



CHIRUNGU SETTLEMENT AND RWOHO FOREST RESERVE

A SITE REPORT

BY

UFRIC RESEARCH TEAM

Research Note Number 7, 1999

Uganda Forestry Resources and Institutions centre (UFRIC)

An IFRI Collaborating Research Centre

**MAKERERE UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF FORESTRY AND NATURE CONSERVATION
KAMPALA, UGANDA.**



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Between 1931 and 1934, the population of migrants increased further. People were during this period free to settle and cultivate in the forest, but the existence of large numbers of wild animals in the forest checked their advance. Hunting in the forest, which aimed at reducing the number of wild animals, was a great source of protein for the local people. Cattle were also introduced by the migrants during this period. By the end of the 1930s, the population increase had mounted further pressure on the land holdings. The number of animals in the forest now reduced significantly while grazing activities intensified. Since Uganda's political independence in 1962, the population and pressure on land has further increased, and so has cultivation, grazing, and harvesting of forest products.

However, it is important to note that the settlement has not been largely affected by the

The people in the settlement are generally poor and uneducated. In all the houses both sexes are employed. Because of this, it is very difficult for the residents to distinguish between the rich and the poor. A rich person in this community is one who has at least 12 heads of cattle, 5 goats, and at least 7 acres of land. A poor person on the other hand is landless and does not proceed with the land lord from whom he/she has rented land.

The people in the settlement depend entirely on agriculture and the forest for a living. The forest is the sole source of fuel wood, grass and water for the residents and their animals. There are no privately owned forests within the settlement although a few products can be harvested. Therefore, with increased population pressure, the forest is likely to be exhausted since it is the main source of products for the residents and their animals.

The condition of the forest is relatively good since exploitation of the forest resources is not prohibited by the government. The residents mainly use the forest for subsistence hunting and gathering of forest products.

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1.0 THE HISTORY OF THE AREA

Chirungu is a relatively new settlement surrounded by a forest reserve. The history of the first Banyankole natives of the settlement before 1950 is not known by the current settlers who are a generation of migrants from Kabale District.

In 1950, twenty households from Kabale came to settle at Chirungu. The migrants were led by Paulo Ngorogoza, a prominent chief in Kabale, who asked the Mugabe of Ankole, Charles Godfrey Gasiyonga to give him land to settle his people. The migration was a result of over population in Kabale which led to land shortage and famine. It was on arrival at Chirungu settlement that the migrants found only 6 households of the native Banyankole of Mbarara.

Between 1951 and 1954, the population of migrants increased further. People were during this period free to settle and cultivate in the forest, but the existence of large numbers of wild animals in the forest checked their advance. Hunting in the forest, which aimed at reducing the number of wild animals, was a great source of protein for the local people. Cattle were also introduced by the migrants during this period. By the end of the decade, the population increase had mounted further pressure on the land holdings. The number of animals in the forest now reduced significantly while grazing activities intensified. Since Uganda's political independence in 1962, the population and pressure on land has further increased, and so has cultivation, grazing, and harvesting of forest products.

However, it is important to note that this settlement has not been largely affected by the

major political and administrative changes that have taken place in the country.

2.0 GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF CHIRUNGU SETTLEMENT

Chirungu Local Council (LC) 1 consists of 269 households, which are sparse. The population of the settlement is 1,350 people of whom 743 are children. This implies that there is a high dependency ratio of 0.6 within the community. However, the family size average to 5 persons per household which is lower than the national figure of seven.

The people in the settlement are generally poor and resource endowment in all the households almost homogenous. Because of this, it is very difficult for the residents to distinguish between the rich and the poor. A rich person as defined by this community is one who has at least 12 heads of cattle, 5 goats, and at least 3 acres of land. A poor person on the other hand is landless and shares crop proceeds with the land lord from whom he/she has rented land.

The people in the settlement depend entirely on agriculture and the forest for a living. The forest is the sole source of fuel wood, grass and water for the residents and their animals. There are no privately owned forests within the settlement from which these products can be harvested. Therefore with increased population pressure, the forest is likely to be endangered since it is the only source of products for the residents and their animals.

The condition of the forest is relatively good since exploitation and use of the resource is not pronounced at the moment. The residents mainly use the forest reserve for subsistence consumption. Illegal commercial harvesting

of the forest products is not prominent. The only activity that goes on illegally in the forest is grazing since it is not permitted to graze in the forest reserve. However, residents do not know any rules that govern forest use and as a result no conflicts have arisen so far between the Forestry Department and the various user groups.

3.0 USER GROUPS OF THE VARIOUS PRODUCTS IN RWOHO FOREST RESERVE

Three user groups were identified for the forest products from Rwoho Forest Reserve.

3.1 Firewood Collectors of Chirungu

This user group came into existence in 1950 when the first occupants were first recognized in this settlement. The user group has gotten bigger over time due to increased population that was a result of migration and family expansion. The group comprises women and children (both boys and girls above 7) who mostly harvest firewood for domestic consumption. They usually harvest dead, dry and fallen wood, and are therefore not likely to endanger the forest at the moment. The machete is the most important tool used for harvesting these products and its use usually limits the harvesting activities. The products are available all year round and do not fluctuate in quantities from one year to another.

3.2 Water Collectors of Chirungu

This user group, like the former, has existed since 1950 when the first residents were sighted in this settlement. The user group has gotten bigger over time due to the migration of the Bakiga from Kabale District into the settlement. Furthermore, the rise in population due to new family emergence has

expanded the group further. The group comprises women and children who mostly harvest water for domestic consumption. The forest is the sole source of water for this settlement. However, the amount an individual can harvest at a go is limited by the size of the "jerrican" (plastic pot) used. This group also harvests firewood for domestic consumption.

3.3 Grazers of Chirungu

This group of users was founded in 1954 when the migrants from Kabale brought with them their animals in the settlement. The group has since gotten bigger as the animals have reproduced and others been bought from outside the settlement. The group consists of about 33 households. The animals owned include cattle, goats, chickens, pigs and sheep. The goats and chickens are the most important animals on the farm and are regarded as liquid assets that can quickly be disposed of when cash needs arise. Cattle on the other hand are important as domestic dietary supplements through the provision of milk, although they are also major sources of income.

All members of this group own land whether through purchase or inheritance. However, the user group entirely depends on the forest for its grazing activities. The grass and water for the animals are derived from the forest and there are no other sources or close substitutes of these products within the settlement. It is thus more likely that the forest may be endangered if the number of grazers increase, especially that they have two kinds of animals—those that graze and those that browse.

4.0 PRODUCTS OF RWOHO FOREST RESERVE

There are not many products harvested by the residents of Chirungu LC1 settlement from the forest. Moreover, all the products are harvested for subsistence use.

Using the pairwise ranking methodology, the products were ranked by the local people in order of importance to their livelihood from water, firewood, grazing grass, to hoe handles. Water was regarded the most important product for subsistence, both for the people and their animals. Water is harvested solely for subsistence use. It is harvested all the year round and from an average distance of 4 km. An average household of 5 occupants uses about 29,200 litres of water per annum. On average, an animal consumes 20 litres per day in the wet months and 30 during the dry season. There is no other source of water for the settlement other than Rwoho Forest Reserve.

Firewood is also harvested for subsistence use, mainly for cooking. All the households in Chirungu LC1 settlement use firewood for fuel. The residents have no reasonable substitute for firewood other than the dried banana leaves, which are energy inefficient. On average a household of 5 occupants consumes 3 head loads of 10 kg each per week. There is no other source of firewood in the settlement other than Rwoho Forest Reserve. The most commonly harvested species for firewood include *Bridelia microcanthus*, *Combretum molle*, *Acanthus pubescens*, and *Catha edulis*.

Grazing grass is a product particularly important to livestock. The residents do not have an alternative grazing ground in the

settlement. Since the reserve is not officially open to grazers, all grazing activities are illegal. On average, an animal grazes over an area of 1 acre per day, consuming about 20 kg of grass during the dry season and about 30 kg during the wet season. The most commonly grazed grasses include *Hyperania ruffa*, *Imperata cylindrica*, "Eyosho" and "Omutete".

The local people also harvest species like *Markhania lutea* and *Maesa Lanciolata* for making hoe handles.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The foregoing sections have described the various user groups, the forest products harvested, and the user-forest relations. It is important, however, to point out the problems that affect the community.

These major problems include the poor road networks which make transport very difficult. This implies that there are no proper outlets for the commercial agricultural products to places outside the settlement. Secondly, there are low literacy levels in the community. The majority of people in the community have only been as far as primary level, which hinders the development of skills for other activities. Thirdly, the lack of health centre is also a big problem since there is no proper place where the community members can receive proper medication.

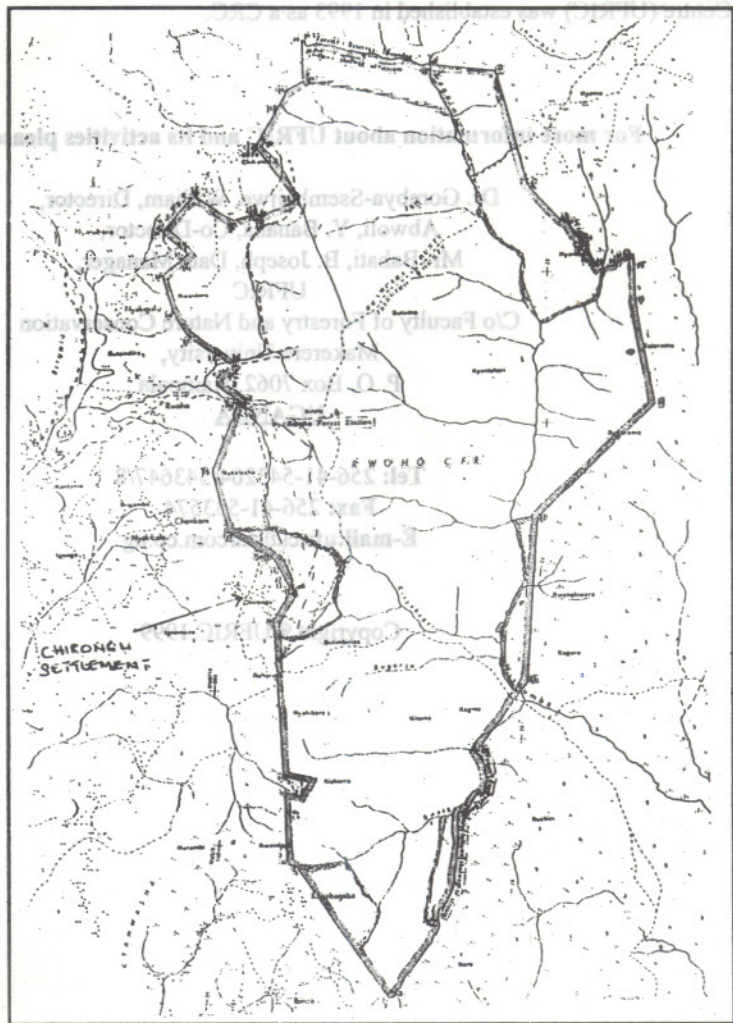
APPENDIX: 1

PLANT SPECIES AND THEIR USES IN RWOHO FOREST RESERVE:

NO	BOTANICAL NAME	LOCAL NAME	IMPORTANCE	USES
1	<i>Acacia kirkii</i>	Omunyinya	Unkown	Fuel wood
2	<i>Acanthus pubescens</i>	Entojii	Fuel energy	Home use
3	<i>Asparagus africanus</i>	Olushabishaba	Unkown	Unkown
4	<i>Acalypha volkensii</i>	Orugesha	Medicinal	Local use
5	<i>Asplenium spp</i>	Akasini	Unkown	Unkown
6	<i>Allophyllus macrobotrytis</i>	Omushusha	Poles	Building
7	<i>Aspria mossambicensis</i>	Ekalwe	Medicinal	Home use
8	<i>Albizia ferruginea</i>	Omushubeya	Timber	Construction
9	<i>Brideria macrantha</i>	Katoza	Building	Poles/handles
10	<i>Bersma spp</i>	Ekikaiabu	Craft	Bee ives
11	<i>Bidens kilimandascharica</i>	Ehongwo	Medicinal	Home use
12	<i>Berkeya spekeana</i>	Kanyamahwo	Unkown	Unkown
13	<i>Blighia unijugata</i>	Mulemampango	Building	Poles/fuelwood
14	<i>Catha edulis</i>	Munyaga	Fuel energy	Home use
15	<i>Celtis africana</i>	Kakobo	Timber	Construction
16	<i>Clausena anisata</i>	Omutanwa	Poles	Building/fuel wood
17	<i>Crassocephalum vitellinum</i>	Unkown	Unkown	Unkown
18	<i>Combretum molle</i>	Omurama	Fuel energy	Home use
19	<i>Commellina spp</i>	Enteja	Medicinal	Home use
20	<i>Cordia millenii</i>	Muzugangoma	Timber	Furniture
21	<i>Dovyllis abyssinica</i>	Omushengi	Unkown	Unkown
22	<i>Dombeya mukole</i>	Mukole	Unkown	Unkown
23	<i>Ehretia cymosa</i>	Mukobakoba	Unkown	Unkown
24	<i>Erythrina abyssinica</i>	Ejiko	Cork (bark)	Floating finstnet
25	<i>Flacourtia indica</i>	Mutegenjere	Poles	Building
26	<i>Ficus urceolaris</i>	Omushomoro	Unkown	Unkown
27	<i>Hyparrhenia ruffa</i>	Ruteje	Thatching	Home use
28	<i>Leonotis nepetifolia</i>	Kicumucumu	Unkown	Unkown
29	<i>Phyllanthus capilaris</i>	Unkown	Unkown	Unkown
30	<i>Phytolacco dodecandra</i>	Muihura	Medicinal	Home use
31	<i>Vernonia auriculifera</i>	Kikokoma	Fuel energy	Home use
32	<i>Alangium chinense</i>	Kinyeera	Fuel wood	Home use
33	<i>Bidens pilosa</i>	Mikurura	Medicinal	Home use
34	<i>Cyperus Rotundus</i>	Ehunge	Unkown	Unkown
35	<i>Draceana fragrans</i>	Magorora	Marker	Boundary
36	<i>Draceana staudrieri</i>	Kigorogoro	Mdicinal	Babies
37	<i>Eucalptus grandis</i>	Karitunsi	Timber	Construction
38	<i>Gloriosa simplex</i>	Mushura	Medicinal	Home use
39	<i>Impatiens & tinctoria</i>	Rutungabasija	Unkown	Unkown
40	<i>Piper umbelletum</i>	Unkown	Unkown	Unkown
41	<i>Trimfetta volkensii</i>	Ruhugura	Unkown	Unkown.

Appendix 2

Map of Rwoho central Forest Reserve



The International Forestry Resource and Institutions (IFRI) Research Programme was developed in 1992, at the Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis, Indiana University, to investigate issue of governance of forests as common-pool resources (CPRs). IFRI works through a network of Collaborating Research Centres (CRCs) that utilize a common research methodology and database. Uganda Forestry Resources and Institutions Centre (UFRIC) was established in 1993 as-a CRC.

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