



Large Scale INRM Strategy Development in the Rwenzori Mountains (Uganda): “The Rwenzori Mountain Case: A Pilot for Large Scale Social Extension, Exploration and Institutionalization of a Change Strategy for Integrated Natural Resource Management from Grass Root to Regional Level”

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ABSTRACT

Natural resources in the Rwenzori region just like elsewhere in Uganda are under intense anthropogenic pressure. Despite the availability of policies on natural resource management and implementation of various interventions, the pressure has intensified. The Afromaison project has designed a number of innovative participatory tools involving stakeholders from the micro to the meso scale to reflect and come up with a strategy for sustainable integrated natural resource management. The focus of this paper is on the process of development and use of one of the tools (the Mpa'game) in natural resource planning and strategy development in the Rwenzori region. From the onset, the development of the tool involved stakeholders who tested it and suggested improvements to make it context specific and as a way of enhancing its ownership among end users. Pilot sessions involving the tool were conducted in villages in the Rwenzori region and stakeholders such as farmers, leaders, politicians, civil society organizations and the private sector participated. Results from the sessions indicate that a reflective and exploratory process has been going on in the villages resulting into commitments for sustainable use of resources by stakeholders, consensus on concrete options for Integrated Natural Resource Management, and in some instances actual positive change in practices. Evidently, the main strength of the Mpa'game is its ability to create synergies in interests among natural resource users from different locations, tribes, political affiliations, religions, economic status, and levels of education. Using a dedicated protocol, the Mpa'game session managers and rapporteurs have documented the results from each session for scientific analysis and integration into the existing development framework of the Rwenzori region. This process provides a unique example of a participatory large scale social extension, exploration and institutionalization of a strategy for Integrated Natural Resource Management from grass root to regional level. This process can be replicated in other regions in Africa where a similar situation prevails.