

# Role of institutions in channelling forest information

Robert Bakiika

MSc research student

Makerere University

Email: [rbakiika@forest.mak.ac.ug](mailto:rbakiika@forest.mak.ac.ug)



# Contents

1. Background
2. Introduction
3. Institutions
4. Types of institutions
5. A case study of Uganda
6. Challenges in channeling forest information
7. Recommendation

## Background

Africa, more than 70 percent of the population depends on forests and woodlands for its livelihood; one fifth of rural families' daily needs come from forests. Woodlands and forests supply approximately 60 percent of all energy. Forest-related activities accounts for a large part of the GDP with a contribution of 4% in Uganda. And, Africa is home to 25 percent of the world's remaining rainforests (FAO, 2009).

# Introduction

Traditional institutional arrangements that produced management systems through learning-by-doing processes had largely been perceived as inefficient (Banana, *et al.*, 2007).

## Cont'


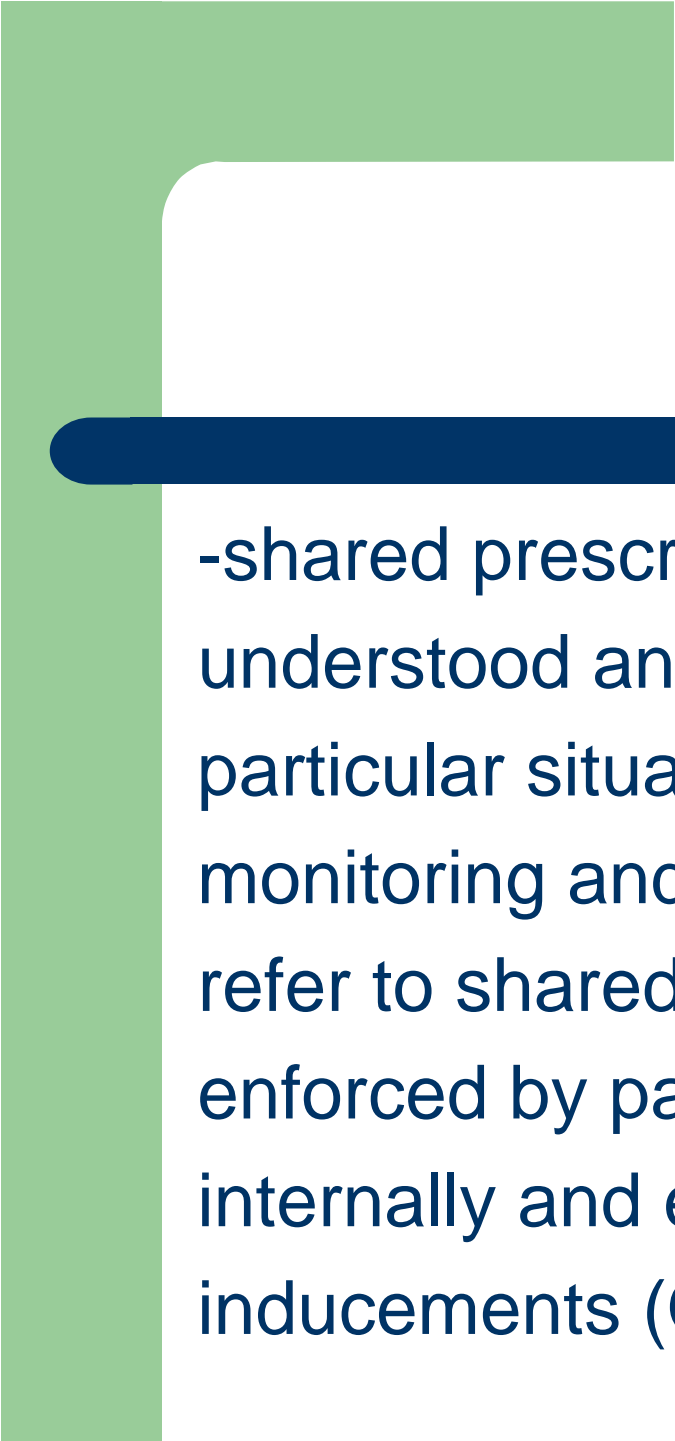
And the rigid forest- management strategies imposed by central, colonial governments reflected less the desires and needs of local populations, and restricted their ability to adapt to changing environment.

## Cont'd

It is well documented that the roles of forestry institutions have been reassigned to institutions with only marginal technical competence in forestry.

# Institutions

Institutions are systems of established and embedded social rules that structure social interactions (Tatu and Olli, 2007). According to Ostrom (1990), institutions refer to a shared understanding that is used by humans in repetitive situations and organized by norms and rules, where rules constitute-



-shared prescriptions that are mutually understood and predictably enforced in particular situation by agents responsible for monitoring and imposing sanctions and norms refer to shared prescriptions that tend to be enforced by participants themselves through internally and externally imposed costs and inducements (Ostrom, 1999a).

# Types of institutions

There are two types of institutions i.e.

- Formal institutions
- Informal institutions

According to Helmke and Levitsky (2004) informal institutions are socially shared rules, usually unwritten, that are created, communicated and enforced outside of officially sanctioned channels.

## **Roles of institutions in channeling forest information**

- formal avenues for channeling information to and from research and academic institutions
- channeling entrepreneurs into activities with positive or negative effects on forests
- determine the direction and magnitude of flows of resources to different social groups
- facilitate resources access to vulnerable social groups.

## A case study of Uganda

Environmental Alert (EA) in collaboration with Arid Land Information Network (ALIN), a Kenya based non governmental organization, came up with an initiative to promote exchange of ideas and experience among local communities in Uganda and Arid lands in Eastern Africa at large. As part of the initiative, in October 2007 a community knowledge centre was set up in Lukwanga parish, Wakiso sub-county, Wakiso district, Uganda.

## Cont'd

This is community facility where members of the community share information and ideas which is developmental for improvement of livelihoods. Information shared involves district, sub-county, agriculture, educational, markets, local innovations, market, business and any other information that is of value to the community.

## Objectives of the community knowledge centre

- To generate, document and disseminate local development content from communities using different multi-media approaches.
- To build and strengthen the capacities of community members with documentation skills
- To strengthen organizational capacities of grass root communities in the field of information management

# Challenges faced by institutions

- poor intersectoral linkages with high priority sectors such as mining and industrial development and energy
- weak legal frameworks
- declining capacity of public forest agencies including research, education, training and extension.

## Cont'd

- low investments in science education and research
- failure to develop and use Africa's strong base of traditional knowledge to deal with modern problems.

# Recommendations

- Existing information should be made available in accessible and appropriate forms for the wide range of users
- Linking traditional knowledge with research
- Increased funding for research, education, training and extension.

# Thank you for listening

