministry of Water and Environment.
- Republic of Uganda, 2003, The National Forest and Tree Planting Act.
- Republic of Uganda, 2011a, REDD Readiness Proposal for Uganda. Submitted to the Forest Carbon Partnership Fund, 4 March 2011, Kampala.
- Republic of Uganda, 2011b, Report on the 2010/2011 General Elections, Kampala, Electoral Commission of Uganda.
- Republic of Uganda, 2012, Uganda National REDD+ Consultation and Participation Strategy, Kampala: Ministry of Water and Environment.

- Ribot, J.C., 2008, *Building Local Democracy through Natural Resource Interventions: An Environmentalists' Responsibility*, Washington DC: World Resources Institute.
- Ribot, J.C., Chhatre, A. & Lankina, T., 2008, 'Introduction: Institutional Choice and Recognition in the Formation and Consolidation of Local Democracy', *Conservation and Society*, Vol. 6, pp. 1-11.
- Ribot, J.C., 2007, 'Representation, Citizenship and the Public Domain in Democratic decentralisation', *Society of International Development* 1011 – 6370/07, pp. 43 - 49.
- Ribot, J.C., 2004, *Waiting for Democracy. The Politics of Choice in Natural Resource Decentralization*, Washington DC: World Resources Institute.
- UNFCCC, 2010, The Cancun Agreements 1/CP.16. United Nations Framework Convention. on Climate Change.
- World Bank, 1996, World Bank Participation Sourcebook, Washington DC: World Bank.
- World Bank, 2009, Grant Agreement for the Readiness Preparation Proposal Readiness Fund of the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) Grant No. TF095015, The World Bank.
- World Bank, 2012, The World Bank Environmental and Social Safeguards, Washington DC: the World Bank.



## RFGI WORKING PAPER SERIES

The Responsive Forest Governance Initiative (RFGI) is a research and training program, focusing on environmental governance in Africa. It is jointly managed by the Council for the Development of Social Sciences Research in Africa (CODESRIA), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign (UIUC). Natural resources, especially forests, are very important since they provide local governments and local people with needed revenue, wealth, and subsistence. Responsive local governments can provide forest resource-dependent populations the flexibility they need to manage, adapt to and remain resilient in their changing environment. RFGI aims to enhance and help institutionalize widespread responsive and accountable local governance processes that reduce vulnerability, enhance local wellbeing, and improve forest management with a special focus on developing safeguards and guidelines to ensure fair and equitable implementation of the Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) and climate-adaptation interventions.

---

RFGI is a programme of the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, International Union for the Conservation of Nature, and University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign.

**Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA)** is an independent pan-African research organisation primarily focusing on social sciences research. It was established to promote and facilitate research and knowledge production using a holistic, multi-disciplinary approach. The Council is committed to combating the fragmentation of knowledge production, and the African community of scholars along various disciplinary and linguistic/geographical lines.  
<http://www.codesria.org>

**International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)** is a leading authority on the environment and sustainable development focusing in part on ensuring effective and equitable governance of natural resource use. IUCN supports scientific research, manages field projects all over the world, and brings governments, NGOs, the UN and companies together to develop policy, laws and best practice. RFGI works with IUCN's Regional Offices for Central and West Africa (PACO) and Eastern and Southern Africa (ESARO) and the Headquarters in Switzerland.  
<http://www.iucn.org>

**University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign** is a public research-intensive university in the U.S. state of Illinois. A land-grant university, it is the flagship campus of the University of Illinois system. At UIUC, RFGI activities are part of the Social Dimensions of Environmental Policy Initiative (SDEP) of the Department of Geography and Geographic Information Science and the Beckman Institute.  
<http://sdep.beckman.illinois.edu>

ISBN : 978-2-86978-690-5

