

**Where is the power? Contesting the community empowerment narrative in a
REDD+ pilot project in Mushie, DR Congo**

Maurice Dikaya

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School of International Development and Global Studies
Faculty of Social Sciences
University of Ottawa

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Abstract

This thesis investigates local community empowerment through Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) pilot projects in the Plateaux District in the Mai-Ndombe province of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The province encompasses two districts (Plateaux and Mai-Ndombe) with 1.5 million inhabitants and 87 percent tropical rainforest cover. However, deforestation is a significant threat, with 269,000 hectares (ha) lost between 2000 and 2012, due mainly to agriculture on burned fallow land and production of charcoal to supply the city of Kinshasa. Deforestation rates in certain areas reach 8%. The Plateaux District, a deforestation hotspot, is an agricultural frontier area of significant importance for biodiversity that exhibits high levels of poverty. Its 2000-2014 deforestation rate of 0.44 percent (as a percentage of the existing carbon stock) prompted its inclusion in the national REDD+ integrated programme supported by the Central Africa Forest Initiative (CAFI).

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) recognized the potential role of forests and forest communities in contributing to climate change mitigation. As forests contain substantial stores of carbon, their degradation and/or conversion to other land cover causes the release of some of the carbon stored within them; conversely, their restoration can absorb atmospheric carbon. Recognizing the potential role of forests in contributing to climate change mitigation, the UNFCCC developed REDD+, which includes reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, the conservation of forest carbon stocks, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks. REDD+ is thus a potentially important way to reduce total GHG emissions and thus mitigate climate change. The UNFCCC also recognizes the need for the full and effective participation of local communities since there are those who are affected by or can affect a decision by REDD+ implementation. The REDD+ decisions in the Cancun Agreement emphasize the participation of these groups to align with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples on Climate Change, which includes reference to the right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC).

The study aims to understand and analyze the complexities of local communities' participation in forest governance by identifying the moments when local communities' power emerged and was exercised in a REDD+ pilot project. In doing so, the study focuses on a set of specific issues related to forest governance and the establishment of REDD+ pilot projects. Firstly, it assesses the participation of local communities in REDD+ pilot project in Mushie territory by examining the institutional arrangements of local communities' participation and the interactions surrounding their implementations in REDD+ pilot project. Secondly, it examines local community power within the REDD+ benefits sharing mechanism (BSM) by exploring the webs of power and the bundles of power configuring the access to benefits from REDD+ pilot project's activities. Finally, it examines the emergence of local communities' power in four "locations" (distinct conceptual contexts).

The thesis employs a political ecology (PE) framework to understand local community participation in REDD+ pilot projects with a focus on power dynamics that shape environmental changes. In this thesis, the PE framework examines local community power in the REDD+ pilot project using the concepts of power developed by Allen (2014) and the four “locations of power” developed by Ahlborg and Nightingale (2018). The thesis applied a case study research design and combined different data collection techniques, including document analysis, semi-structured interviews/key informant interviews, focus group discussions, household surveys, participant observation and field observation.

The key findings in the summaries of the three interrelated essays that make up the thesis are now presented:

**1. Contested visions of community participation for carbon management:
Evidence from the PIREDD/Plateaux project in Mushie, Democratic
Republic of Congo (Essay 1)**

Local communities play a significant role in forest governance, as outlined in the UN decisions regarding Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) projects. Additionally, the Cancun Agreement acknowledges that the involvement of local communities is vital for effective action across all aspects of climate change. Therefore, local community participation constitutes a crucial aspect of REDD+ social safeguard guidelines. However, despite REDD+ projects expressing their intention to empower and engage local communities through participatory activities, many researchers have observed only nominal or symbolic transfers of power. This study aims to explore and elucidate the underlying reasons for this discrepancy using a case study of a REDD+ pilot project in Mushie in Democratic Republic of Congo.

Drawing upon data gathered through household surveys, interviews, focus group discussions, field observations, and participant observations, this paper illustrates how divergent interpretations of “local community participation” among the various organizing institutions hinder the agency and empowerment of local communities in REDD+ projects. Employing Ahlborg and Nightingale's (2018) framework of four “locations of power” in resource governance projects, the paper analyzes local community participation in REDD+ initiatives structured around Local Committees for Development (LCDs). It finds that local community participation in REDD+ pilot projects through LCDs led to conflicts over epistemologies (first location of power), resulting in operational discrepancies (second location of power). While Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) was promoted as the primary incentive to encourage communities to join LCDs, the LCDs were not granted authority over the PES process. This allowed traditional authorities to secure privileged roles within the LCDs and populate them with their own supporters. Moreover, the failure to deliver on promised PES payments resulted in widespread frustration.

2. Accessing the benefits sharing mechanism of a REDD+ project: Community participation and power brokers in PIREDD–Plateaux, Mushie, Democratic Republic of Congo (Essay 2)

Current endeavors to comprehend the involvement of local communities in REDD+ projects have predominantly focused on identifying the extent of power gained, particularly in terms of managerial or decision-making authority. However, these linear and static viewpoints on local community participation overlook opportunities to accurately assess how power has been acquired or not. The process of benefit sharing represents one of several instances where local community power can be generated or constrained within such projects. This study delves into the participation of local communities in a REDD+ project beyond the scopes of managerial authority and labor supply, aiming to underscore critical yet uneven ways in which intermediaries mediate these processes.

The Integrated REDD+ Plateaux Project (PIREDD–Plateaux project) served as a REDD+ pilot initiative in the Plateaux District of the Mai-Ndombe province in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Drawing on Ribot and Peluso's (2003) theory of access and the literature on the intermediaries in forest governance, this study examines the participation of local communities concerning their capacity to benefit from REDD+. The ability to derive benefits from resource governance projects encompasses not only the entitlement to benefit from these resources but also the dynamics of access. This paper seeks to contribute to the understanding of local community power within the REDD+ benefits sharing mechanism (BSM) by exploring the intricate "webs of power" and "bundles of power" configuring access to benefits derived from REDD+ pilot project activities.

The paper contends that pivotal instances where local community power was anticipated to manifest were during the implementation of REDD+ pilot project activities and the distribution of resources from these activities. However, it was the power brokers, notably the traditional authorities, whose influence prevailed during these critical junctures, particularly in the composition of the steering committees of newly established local committees for development (LCDs). Consequently, the local community never managed to effectively mobilize its own power to shape the BSM or receive the financial benefits initially incentivizing their participation. The exercise of local community power was frequently constrained or exploited by other actors. For instance, when payments for environmental services (PES) were delayed, traditional authorities received payments "in advance," while local community members had to endure waits exceeding five months. These findings indicate that LCD steering committees, intended to represent local communities, failed to effectively configure access to REDD+ benefits regarding their bundles of power or their position within the webs of powers.

3. Local community participation as an important puzzle in REDD+ pilot projects: How do lessons from Mushie advance knowledge? (Essay 3)

This article situates the experiences of Plateau district community involvement in the implementation of REDD+ in the context of other REDD+ pilot projects. Given their direct impact from the REDD+ pilot project, the active participation of local communities holds significant importance in both the design and execution phases. The participation of local communities is grounded in the notion that their behavior can be influenced through the provision of economic incentives and appropriate technical assistance. A review of experiences in other pilot projects found different configurations and logics for local participation, which offer five key lessons that can inform the next phases of REDD+ projects. These lessons collectively indicate that advancements towards achieving the comprehensive and effective participation envisioned in Decision 1/CP.16, also known as the Cancun Agreements, can be realized by considering local power dynamics and various factors beyond mere economic incentives that shape community participation. This approach aligns with the principles of good forest governance and contributes to the engagement of existing REDD+ stakeholders in a manner consistent with these principles.

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Dedication

“My father gave me the greatest gift anyone could ever give another person. He believed in me.” – Jim Valvano

This thesis is dedicated to my late father Albert Mukoie Okitankoie Onokoko. I made a promise to him that I am going to obtain a PhD degree. This thesis is not only the fulfillment of this promise, but a way to pay tribute to my father and honor him with true filial piety. Father, this thesis is for you. Rest in peace now.

Table des matières

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgements	vi
Dedication	viii
Table des matières.....	ix
List of Figures.....	xiii
List of maps.....	xiv
List of Tables.....	xv
List of Abbreviations	xvii
Chapter I Introduction.....	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.1.1 Framing the problem.....	1
1.1.2 Study objective and research question	2
1.1.3 The structure of the thesis	3
1.2 Theoretical and conceptual framework: A political ecology of local community participation	4
1.2.1 Forest governance and participatory policies	6
1.2.2 Local community participation.....	8
1.2.3 Institutional approach in environmental governance	27
1.2.4 The political ecology of locations of local community's participation	31
1.3 The study area	39
1.3.1 Local communities and forest governance in the DRC	39
1.3.2 Forest governance in Mushie territory	44
1.3.3. Roadmap for the REDD process in DR Congo	46
1.3.4 REDD+ piloting in Mushie territory	47
1.4 Research design and methods.....	52
1.4.1 Overview of the research design	52
1.4.2 Data collection	53
1.4.3 Research limitations and challenges	56
1.4.4 Data analysis	59
1.5 References.....	60
Essay 1	80

Abstract	80
2.1 Introduction	81
2.2 Power and local community participation: An analytical framework.....	84
2.3 Methods.....	91
2.3.1 Geographical context	91
2.3.2 Research methods	95
2.4 Findings and discussion: Local community power in PIREDD–Plateaux–Mushie 97	
2.4.1 First location: Contested visions of community participation in REDD+ pilot project	98
2.4.2 REDD+ in Mushie: The NGO AMAR and newly (re)structured LCDs.....	104
2.5 Discussion: The emergence and suppression of local community power in PIREDD-Plateaux in Mushie.....	111
2.5.1 The process of translating local community participation into LCDs.	111
2.5.2 Closures through bylaws, statutes and FPIC	115
2.5.3 Local community participation “trouble”	117
2.6 Conclusion	119
2.7 References	123
Essay 2	127
Abstract	127
3.1 Introduction	128
3.2 Access, entitlements, and local community participation: An analytical framework 131	
3.2.1 The local communities’ participation as ability to benefit from REDD+	131
3.2.2 Power relations and access control: The “bundles” and “webs” of powers that configure resource access	140
3.3 Methods.....	145
3.3.1 Geographical context	145
3.3.2 Research methods	147
3.4 Findings and discussion: Local community power in moments of benefit sharing 149	
3.4.1 LCDs and REDD+ benefits in PIREDD–Plateaux	150
3.4.2 Facilitator power brokers and local communities.....	153
3.4.3 Power broker conflicts and local communities.....	155

3.4.4 The failed brokering of the LCD steering committees	159
3.5 Conclusion	160
3.6 References	162
Essay 3	167
Abstract	167
4.1 Introduction	168
4.2 Forest governance and local community participation	172
4.3 Mushie REDD+ pilot project case study.....	176
4.4 Key lessons learned from phase I of REDD+ in the DRC	182
4.4.1 The one-size-fits-all approach to local community participation	182
4.4.2 Land at stake in local participation in REDD+ projects.....	185
4.4.3 The power balance between intermediaries and local communities	186
4.4.4 Enhancement of local participation in forest governance through REDD+ payments	187
4.4.5 The story about local community participation and carbon benefits	189
4.5 Conclusions	191
4.6 References	194
Conclusion	200
5.1 Summary of papers	200
5.1.1 Contested visions of community participation for carbon management: Evidence from the PIREDD/Plateaux project in Mushie, Democratic Republic of Congo	201
5.1.2 Accessing the benefit-sharing mechanism of a REDD+ project: Community participation and powerbrokers in PIREDD/Plateaux, Mushie, Democratic Republic of Congo	202
5.1.3 The local community participation in REDD+ pilot project in Mushie: Key lessons learned from the initial phase	203
5.2 Main findings related to research questions	204
5.3 Significance and contributions of the thesis	208
5.3.1 Contribution to knowledge.....	208
5.3.2 Statement of significance	209
5.4 Future research	210
5.5 References	210
Annexes	211

Annex A: List of respondents in the Semi-Structured Interview	211
Annex B: The semi-structured interview guide	214
Annex C : Household Level Survey Questionnaire	220
Annex D: Focus Group Question	225
Annex E: Contract for PES schemes in agroforestry in Lobobi.....	227
Annex F: Contract for PES schemes in savannah defense activities.....	237
Annex G : The service voucher	245
Annex H : Contract of collaboration between WWF and LCD.....	247
Annex I : LCD Statute	250
Annex J : LCD bylaws.....	259

List of Figures

Chapter 1 Introduction

Figure 1: The Cancun Safeguards

Figure 2: Historical context – Local communities and Forests

Essay 1

Figure 2.1: View of local community participation adapted from (Agrawal & Gibson, 1999)

Figure 2.2: Characterizing community participation in REDD+ implementation adapted from (Arnstein 1969)

Figure 2.3: Leading reason for participating in PIREDD/Plateaux in Mushie

Figure 2. 4: The LCD design

Figure 2.5: The Senior Advisor's role in the LCD

Essay 1

Figure 3.1: The multiplicities of interactions around REDD+ benefits

List of maps

Chapter 1 Introduction

Map 1.1: REDD+ initiatives in Mai – Ndombe province

Map 1.2: PIREDD/Plateaux

Essay 1

Map 2.1: PIREDD/Plateaux in Mushie

Essay 2

Map 3.2: PIREDD/Plateaux

Essay 3

Map 4.1: REDD+ pilot project area

List of Tables

Table 1.1: The eight pillars of intervention (DRC National REDD+ Strategy)

Table 1.2: Participation rationales and design choices for participation.

Table 1.3: Updated Mark Reed's typologies of participation

Table 1.4: Local communities and Stakeholder groups

Table 1.5: Why is stakeholder engagement important in REDD+?

Table 1.6: Specific practices to advance local community's participation.

Table 1.7: The basis for stakeholder engagement in REDD+

Table 1.8: Constructivist-based institutionalism

Table 1.9: The Conceptions of power build from the works of Allen (2014) and Ahlborg and Nightingale (2018)

Table 1.10: The administrative/statutory and the traditional systems

Table 1.11: Eight REDD+ pilot projects in DRC

Table 1.12: Linking the research questions to key concepts, methods and analysis

Essay 1

Table 2.1: Characterizing local community participation in Mushie REDD+ pilot project

Table 2.2: Approaches of Local community participation

Table 2.3: The administrative/statutory and the traditional systems of Mai-Ndombe, DRC

Table 2.4: Three Tribal Chiefdoms

Table 2.5: REDD+ pilot project LCDs (new and old)

Table 2.6: Structuring LCDs in Mushie

Table 2.7: Which actor represents the community interests in PIREDD (household interview responses, 2019)

Table 2.8: The distribution of direct monetary benefits from REDD+ pilot project's activities

Essay 2

Table 3.1: Theories of access

Table 3.2: The local communities' participation as ability to benefit from REDD+

Table 3.3: The types of benefits in REDD+ project

Table 3.4: Forest tenure regimes and benefit sharing mechanisms

Table 3.5: The power brokers

Table 3.6: Three Tribal Chiefdoms

Table 3.7: Production and enactment of power relating to project activities

Table 3.8: The distribution of direct monetary benefits from REDD+ pilot project's activities

Table 3.9: PES distribution after completion of agroforestry activities -LCD Lobobi

Essay 3

Table 4.1: Various comparator REDD+ projects (adapted from USAID 2012: 2-4)

List of Abbreviations

BSM	Benefits Sharing Mechanism
CU-FIP	Cordination Unit of Forest Investment Program
FIP	Forest Investment Program
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
GHGs	Greenhouse Gases
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
LCD	Local Committee for Development
PE	Political Ecology
PES	Payment for Ecosystem Services
PPB	Le plan de partage des bénéfices
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation as well as the sustainable management of forests and the conservation and enhancement of forest carbon stocks
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WWF	World Wildlife Fund -
WWF-DRC	World Wildlife Fund - Democratic Republic of Congo

Chapter I Introduction

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Framing the problem

As the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) notes in its Fifth Assessment (IPCC, 2013), “It is extremely likely that human influence has been the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century.” Although the climate system is complex and is influenced by several natural effects such as variations in solar radiation, the natural greenhouse effect, naturally occurring aerosols and water currents, there is broad scientific consensus that the primary cause of recent (and future) climate change is anthropogenic (i.e., human-induced), resulting from the emission of greenhouse gases (GHGs) into the atmosphere from sources such as the burning of fossil fuels, agriculture and deforestation (United Nations Environment Programme, 2018). The observed warming of the climate system is unequivocal, and the largest contribution comes from the increase in the atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide (CO₂). Carbon can be found in various forms and locations, including living organisms (including trees and other plants), fossil fuels (coal, oil and gas) and CO₂ in the atmosphere. The carbon cycle means that vegetation (including forests), soils, oceans and the atmosphere are connected, and it is important to consider the role vegetation and changes in vegetation cover play in controlling overall greenhouse gas emissions and hence climate change (United Nations Environment Programme, 2018; IPCC, 2013). Greenhouse gas emissions, primarily from tropical deforestation and forest degradation, make up an estimated 10% to 12% of total anthropogenic releases of greenhouse gases (GHGs) (Hansen et al., 2013; Le Quéré et al., 2015). For Lera and Sonwa (2015), “forest-related mitigation activities in both developing and developed countries represent important opportunities for climate change mitigation, and enhanced action on these activities could contribute significantly to narrowing the emissions gap” (p. 44). Deforestation and forest degradation play a key role in the process of climate change. Increased forest loss in the tropics is likely to have dramatic consequences for the global climate, with a loss of ecosystem services affecting the livelihoods of forest-dependent communities that have limited capacity to adapt to the changing climate (IPCC, 2013).

The links between forests and the carbon cycle mean that actions that affect the forest sector can have significant impact on greenhouse gas emissions and, by extension, on climate change. Globally, forests cover about 4 billion ha or 31% of the world’s land surface (compared to a pre-industrial area of 5.9 billion ha). Most forests are in the tropics and in large areas of the northern hemisphere in Canada, the US, Europe, Siberia and China (United Nations Environment Programme, 2018; Crowther et al., 2015; Lera & Sonwa, 2015). Recent findings suggest that reducing deforestation may be a relatively inexpensive climate change mitigation option (Eliasch, 2008; Stern, 2007). In its 2023 report, IPCC recognizes that:

- Some land-related adaptation actions such as sustainable food production, improved and sustainable forest management, soil organic carbon management, ecosystem conservation and land restoration, reduced deforestation and degradation, and reduced food loss and waste are being undertaken, and can have mitigation co-benefits (high confidence). (p. 55)
- Conservation, improved management, and restoration of forests and other ecosystems offer the largest share of economic mitigation potential, with reduced deforestation in tropical regions having the highest total mitigation potential. (p. 106)

Knowing the potential role of forests in contributing to climate change mitigation, the UNFCCC created the REDD+ framework, to organize activities aimed at reducing emissions from deforestation and/or forest degradation, while supporting the sustainable management of forests and the conservation and enhancement of forest carbon stocks (United Nations Environment Programme, 2018). REDD+ thus became a key instrument for achieving forest-related emission reductions in developing countries, with an emphasis on tropical forests (UNFCCC, 2009). Efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and forest degradation require changes in incentives and behaviour that involve the major external and local drivers of change in tropical forest margins (Ghazoul et al., 2010, Angelsen et al., 2011). The emergence of REDD+ initiatives in developing countries has raised major concerns about their impact on local communities. While local and indigenous forest-dependent communities are most affected by climate change, the international community needs to integrate REDD+ into the local context, with local people overseeing a local REDD+ scheme. This has often proven to be the most effective arrangement (Bayrak et al., 2016; Macchi et al., 2008). In order to include local communities, stakeholder engagement in REDD+ was framed under several decisions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC): Decision 4/CP.15 (2009) in Copenhagen, Decision 1/CP.16 (2010) in Cancun, Decision 12/CP.17 (2011) in Durban and Decision 15/CP.19 (2013) in Warsaw.¹

1.1.2 Study objective and research question

The overall objective of this thesis is to assess the nature of stakeholder engagement in REDD+ projects. It uses a case study of a REDD+ pilot project in Mushie, DR Congo (PIREDD²) to focus on the local community's participation. In relation to this aim, it is important to note that there are many stakeholders engaged in the REDD+ pilot project: government agencies and executants, international funders, private sector entities, civil

¹ The UNFCCC has gathered all the COP decisions relevant to REDD+ in the Decision booklet REDD+ (UNFCCC, 2014). [Key decisions relevant for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries \(REDD+\) \(unfccc.int\)](http://unfccc.int/key-decisions-relevant-for-reducing-emissions-from-deforestation-and-forest-degradation-in-developing-countries-(redd+)-unfccc.int)

² PIREDD is the French acronym for "Integrated Project for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries."

society organizations (CSOs), Indigenous peoples, forest-dependent communities and smallholders. Poorly implemented stakeholder participation could exacerbate social and environmental risks, as forest-dependent communities rely on the ecosystem services the forests provide. Conversely, effective stakeholder participation in REDD+ pilot projects could provide them with a space for authentic and equitable engagement and decision-making.

Based on the overall objectives, and using a political ecology framework, three research questions were formulated. They specify the aspects concerning stakeholder participation and the local community's exercise of power in forest governance related to the REDD+ pilot project that are emphasized in the research undertaken:

1. Where, how and with what consequences are local communities able to exercise power within REDD+ governance structures?
 - 1.1 What are the institutional arrangements for local community participation in REDD+ pilot project?
 - 1.2 How does the local community exercise its power in the REDD+ pilot project through structured/revitalized Local Committees for Development?
2. To what extent have participatory processes translated into the empowerment of local communities that are able to access, control and derive benefits from the REDD+ pilot project?
 - 2.1 How do local communities exercise their power within the REDD+ benefit-sharing mechanism?
 - 2.2 Do Local Committees for Development control, maintain and access benefits from REDD+ pilot projects?
3. How should REDD+ pilot projects be redesigned to facilitate opportunities for the empowerment of local communities?
 - 3.1 What are the key challenges and lessons learned from the local community's participation in the REDD+ pilot project?

1.1.3 The structure of the thesis

The thesis consists of two independent papers that investigate these research questions and a third paper that highlights key lessons from the REDD+ pilot projects to inform efforts to encourage local community participation in resource governance projects. This introduction chapter aims to present a theoretical, methodological and contextual framework in which the overall results and analysis can be understood coherently. The introduction goes into more detail about the theories, methods and fieldwork than the individual papers, which are in an article-based format. The thesis concludes with a chapter that summarizes the findings and their implications for policy and future research.

1.2 Theoretical and conceptual framework: A political ecology of local community participation

There is increasing evidence from around the world that the Earth's climate is changing, and the IPCC has noted that "it is extremely likely that we are the dominant cause of warming since the mid-20th century" (UNEP, 2018a). The carbon cycle involves vegetation (including forests), soils, oceans and the atmosphere, and it is important to consider the role vegetation and changes in vegetation cover play in controlling overall greenhouse gas emissions and hence climate change. As forests contain substantial stores of carbon, their degradation and/or conversion to other land cover causes the release of some of the carbon stored within them; conversely, their restoration can absorb atmospheric carbon (UNEP, 2018a).

Forest ecosystems harbour a substantial proportion of global biodiversity, contribute extensively to biogeochemical cycles and provide countless ecosystem services, including water quality control, timber stocks and carbon sequestration (Crowther et al., 2015). Forests also provide subsistence and income for more than 1.6 billion people, including approximately 60 million Indigenous people. Those who rely on forests for their livelihoods are among the poorest people on the planet, and they are disproportionately female (UN-REDD Programme, 2011). The links between forests and the carbon cycle mean that actions that affect the forest sector can have an enormous impact on greenhouse gas emissions and thus on climate change. Forests are not only potential sources of carbon emissions to the atmosphere, they can also act as carbon sinks, sequestering carbon (UNEP, 2018a).

Local communities derive significant portions of their livelihoods from forest resources, to the extent that these diverse relationships between communities and forests have been called "community forests" (Charnley & Poe, 2007). The importance of the community forest as a source of households' livelihood has a positive and strong impact on their level of cooperation in forest governance. This suggests that it is critical to understand the importance of the community forest for the livelihood of the local communities before implementing the participatory forest management programme (Gatiso, 2019; Mendako, 2022). Since the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, there has been growing acknowledgment that people play vital roles within tropical forest ecosystems. It is now widely recognized that consulting, informing and involving people are essential aspects in the development and execution of forest governance policies. More important, it is crucial to understand the power of local communities that depend on community forests in forest governance projects such as REDD+ pilot projects. Among the many studies related to REDD+, a few have taken the local community as their main topic. They mostly revolve around the legal framework and institutionalization process, such as the rights of the local community, Indigenous people and their livelihood impacted by REDD+ without considering their participation (Dirgantara, 2021: 114).

Forests are generally adapted to the local climates in which they have historically grown, but climate change is threatening their health, productivity and myriad social-ecological benefits. Climate change threatens the social, ecological and economic benefits enjoyed by forest-dependent communities worldwide. They are facing difficult climate-adaptive decisions in forests as complex social-ecological systems (Findlater et al., 2022). These difficult climate-adaptive decisions mean that individuals or groups with a stake, interest or right in the forest land will be affected negatively or positively by activities to mitigate climate change. Local communities are not the only actors affected by these climate-adaptive decisions, but they have economic and non-economic relationship with the forests and rely on the ecosystem services they provide. As the IPCC noted, “Loss of ecosystems and their services has cascading and long-term impacts on people globally, especially for Indigenous Peoples and local communities who are directly dependent on ecosystems, to meet basic needs” (2023: 99). An important notion that reinforces this study is inclusiveness: the inclusion of those most affected in decision-making, formulating plans, controlling resources and implementing decisions over their own lives (Samdong, 2018; Agarwal, 2001).

“Participation,” as a central tenet, refers to the inclusion of those who are affected or who can affect a decision (Bixler, 2015; Reed, 2008; Ribot, 2002). There is a consensus that effective participation requires the local community’s involvement not just as individuals but also as a collectivity, such as a village community. Devolving greater power to local communities is now widely accepted as an institutional imperative (Agarwal, 2001).

Nevertheless, while the idea of local community participation has become almost mandatory in forest governance, views diverge on how participation is defined, whom it is expected to involve, what it is expected to achieve and how it is to be brought about (Agarwal, 2001). Many theories or disciplines are trying to address the issues related to local community participation. As result, the study of local community participation requires an interdisciplinary approach and a set of theoretical, analytical and methodological tools that can offer distinct and complementary insights. Such a strategy demands great care, as there is a risk of theoretical and methodological contradictions that undermine the analytical and explanatory power of such a research study (Samdong, 2018). The theoretical and conceptual framework adopted in this thesis is founded on political ecology theory, with some insight from the environmental governance framework and institutional theory. The framework examines the factors that shape relations of power among different social groups, the biophysical landscape and global processes.

These theoretical approaches and the analytical framework used in this study are addressed in this opening chapter. The first section frames the analysis of the study by positioning local community participation in forest governance. The second section examines the concept of local community participation. In the third section, theoretical approaches are used to discuss the role of institutional arrangements in local community participation and local community participation in forest governance as an access and

entailment question. The fourth section uses the political ecology perspective to link the framework to the theoretical approaches and discuss some of the key concepts.

1.2.1 Forest governance and participatory policies

1.2.1.2. REDD+ and forest governance in the Democratic Republic of Congo

REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation, plus fostering conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks) is crafted as a climate mitigation strategy aimed at promoting sustainable development. Within the framework of REDD+, developing nations receive compensation in exchange for reducing carbon emissions by curtailing deforestation and forest degradation, conserving forests and sustainably managing them. The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has been engaged in REDD+ “Readiness” activities and has initiated pilot investments aimed at addressing some of the primary causes of deforestation and forest degradation identified within the country. The REDD+ process in the DRC has been overseen by the Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation and Tourism (MECNT), with significant involvement from other sectors, particularly civil society and the private sector. The DRC receives technical and financial support from two major multilateral initiatives dedicated to REDD+ Readiness: the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) and the UN-REDD Programme, along with contributions from various other donors. The National REDD+ Strategy is based on a national consensus regarding the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation.

In 2009, a decree was signed by the Prime Minister to establish the principal entities tasked with leading the REDD+ initiative in the country. These include:

- The National REDD Committee, serving as the decision-making body for REDD-related matters in the country, composed of representatives from various ministries, civil society and the private sector.
- An Interministerial REDD Committee, mandated to ensure that the interdisciplinary aspects of REDD+ are duly considered in the decision-making process.
- A National REDD Coordination, affiliated with the MECNT and entrusted with the implementation of the day-to-day activities related to the REDD process.

The National REDD+ Strategy defines the government’s vision for sustainable land management and use to address the various drivers of deforestation in an integrated manner and stabilize forest cover, while ensuring economic growth, increasing incomes of populations and improving their living conditions, especially for the poorest and most vulnerable. Implementation of REDD+ can take the form of national programs, with payments directed to governmental bodies, or more project-based initiatives involving NGOs or other partners, with payments disbursed to a broader spectrum of entities, including local communities. The National REDD+ Strategy framework and investment plan in the Democratic Republic of Congo explicitly states that endeavours to alter deforestation rates must involve collaborating with local communities to assist them in

their livelihoods in ways that minimize the impact on forest cover. The recent implementation of the community forest law presents an opportunity to acknowledge traditional rights to the forest and foster participatory forest management.

1.2.1.1. The local community's participation and the governance pillar

The National REDD+ Strategy is based on eight pillars of intervention (**Table 1.1**). The effective implementation of REDD+ in the DRC, with all eight thematic pillars, requires strengthening the capacities of institutions and other stakeholders in terms of the governance of financial or natural resources. A climate of trust must be built in a context of limited capacities, weak presence of the State, especially in forest areas, and low governance at all levels.

Table 1.1: The eight pillars of intervention (DRC National REDD+ Strategy)

Pillar	Overall objective of the pillar
Agriculture	Reduce the impact of agriculture on the forest while actively contributing to the country's food security goals and the desire to make the agricultural sector a pillar of the country's economic growth.
Energy	Reduce the share of unsustainable wood energy production while meeting national energy demand.
Forests	Meet the needs for timber products of the national and potentially regional and international markets, through sustainable forest management that minimizes the impact on the environmental services provided by them.
Governance	Ensure good governance of the REDD+ process necessary for effective, cross-cutting, transparent, responsible, pragmatic, fair and sustainable implementation of REDD+, based on results, and including information, consultation, ownership and the participation of all stakeholders.
Demography	Control the extremely high population growth in the DRC to alleviate pressure on forest ecosystems accordingly and thus actively contribute to the country's economic growth and sustainable development goals.
Land use	Promote, within an intersectoral and forward-looking vision, optimal land allocation and planning of populations, activities, as well as infrastructure and

	means of communication, to effectively contribute to the country's sustainable development goals while minimizing the impact on forests.
Land tenure	Support land tenure harmonization and security to ensure the attractiveness of REDD+ investments and contribute to the permanence of emission reductions (legal security) for project holders as well as other stakeholders such as rural households.
Mines and hydrocarbons	Understand the impacts of investments in mining and oil resources on the forest, develop standards and procedures aimed at better preserving the forest, and assist the government and economic actors in more effective implementation of the standards. This pillar will also be intricately linked to land use.

Source: Fonds National REDD+ (FONAREDD)³

Local community participation is included in the governance pillar. The governance pillar supports a multi-stakeholder dialogue for a shared representation of the common space, identification of desirable land uses, identification of infrastructure and collective equipment needs, reflection on sustainable technical alternatives and support for the implementation of these alternatives in priority areas.

The governance pillar also focused on capacity-building. Capacity-building aims to enable the effective and efficient participation of all stakeholders – women and men, local populations and Indigenous peoples – in the objectives of REDD+ for transparency, equity and traceability in the implementation of activities and the monitoring and evaluation of these activities, and to allow for adequate benefit-sharing. It also aims to develop and test innovative mechanisms for financing REDD+ to make REDD+ investments viable, as well as for incentivizing changes in practices, such as Payment for Environmental Services (PES). The central observation of the thesis is related to the governance pillar, with a focus on local community participation.

1.2.2 Local community participation

1.2.1.1. *The role of local communities in forest governance*

Public policy increasingly recognises the value of communities and their ability to create social and economic change. Policymakers now look to local energy and community creativity to partner in delivering services, identifying needs and opportunities, and as drivers of a new paradigm of place-based and participatory development. The theoretical assumption underpinning much of this interest is that

³ Le Fonds National REDD+ (FONAREDD). Nos piliers d'intervention. <https://fonaredd-rdc.org/nos-piliers/>

communities of people, however defined, possess agency in the sociological sense: that is, that they have the ability to act and be agents of their own development. (Eversole, 2011: 51)

In the context of forest governance, “communities” typically refers to groups of people who reside in or depend on forests for their livelihoods, cultural practices and social well-being. They represent a diverse array of stakeholders who live in or depend on forests, each bringing unique perspectives, knowledge and interests to the table. The term encompasses a wide range of actors, including Indigenous peoples, local residents, smallholders, rural farmers, forest-dependent communities and other stakeholders who have a personal stake in the management and conservation of forest resources. Some parts of the literature on local community participation in REDD+ put the emphasis on local drivers by assigning a prominent level of responsibility to local actors in deforestation (Skutsch & Turnhout, 2020). This thesis, however, considers the role of local communities in the design and implementation of REDD+.

The traditional hierarchical ways of organizing that characterize forest governance bureaucracies considered communities to be an obstacle to efficient and rational use of forest resources. The goals of forest governance and the interests of local communities were opposed. This traditional forest governance excluded local communities. Community involvement in forest governance has undergone a significant transformation, however, with communities now being at the forefront of forest governance. The underlying premise of this trajectory is that communities may tend to exploit forest resources unsustainably when they are excluded from forest resource management. By engaging communities in forest governance efforts, the benefits they accrue will foster a sense of responsibility, incentivizing them to act as responsible stewards of the resources. This thesis is trying to clarify the role of local communities in forest governance in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). To begin, it is important to understand what makes a local community a foundation upon which to base forest governance.

Article 1 of the DRC Forest Code and Article 2 of Decree 14/018 define a local community as “a population traditionally organized on the basis of custom and united by bonds of solidarity in clan or kin, underpinning its internal cohesion. It is further characterized by its attachment to a particular land.”

This article of the Forest Code sees the local community in three ways: as a spatial unit, as a social structure, and as a set of shared norms. Forest governance in the DRC is based on the combination of these three ways. In the spatial perspective, community has often been connected to small-scale territorial associations. This perspective tends to assume a link between the territorial conception of community and successful resource management. As a consequence, a lot of villages are selected to be part of forest governance. Concentrating solely on a community’s shared physical space and its small population is inherently inadequate and could potentially lead to misleading conclusions when analyzing the management of forest resources at the local level. The composition of local communities underscored in the Forest Code places greater emphasis on the

construction of local community as a homogeneous social artefact. It is important to direct attention towards the social makeup of a community rather than presupposing its homogeneity because establishing a direct link between social homogeneity and sustainable forest resource use is not straightforward. The Forest Code also highlights the sense of community or the feeling of being a single entity to accomplish goals such as sustainable forest management. The probability of successful forest resource management increases by prioritizing common interests over individual and self-serving ones. By conceptualizing local community through their common interests, the Forest Code introduces complexity that shapes the participation of the local community. The thesis will look at the way this conception of local community shapes their participation in forest governance.

1.2.1.2 Conceptualizing local community participation in forest governance

1.2.1.2.1 Understanding participation in REDD+ projects

Participation has become a mantra in environmental governance and particularly crucial in assessing forest governance processes and REDD+ implementation. For most of the past century, the modes of environmental decision-making had been under the control of state bureaucracies. Much of the literature backed the exclusionary modes of environmental governance and the state management of natural resources. Local actors in proximity to these resources were not represented in environmental policy (Forsyth, 2003; Bixler, 2015). The failure of this centralized environmental governance approach to meet local needs fuels the debate about the role of local participation in environmental governance and the alternatives to top-down management of natural resources. Generally, practitioners and scholars alike expect the inclusion of nonstate actors in governmental decision-making to contribute to the quality and implementation of decisions, as well as to their legitimacy (Wesselink et al., 2011). In the context of this shift in environmental governance, participation became a new environmental governance paradigm endorsed by the international environmental community at the Rio Conference in 1992 and gained legitimacy as a style for managing the environment when it was unveiled as one of the key principles of sustainable development (Bixler, 2015). Indeed, the idea of community participation as a mechanism for tackling complex problems is now reflected at a global level in the UN Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2016). This shift from government to governance as the State “steps back” and seeks the involvement of communities in a range of areas potentially offers opportunities for them to gain new powers (Rolfe, 2017).

Defining “participation”

There have been numerous attempts to define participation, but it is hard to capture all its dimensions and dynamics in a single and succinct definition. Participation is not a single phenomenon. This thesis uses Wesselink, Fritsch and Renn’s work (2011) on rationales for public participation in environmental policy and governance to understand participation in forest governance and the different expectations of participation. Their three rationales (substantive, instrumental and normative) have been used to define

participation in and implementation of the environmental decision-making process (**Table 1.2**).

Based on a substantive rationale (**Table 1.2**), participation means the inclusion of nonstate actors, as members of the public or as organized stakeholders, in any stage of governmental policymaking, including implementation. The policymaking environment itself imposes barriers to participation in terms of laws and regulations, internal contradictions, the need for coordination and integration between policy areas and institutional and political barriers to the integration of participatory processes in policymaking (Wesselink et al., 2011). Here, participation represents a disturbance of administrative work and differentiates state actors (bureaucracy) and nonstate actors. Nonstate actors have vital roles to play as participants, legitimizers and endorsers of government policy and action, as watchdogs of the behaviour of other public and private REDD+ stakeholders and as collaborators in REDD+ efforts. This definition fits with the participation of civil society organizations (CSOs).

Based on an instrumental rationale (**Table 1.2**), participation means the involvement of a substantial number of people in events or actions that enhance their well-being, e.g., their income, security or self-esteem (Cohen & Uphoff, 1980). The focus is more on the capacity of the participants in environmental governance to obtain the results they intend to obtain from their involvement in decision-making and implementation. Participation therefore implies increasing capacities to be involved in decision-making or to engage effectively in REDD+.

Based on an instrumental rationale (**Table 1.2**), participation is the inclusion of people in making decisions, formulating plans, controlling resources and implementing decisions related to their own lives (Agarwal, 2001). The focus here is on involvement in all steps of development and conservation interventions and in REDD+ implementation (REDD+ design and implementation).

Based on a normative rationale (**Table 1.2**), participation is defined as a process where individuals, groups and organizations choose to take an active role in making decisions that affect them (Wandersman, 1981; Wilcox, 2003; Rowe et al., 2004). This definition focuses on the importance of including those who have a stake in natural resource governance. In this definition, the focus is on stakeholder participation rather than broader public participation.

The thesis considers the normative rationale to deepen the understanding of the participation of those who hold a stake (whether directly or indirectly) in the scope of REDD+ pilot projects, rather than attempting to meaningfully engage with the wider public. Stakeholder participation is a key concept in this thesis. The thesis also considers the instrumental rationale by looking at the implementation activities in these REDD+ pilot projects and the power of stakeholders.

Table 1.2: Participation rationales and design choices for participation

Participation rationales	Normative rationale	Substantive rationale	Instrumental rationale
Arguments for participation	Democratic ideals call for maximum participation. Participation aims to counter the power of incumbent interests and allows all who are affected by a decision to have influence.	Nonexperts see problems, issues and solutions that experts miss. Participation aims to increase the breadth and depth of information and thereby improve the quality of decisions; it ignores power issues (e.g., related to problem framing). Unlike the instrumental rationale, the substantive rationale allows for changes in policy goals.	Effective participation makes decisions more legitimate and improves results. Participation aims to restore public credibility, diffuse conflicts, justify decisions and limit future challenges to implementation by “creating ownership.” Policy goals are not open for discussion; only the details are (to a lesser or greater extent). As such, this rationale supports incumbent interests.
Who is included?	Those who have a stake	Those who have additional knowledge	Those who have blocking power and those who are needed for implementation
What is included?	Participants’ concerns and views	Policymakers’ concerns; all knowledge and views	Policymakers’ concerns; selected knowledge and views
How is it included?	In all stages and issues	Only when it adds value substantively	Only when it ensures smooth implementation

From stakeholder participation to local community participation

Freeman (1984) defines stakeholders as those who are affected by or can affect a decision. In the context of forest governance, stakeholders are individuals or groups with a stake, interest or right in the forestland that will be affected negatively or positively by the activities. There is a diversity of stakeholders, but the participation of the local community as a forest-dependent community is the cornerstone of this thesis. Forests

and village commons are important sources of supplementary livelihoods and basic needs for rural households in many parts of the world – including the DRC (Agarwal, 2001). The participation of local communities in activities to tackle deforestation or forest degradation reduces social and environmental risks such as exclusion from their traditional lands and the pursuit of traditional forest-based livelihoods and spiritual practices. On the ground, however, some recent implementations of participatory approaches within the forest governance sphere have failed to fully achieve their initial objectives. As stakeholders, local communities have been employed solely as a means to accomplish predetermined goals, rather than as a process aimed at empowering groups and individuals to assume leadership roles, envisage their futures and enhance their livelihoods. As Sen (1999, 2013) suggests, individuals should be actively engaged in shaping their own future rather than being passive recipients of programs crafted by external parties.

1.2.3.1.2 Typologies of participation

While participation covers a broad spectrum of forms, it lacks conceptual clarity, and serious concerns are raised in local contexts during the shift from theory to practice (Hobley, 1996; Bixler et al., 2015). In this context, many different typologies (**Table 1.3**) exist to delimit the types and kinds of participation (Bixler et al., 2015). These typologies have been developed to understand the basis for stakeholder participation. Stakeholder participation needs to be underpinned by a philosophy that emphasizes empowerment, equity, trust and learning. Where relevant, participation should be considered as early as possible and throughout the process, representing relevant stakeholders systematically (Reed, 2008, updated in Table 1.3).

In this thesis, the basis used for stakeholder participation is the exercise of power by the stakeholder. The idea was to identify where and how power is exercised and with what effects, rather than whether or not people “have” power. Stakeholder participation is the exercise of power, which is relational, situated and emergent in ways that produce contradictory and ambiguous effects that are hard to control (Ahlborg & Nightingale, 2018).

Table 1.3: Updated Reed typology of participation

Basis of typology	Type of participation	Interpretation
The degree to which stakeholders are engaged	Ladder of participation (Arnstein, 1969)	Stakeholder participation is perceived as a “ladder of participation”: a continuum of increasing stakeholder involvement, from passive dissemination of information (which she called “manipulation”) to active engagement (“citizen control”).

	Wheel of participation (Davidson, 1998)	Stakeholder participation is a “wheel of participation.” This metaphor emphasizes the legitimacy of different degrees of engagement.
	Level of engagement (Biggs, 1989)	Stakeholder participation is about the level of engagement and can be “contractual,” “consultative,” “collaborative” or “collegiate.”
The nature of participation based on the direction of communication flows	Two-way flow of communication (Rowe & Frewer, 2000)	Stakeholder participation is conceptualized as two-way communication between participants and exercise organizers where information is exchanged in some sort of dialogue or negotiation: information dissemination to passive recipients constitutes “communication,” and gathering information from participants is “consultation.”
Theoretical basis, essentially distinguishing between normative and/or pragmatic participation	Communicative action theory (Habermass, 1987)	Stakeholder participation is a “fair” and “competent” representation of the full range of relevant stakeholders and the balance of power among the participants. This distinction has also been conceptualized as the need for “public acceptance” as opposed to “decision quality” or “political” as opposed to “technical” participation.
Objectives participation is used for	Okali et al. (1994)	Stakeholder participation is either “research driven” or “development driven.”
	Michener (1998)	Stakeholder participation is either “planner centred,” that is, focused on outcomes, or “people centred,” which builds capacity and empowers stakeholders to define and meet their own needs.
	The operational objectives of participation (Lynam et al., 2007)	Stakeholder participation can be “diagnostic and informing,” “co-learning” or “co-management.”
The exercise of power by stakeholders	Ahlborg & Nightingale (2018)	Stakeholder participation is the exercise of power based on the multiplicity of interactions among stakeholders. It can produce stabilization or destabilization as effects.

1. 2.2.1 Participation of local communities in the REDD+ context

1.2.2.1.1 From the global setting of local community participation: International commitment

In the context of REDD+, stakeholders (**Table 1.4**) are individuals or groups with a stake, interest or right in the forestland that will be affected negatively or positively by REDD+ activities. Multi-stakeholder involvement is essential for REDD+ to be effective and to achieve desired social and environmental objectives. UN-REDD recognized Indigenous peoples and local communities as critical partners in forest solutions to the climate crisis:

Over the past decade, UN-REDD has developed and deployed a rich set of policies and practices to advance social inclusion and equity in REDD+ endeavours, with a focus on the rights of Indigenous peoples and local communities and on gender equality. Since its inception in 2008, the Programme has supported inclusive, gender-responsible policy formulation and decision-making for national and subnational REDD+ processes. This approach is based on recognition of the fact that the women and men who live within or in close proximity to forests and whose livelihoods depend directly on them, are not only the most affected by policy decisions regarding forest and land use, but are also the best positioned to protect and sustainably manage forests. The rights and knowledge of local communities and Indigenous peoples deserve primary consideration. To underpin this approach, the Programme delivers technical support to REDD+ countries in three interrelated areas: social inclusion, gender equality and forest tenure, governance and carbon rights. (UN-REDD, 2022: 2)

Table 1.4: Local communities and stakeholder groups

Stakeholder group	Definition
Government agencies	Once committed to REDD+, the government becomes pivotal in making sure that the country can implement Policies and Measures (PAMs). REDD+ contains both technical and policy-related issues, cutting across multiple sectors and between national and subnational levels. Thus, REDD+ activities often require collaboration across and between ministries including finance, planning, rural development, agriculture, land and natural resources/forestry.
Private sector entities	Private sector entities are relevant as landowners or managers, because of their

	role in the exploitation of natural resources or as funders of REDD+ action. Actors in the following sectors can be relevant to REDD+: agriculture, energy, forestry and timber, mining, infrastructure, investment banking and forest carbon.
Civil society organizations (CSOs)	The United Nations defines CSOs as nonstate actors whose aims are neither to generate profits nor to seek governing power. CSOs unite people to advance shared goals and interests. REDD+ must come from within and be owned by a country and its citizens. CSOs therefore have vital roles to play as participants, legitimizers and endorsers of government policy and action, as watchdogs of the behaviour of other public and private REDD+ stakeholders and as collaborators in REDD+ efforts.
Indigenous peoples	Indigenous peoples have historical and intricate relationships with their lands, territories and resources. Many live in and around forests and have formal or traditional rights to forested land. REDD+ efforts need to recognize that forests have multifunctional values and roles for Indigenous peoples.
Forest-dependent communities	Forest-dependent communities are defined by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) as both those that are explicitly acknowledged by the state and that may be protected using legal means or de jure rights (formal users) and forest users that lack official recognition and protection (informal users).
Local communities	Article 1 of the DRC Forest Code of 2002 Local community refers to a population traditionally organized based on custom and united by ties of clan or parental solidarity that underpin its internal cohesion. It is also characterized by its attachment to a specific territory.

Smallholders	The FAO defines smallholders as those who own, manage or use forest lands or have resource endowments considered minor compared to others in their region.
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There are risks (**Table 1.5**) associated with the exclusion of relevant stakeholders and benefits (**Table 1.5**) associated with the participation of all relevant stakeholders (**Table 1.4**). Stakeholders can potentially gain or lose through REDD+, so, “a strong human rights-based approach was integral to the creation of UN-REDD, especially since forest-based solutions and REDD+ schemes are closely linked to the rights of Indigenous peoples and local communities, who are residents and custodians of many forests around the world and whose livelihoods depend on them” (UN-REDD, 2022: 2).

Table 1.5: Why is stakeholder engagement important in REDD+?

Risks	Benefits
Social and environmental risks	Contribution to national development objectives
Conversion of natural forests into plantations	Improved forest management, governance and enforcement
Inequitable benefit-sharing	Space for authentic and equitable engagement and decision-making
Land speculation, land grabbing and land conflicts	Increased food security through strengthened traditional livelihoods and generation of additional resources for Indigenous peoples and forest-dependent communities (including women, men and youth)
Elite capture of international funds	Development of private sector operating models as well as public-private collaborations that contribute to REDD+ results
Worsening inequalities (e.g., gender inequality)	Incorporation of traditional knowledge, innovations and practices in natural resources management
	Greater recognition of community and traditional rights to forests and trees
Risks for Indigenous peoples and forest-dependent communities	Benefits linked to stakeholder engagement in REDD+
Exclusion from decision-making	Relevance, improving the validity of REDD+ readiness and implementation
Exclusion from traditional lands and the pursuit of traditional forest-based livelihoods and spiritual practices	Ownership, increasing the chance of acceptance for REDD+ strategy and implementation

	Accountability, improving forest governance
	Relationships, constructively avoiding and managing conflicts and building new relationships
	Innovation, encouraging innovative ways to decouple economic growth from unsustainable resource use

Each REDD+ project has an impact on the surrounding local communities and necessarily induces social change. The level of information, understanding, consent and involvement of local communities in these pilot projects is important for stakeholder engagement in REDD+. UN-REDD has introduced approaches and contributed to testing methods aimed at promoting social inclusivity in policy efforts and on-the-ground programs concerning forest-based solutions to sustainability and climate challenges (**Table 1.6**).

Table 1.6: Specific practices to advance local community participation

Specific practices to advance	Description
Participatory governance of REDD+ processes	From inception, UN-REDD has strived for best practice on social inclusion by engaging in multi-stakeholder and inclusive internal governance arrangements. UN-REDD has required partner countries to include Indigenous peoples and civil society organizations in the national governance arrangements for their REDD+ processes and projects, providing technical assistance and mediation services when needed. The aim is to create connections between grassroots forest conservation and sustainable forest management efforts with a national REDD+ policy.
Building and implementing REDD+ safeguards	To be eligible to receive results-based payments for REDD+, countries and jurisdictions must present summaries of information on how social and environmental safeguards will be addressed and respected. UN-REDD supports countries in undertaking participatory, inclusive and gender approaches to planning and building safeguard information systems and summaries of information for REDD+ safeguards, involving representatives of

	Indigenous and local communities and establishing participatory platforms to facilitate ongoing multi-stakeholder engagement on safeguards. The inclusion of Indigenous peoples and local communities and respect for their rights and knowledge are central to these undertakings.
Community-based forest management and Monitoring	A national forest monitoring system is another precondition for a country to be eligible to receive recognition and results-based payment for reduced emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. Inclusive approaches such as community-based forestry monitoring – where government, Indigenous committees, councils and civil society actively participate – help foster respect for the rights of Indigenous and local communities while also building an important knowledge base of land-use dynamics and forest-cover change for forest policy frameworks. Community monitoring has been recognized as an efficient tool for collecting information and observations about forests and also acts as an independent forest monitoring mechanism in relation to the use of forest resources. UN-REDD supports countries in implementing community-based forest management and monitoring systems by providing training and equipment and facilitating partnerships to link and ensure recognition of community monitoring efforts within national forest monitoring systems.
Digital inclusion	In response to the challenges and disruption caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, UN-REDD is applying innovative digital approaches to sustain multi-stakeholder processes, turning to virtual tools to facilitate the safe, inclusive participation of remote communities. Digital cooperation reduces travel and the related carbon footprint and opens new avenues for stakeholder

	engagement, but it can dilute the human contact that is so valuable for inclusive and engaging policy processes.
Community-based REDD+	The Community-based REDD+ initiative (CBR+) is a pioneering partnership between the UN-REDD Programme and the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme for community action in the REDD+ domain. The main objective of CBR+ is to enhance the engagement and inclusion of Indigenous peoples and forest communities in national REDD+ processes, helping channel grassroots experiences and perspectives into national policies to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. Building on the success of its pilot phase (2013–2017), a new phase of CBR+ was designed in consultation with Indigenous peoples and civil society stakeholders with a focus on funding community and grassroots REDD+ implementation, testing community funding mechanisms for REDD+ proceeds and informing inclusive Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) enhancements.

Source: UN-REDD. (2022). Information Brief on Recognizing and Empowering Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities as Critical Partners in Forest Solutions to the Climate Emergency.

UNFCCC stakeholder engagement frameworks

Local community participation, supported by transparency and access to justice, is one of the most recognized principles of sustainable development. Stakeholder engagement in REDD+ is framed by several decisions under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (**Table 1.7**). The text of the UNFCCC recognizes the need for the full and effective participation of all stakeholders. It places specific emphasis on consulting with Indigenous peoples and local communities because they may have poorly recognized rights to the use and ownership of forests and are more vulnerable to being left out of decision-making processes. Table 1.7 summarizes the bases for stakeholder engagement. Since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, international legal instruments dealing with environmental and socioeconomic development have called for active participation by affected groups and

civil society as not only desirable but necessary if sustainable development objectives are to be met.

Principle 10: Environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level. At the national level, each individual shall have appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by public authorities, including information on hazardous materials and activities in their communities, and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. States shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making information widely available. Effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings, including redress and remedy, shall be provided. [A/CONF.151/26 (Vol. I)]

Principle 22: Indigenous people and their communities and other local communities have a vital role in environmental management and development because of their knowledge and traditional practices. States should recognize and duly support their identity, culture and interests and enable their effective participation in the achievement of sustainable development. [A/CONF.151/26 (Vol. I)]

The Cancun Agreement⁴ “requests developing country Parties” to ensure the “full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, inter alia Indigenous peoples and local communities.”

The Anchorage Declaration of Indigenous Peoples on Climate Change (2009) stated, in point 4:

We call upon the UNFCCC’s decision-making bodies to establish formal structures and mechanisms for and with the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples. Specifically, we recommend that the UNFCCC:

[...]

5. Take the necessary measures to ensure the full and effective participation of Indigenous and local communities in formulating, implementing, and monitoring activities, mitigation, and adaptation relating to impacts of climate change.

Therefore, the REDD+ decisions emphasize the participation of these groups and make note of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which includes reference to the right to free, prior and informed consent (FPIC).

⁴ Cancun Agreement on Climate Change.
<https://unfccc.int/decisions?such=j&volltext=%22cancun%20agreements%22#beg>

With regard to the rationale of local community stakeholder engagement in REDD+ pilot projects, the Letter of Intent⁵ underlined the following principle in Article II.4:

Respect of the UNFCCC Warsaw Framework, including respect for the Cancun REDD+ social and environmental safeguards, and consistency with DRC REDD+ national standards.

Table 1.7: The basis for stakeholder engagement in REDD+

Decision	Basis for stakeholder engagement in REDD+	What the UNFCCC says about stakeholder engagement
Decision 4/CP.15 (2009) in Copenhagen	The preamble of Decision 4/CP.15 states the importance of stakeholder engagement in REDD+.	“Recognizing the need for full and effective engagement of Indigenous peoples and local communities in, and the potential contribution of their knowledge to, monitoring and reporting of activities” (in relation to policy approaches and positive incentives on issues related to REDD+). Paragraph 3 operationalizes this commitment and “Encourages, as appropriate, the development of guidance for effective engagement of Indigenous peoples and local communities in monitoring and reporting.”
Decision 1/CP.16 (2010) in Cancun	Decision 1/CP.16, also known as the Cancun Agreement, asks countries to have the following elements in place for REDD+ implementation: • A national strategy (NS) or action plan (AP)	Paragraph 72 of Decision 1/CP.16 asks developing country parties: “... when developing and implementing their national strategies or action plans, to address, inter alia, the drivers of deforestation and forest

⁵ Letter of Intent for the Establishment of a Partnership Between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the Central African Forest initiative (CAFI) on the implementation of the National REDD+1 Framework Strategy and Investment Plan of the DRC.

	• A national forest reference emission level (FREL) and/or forest reference level (FRL) • A robust and transparent national forest monitoring system (NFMS) for monitoring and reporting the five REDD+ activities • A safeguard information system (SIS)	degradation, land tenure issues, forest governance issues, gender considerations and the safeguards identified in paragraph 2 of Appendix I to this decision, ensuring the full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, inter alia Indigenous peoples and local communities.” Safeguard B recognizes the importance of “transparent and effective national forest governance structures, taking into account national legislation and sovereignty.” Safeguard C specifies “respect for the knowledge and rights of Indigenous peoples and members of local communities, by taking into account relevant international obligations, national circumstances and laws, noting that the United Nations General Assembly has adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.” Safeguard D focuses on “the full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, in particular Indigenous peoples and local communities, in actions referred to in
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		paragraphs 70 and 72 of this decision.”
Decision 12/CP.17 (2011) in Durban	Decision 12/CP.17 states that information on safeguards should consider national circumstances, recognize national legislation and relevant international obligations and agreements, and respect gender considerations.	Provide transparent and consistent information that is accessible by all relevant stakeholders and updated on a regular basis.
Decision 15/CP.19 (2013) in Warsaw	Decision 15/CP.19 states the importance of stakeholder engagement on drivers.	“Encourages all Parties, relevant organizations, and the private sector and other stakeholders, to continue their work to address drivers of deforestation and forest degradation and to share the results of their work on this matter, including via the web platform on the UNFCCC website.”

Participation and the seven REDD+ safeguards

The REDD+ safeguards (**Figure 1.1**) are the seven minimum requirements agreed to under the UNFCCC which those who fund and implement REDD+ must address and respect. “Safeguard” usually refers to a process or policy designed to mitigate risks. The seven safeguards associated with REDD+, as agreed under the UNFCCC, are broad aspirational principles that not only help to ensure that REDD+ policies and measures (PAMs) “do no harm” to people or the environment but also “do good” and enhance social and environmental benefits. Understanding the REDD+ safeguards helps to ensure that REDD+ pilot projects are correctly implemented. The safeguard approach allows for an understanding of existing governance arrangements and the ways social and environmental risks from REDD+ are reduced and its benefits are enhanced.

Some safeguards specifically encourage funders and implementers to include local communities and underline elements of good governance such as transparency and access to information and respect for the rights or participation of Indigenous peoples and local communities. Each safeguard can be broken down into core components or key issues. Examining these can help to determine the power Indigenous peoples and local communities have in REDD+ pilot projects.

Safeguard B recognizes the importance of “transparent and effective national forest governance structures.” Here, stakeholder engagement issues include:

- Transparency and equitable access to information for all stakeholders, including women, men and youth
- Rule of law, access to justice and effective remedies for women, men and youth
- Systems for feedback, oversight and accountability

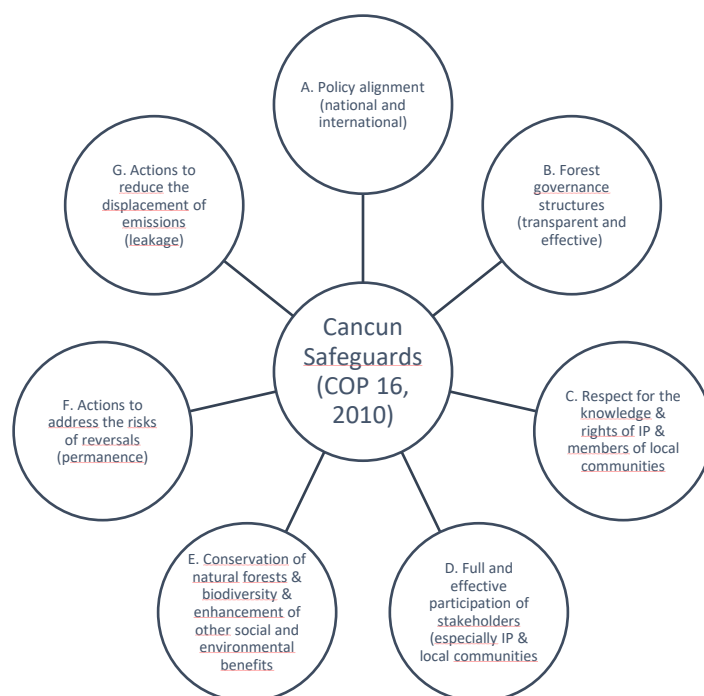
Safeguard C specifies “respect for the knowledge and rights of Indigenous peoples and members of local communities, by taking into account relevant international obligations.” Here, stakeholder engagement issues include:

- Defining Indigenous peoples and local communities
- Respecting “knowledge” and cultural heritage
- Rights to land, territories and resources, self-determination, compensation, benefit-sharing and FPIC (covered in more detail below)

Safeguard D focuses on “the full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, in particular Indigenous peoples and local communities, in REDD+ actions.” In this case, stakeholder engagement issues include:

- Legitimacy and accountability of representative bodies
- Participatory mechanisms for consultation, participation and consent
- Access to justice and grievance mechanisms for women, men and youth

Figure 1.1: The Cancun Safeguards



Engaging stakeholders in REDD+ pilot projects

Articles II and III of the Letter of Intent (LOI)⁶ set out stakeholder engagement in REDD+ pilot projects. The LOI reiterates the need for participation, transparency and consultation. It also imposes participatory methodology and transparency as a framework for engaging stakeholders in REDD+ pilot projects.

With regard to the General Principles of the LOI, stakeholder engagement in REDD+ projects is framed in Article II. 3:

Respect of principles of consultation, participation and transparency in the processes of design and implementation of interventions from the National REDD+ Framework Strategy and Investment Plan, with due regard to UN-REDD/FCPF stakeholder engagement guidelines and national circumstances, while acknowledging and respecting the role and responsibilities of the State in final decisions. The practical modalities of stakeholder engagement in this context will be defined in a participatory manner in the roadmap validated by the national REDD+ Fund Steering committee before the first session of programme approval.

And, in Objective 8 of Article III:

Promote the alignment of interventions in the country by the national public sector and the national and international private sector on REDD+ objectives; ensure transparency and consolidation of information as well as law enforcement in sectors relevant to REDD+.

Stakeholder engagement in REDD+ pilot projects targets all categories of the population in its areas of intervention, both for social reasons and for the sake of efficiency in its technical purpose. Engagement consists of including different stakeholders:

- In supporting activities related to the “structuring of the environment”
- In multi-stakeholder platforms such as Local Community for Development, grouping platforms and territory platforms
- By considering their vital interests over several generations in the use of natural resources
- By allocating operational resources to make systematic reserves for their benefit and developing methodologies that promote their involvement and their specific benefit
- By considering them in the objectives of political and legal developments, so that their interests are defended in the long term

⁶ Letter of Intent for the establishment of a partnership between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the Central African Forest initiative (CAFI) on the implementation of the National REDD+1 Framework Strategy and Investment Plan of the DRC.

1.2.3 Institutional approach in environmental governance

Research on the role of institutions in environmental governance is one of the strongest strands of environmental research informed by new institutionalism (Paavola, 2007). Institutions figure prominently in efforts to both understand the causes of environmental problems and devise responses to these problems that have a reasonable chance of succeeding (Young, 2008). One of the important lessons that emerged from Rio+20 was that “institutions play a critical and fundamental role in implementing sustainable development policies, and a strong governance structure is critical for advancing sustainable development” (United Nations, 2012). Institutions play a key role “in mediating socioeconomic and demographic pressures that might otherwise obstruct collective action or result in resource degradation” (Poteete & Ostrom, 2004: 8). Nevertheless, because institutions represent a critical component of forest governance, institutional approaches must be incorporated into the study of forests and future policy analysis about forests (Poteete & Ostrom, 2004).

“Institution” is a slippery concept, however, which means it has several interpretations, and agreeing on a common definition is difficult. The term is often used casually and can therefore refer to a vast variety of things (Samndong, 2017). An examination of the literature on institutions is required to clarify the conceptual foundations of the institutional approach in environmental governance and the role of institutions in stakeholder participation.

Institutions can be understood as “the humanly devised constraints that structure political, economic and social interaction” (North, 1991) or “the rules of the game” (Ostrom, 1990). This definition is useful for making distinctions between “institution” and “organization.” According to North (1990), “institutions are labeled as rules of the game, and organizations are considered as the actors or players.” As March and Olsen (1989) stated, the function of an institution is to stabilize the behaviour and interaction of different actors and agents and help resolve conflicts among various interest groups. For that reason, institutions create the framework on which these organizations are based (Samndong, 2017).

This thesis applies an understanding of institutions as “rules” and “norms” that specify which types of actions are required, permitted or forbidden in a particular situation (Poteete & Ostrom, 2004). Institutions are developed to regulate the interactions among various stakeholders. As Ostrom (1990: 42) noted, stakeholders “prefer a set of rules that will give them the most advantageous outcome. Although all will prefer new institution that will enable them to coordinate their activities to achieve one of these equilibria, in contrast to continuing their independent actions, a fundamental disagreement is likely to arise among participants regarding which institutions to choose.” The thesis examines the chosen institution for local community participation.

Samndong (2017) identified two positions in the literature on institutions. On one hand, rational choice institutionalism developed among new institutional economists. This position conceptualizes actors as having a fixed set of preferences and behaving in an instrumental way to maximize their utility. For them, institutions are a system of rules and incentives. Institutions influence the context of choice but play no role in forming the individual. Given institutions and the existing distribution of endowments, individuals transact to get what is ultimately considered best for them. Since transacting is costly, institutions exist as a means to reduce transaction costs. They are instruments that make exchanges more predictable, simpler and more efficient (Bromley, 2006; Vatn, 2005). One of the weaknesses of this position is that it does not explain how institutions originate, how preferences come about and why they vary from individual to individual. A human is an economic person described as a calculative, self-interested individual making choices under a set of external constraints (Vatn, 2005).

On the other hand, the constructivist understanding of the role of institutions developed in classical institutional economics. For this position, institutions play a role in creating and influencing the values, preferences and interests of the individual. Institutions regularize life, support certain values and protect and produce interests. The constructivist understanding views institutions as basic structures necessary to enable people to act and emphasizes the role of institutional factors in the process of preference formation. Here, a human is a social person seen as socially constructed with choices governed very much by internalized values, rules and perceptions (Vatn, 2005).

Within the constructivist understanding, various strands that can be named: classical institutionalism, sociological institutionalism, historical institutionalism and, more recently, critical institutionalism. This thesis uses classical institutional economics and critical institutional perspectives.

Table 1.8: Constructivist-based institutionalism

Position	Authors	Institution	Focus
Classical institutional economics	Polyani (1944) and his formulation of "substantivism"	Institutions are both external rules and structures that shape the individual	A two-way interaction between the individual and institutions
Sociological institutionalism	Berger & Luckmann, 1985 Scott & Davis, 2008	Institutions as a belief system of actors	The cultural context within which organizations function and the values with which actors are imbued
Historical institutionalism	Steinmo, Thelen & Longstreth	Institutions as continuities and preservation	Path dependence/emergent features of history

			The persistence of organizations after they are formed rather than the facts of the initial creation
Critical institutional perspective	Ostrom Van Laerhoven		Institutional bricolage Critical institutionalists embrace plurality, the complexity of natural resource management arrangements and recognize that the governance of resources occurs through a variety of scales with no noticeably clear boundary between the domains of the local and the global

The classical position emphasizes that institutions are not only constraints; rather, they form the individual through the internalization of conventions and norms, and help create meaning, thereby influencing purpose (Bromley, 2006). Moreover, by developing institutions, individuals influence who they become (Bromley, 2006; Vatn, 2005). Thus, there is a fundamental link between individual choice theory and understanding what institutions are and do. According to this tradition, there is a two-way interaction between individuals and institutions. Individuals create institutions, and at the same time these creations influence what individuals become. The institutional view of this tradition emphasizes the role of both choice/agent and structure. The theoretical emphasis of this tradition is that institutions are crucial for supporting individual human choices, and it is impossible for the individual to act rationally without the support of institutions (Vatn, 2005; Samndong, 2017). In analyzing power, classical institutionalists focus explicitly on the structural view of power. Institutions are understood as structuralized forms of power that empower, sanction and create structures of domination (Samndong, 2017).

Concerning critical institutionalism, a focus on the dynamics of institutional change was observed around its key concept of institutional bricolage. This approach was developed by Frances Cleaver (2012) in the field of natural resource management and draws on the work of Giddens, Long and Douglas to explain the relationship between agency and structure (Giddens, 1984; Long, 2003) and the role of institutions in shaping human perceptions (Douglas, 1986). Like classical institutional economics, institutions are seen as not only constraining but also enabling human agency. Institutions provide boundaries

that actors can, in turn, shape (Bromley, 2006; Cleaver, 2002). This critical institutional perspective was employed in this study to understand how local communities used restructured institutional structures to access forest resources in Mushie province.

Institutional bricolage means constructing and borrowing disparate existing institutional elements to create different frameworks for decisions and practices (Cleaver, 2001a; Samndong, 2017). As Cleaver stated, contrary to the concept of crafting institutions, which suggests that specific institutions are deliberately developed for particular functions, institutional bricolage suggests that mechanisms for resource management and collective action are borrowed or constructed from existing institutions, styles of thinking and sanctioned social relationships (Cleaver, 2001a). In addition, for Cleaver, in institutional bricolage, agency is critical in shaping and reshaping institutions. Different bricoleurs are thus likely to apply their knowledge, power and agency with regard to social relations, collective action and resource management in differing ways. The result is a rich diversity of pliable institutional arrangements (Cleaver, 2001a). This implies that practical arrangements for managing resources are filled with wider social significance and can be traced back to the generative principles of the social field (Bourdieu, 1977). Agency is therefore embedded in routinized practices and may not be conscious. Understanding people's actions and the ways they affect institutions goes beyond tracking practices and social relationships (Cleaver & De Koning, 2015; Samndong, 2017).

1.2.3.1 Local Committees for Development (LCD)

Forest governance includes all the standards, processes, institutions and people that control how humans interact with forests. Effective forest governance is related to having adequate institutions and administrative frameworks to coordinate the various organizations involved in forest governance (UNEP, 2018l). It is through institutions that humans attempt to exercise control over natural resources and environmental regimes (Young 2008). The long-term success of participatory processes may depend on institutionally embedding stakeholder participation (Reed, 2008). Numerous writers have highlighted the importance of decentralized forest management and local institutions in promoting sustainable forest conservation and fostering the development of community livelihoods. Some emphasized the significance of providing community members with meaningful opportunities for involvement, interacting with institutions perceived as fair by local communities and allowing for gradual involvement over time. However, Hajjar et al. (2021: 2) noted that "REDD+ interventions in community forests often modify local institutions through new rules and practices that comply with mostly carbon-related objectives" (Poudel et al., 2014; Bayrak & Marafa, 2016; Duchelle et al., 2018). REDD+ "is being inserted in pre-existing social and legal institutional landscapes which may dramatically reshape and change governance systems" (Bayrak & Marafa, 2016: 5)

In this context, stakeholder participation was institutionalized, creating organizational cultures that can facilitate processes where goals are negotiated and outcomes are necessarily uncertain. The stakeholders were organized to participate through institutions

that represent diverse groups of stakeholders and their views (Reed, 2008). For stakeholder engagement, REDD+ pilot projects focused on strengthening the capacities of the territorial institutions at the various levels of intervention: village, terroirs, territories, etc. At the village level, Local Committees for Development (LCDs) were one of the multi-stakeholder platforms used in engaging stakeholders in REDD+ pilot projects. The institutional arrangements led to the creation of LCDs at the village level with the mandates, procedures and capacities to ensure that the relevant REDD safeguards related to local community participation are upheld.

The creation or re-foundation of LCDs is the key step in the participation of local communities in REDD+ pilot projects. LCDs were perceived as opportunities for local communities to influence the REDD+ pilot project design and implementation. Meaningful stakeholder participation has taken place in the forest sector, at least at local levels, as evidenced by several years of REDD+ pilot project activities. However, REDD+ pilot projects are shaped by the history of traditional authorities and governance issues in the forest sector. Moreover, “unless local and forest-dependent communities are able to secure full and effective participation in the development of public policies on REDD+, there is a real risk that REDD+ policies and interventions will end up serving the interest of powerful institutions such as formal forest agencies, conservation organizations and local elites” (Bayrak & Marafa, 2016: 7). The local acceptance or rejection of REDD+ may therefore hinge on intricate interplays among interests, institutions and power dynamics. In a scenario like REDD+, the connections across various levels – such as local, national and international – are significant. The international sphere plays a crucial role in shaping the framework within which REDD+ is instituted locally.

1.2.4 The political ecology of locations of local community’s participation

1.2.4.1 *Power in environmental governance*

Conceptualizations of power

Political ecology (PE) provides a tool kit of concepts to look beyond the local community to explain resource use and power dynamics in environmental governance. “Power” is not only one of the concepts but also a central theme in PE tradition. The power-centred approach, which often emerges as the central analysis term in this tradition, is relevant to this environmental governance study. A central premise of the field is that environmental governance cannot be understood without consideration of the deep and complex ways in which dynamics of unequal social and political power affect ecological systems. The conceptualization of power is different in this tradition, however, and there are significant theoretical differences between these definitions of power (Allen, 2014; Bixler et. al., 2015; Ahlborg & Nightingale, 2018).

Power is conceived as a resource that can be possessed and directed (power as a resource), on one hand, and as potentiality, a situated capacity that needs to be exercised in order to have any effect, with its outcomes uncertain and ambiguous (power as

relational capacity to act), on the other (Ahlborg & Nightingale, 2018). PE literature is split between two main conceptions of power (**Table 1.9**): action-theoretical conceptions (A) – that is, those that define power in terms of either the actions or the dispositional abilities of individual actors – and broader systemic or constitutive conceptions (B) – that is, those that view power as systematically structuring possibilities for action, or, more strongly, as constitutive of social actors and the social world in which they act (Allen, 2014).

Table 1.9: Conceptions of power built from the works of Allen (2014) and Ahlborg and Nightingale (2018)

Conception of power	Description	Key elements
A. “Action-theoretical” conception of power	PE scholars who answer the question of what power is by casting it as either a “resource” that is unequally distributed among humans, a personal “attribute” or a relational “ability” or “capacity” to act or refrain from action.	Power is either relational or more thing-like. Power is exercised for domination, resistance and empowerment. Constraints “structure.” Bryant, 1998; Peet & Watts, 2004; Ribot & Peluso, 2003; Robbins, 2011
B1. “Constitutive” conception of power	Rather than seeing human agency as the only source of power, the constitutive conception of power “focuses on the fundamentally trans-individual and relational ways” in which individuals and society come to be “constituted by power relations.”	Power is more elusive and has been described as a web, as “capillary power,” and as a “multiplicity of force relations.” Built on Foucault’s work on how power works through discourse and disciplining institutions (e.g., Foucault, 1980; Foucault, 1995).
B2. “Systemic” conception of power	PE scholars who refer to historical and very aggregated societal phenomena, such as historical origins of rule in specific societies. The systemic conception highlights the ways in which broad historical, political, economic, cultural and social forces enable some individuals to exercise power over others or	This is a variant of the constitutive conception of power. Its “basic scenario remains individualistic at the methodological level: power operates on individuals as individuals, in the form of a ‘bringing to action’ or external determination.”

	inculcate certain abilities and dispositions in some actors but not in others.	Peet & Watts, 2004
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The “action-theoretical” conception of power

The main aspect of actor-oriented perspectives, or what Svarstad, Benjaminsen and Overå (2018) name as actor-oriented perspectives, is the view that power is exercised by actors, unlike perspectives in which power is perceived as a force that can flow through individuals without their awareness or responsibility. In this framework, scholars address the question of what power is by viewing it either as a “resource” that is unequally distributed among individuals, a personal “attribute” or a relational “ability” or “capacity” to act or abstain from action. These definitions conceptualize power as either relational or more object-like and as relatively static (Ahlborg & Nightingale, 2018; Svarstad et al., 2018). “This action-theoretical definition is self-consciously narrowly conceived and is meant only to relate to purposeful individual action” (Sarr, 2018: 10). All interpretations concentrate on the exercise of human power, typically in the context of domination, but occasionally in terms of resistance and empowerment (Ahlborg & Nightingale, 2018; Svarstad et al., 2018). This is exemplified in Weber’s classic definition at the beginning of *Economy and Society*, where power is understood as “the probability that one actor in a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests” (Weber, 1978: 53).

In this school of PE, the concept of power is a combination of intentionality, relationality and causality (Svarstad et al., 2018: 352). This means that actors exercise power strongly by taking actions to achieve specific intentions (intentionality), interacting between two or more actors (relationality) and producing intended results (causality). Outcomes typically result from negotiated processes where different actors have exerted power, rather than from the complete realization of a single actor’s will. In actor-oriented power perspectives, power is linked to agency, but this does not imply that structures are irrelevant. Rather, the actors’ exercise of power is seen as both constrained and enabled by various types of structures (Svarstad et al., 2018).

Here scholars also explore how individuals exercise power within the limitations imposed by their environment. For Svarstad, Benjaminsen and Overå, “actors may meet structural limitations that restrict their options as result of other actors’ intentional creation of institutions for that purpose, but structural limitations may also be unintended. These are aspects that are crucial to recognize in the field of political ecology, as in social studies in general” (2018: 353).

The “systemic” conception of power

A systemic conception of power refers to broad societal phenomena, such as the historical origins of governance within specific societies. The main focus of the “systemic” conception of power is based on the fact that human agency is at the centre of power,

but it is an agency that is socially conditioned (Svarstad et al., 2018). Some scholars reflect this conception of power in their focus on historical context (Peet & Watts, 2004). Human agency is both constrained and largely shaped by historically established social structures. In political ecology literature, power is exercised by actors not only at the site of environmental interventions but also within centres of power. The prominence of systemic thinking in political ecology has influenced its focus on scales that transcend local boundaries.

However, while these structures create possibilities and boundaries for the exercise of power, agency often serves to perpetuate the structure (Ahlborg & Nightingale, 2018; Svarstad et al., 2018). This conception insists that “the power individuals possess has social conditions of existence, and that it is these conditions that should be the primary focus of theoretical analysis” (Isaac, 1987: 81). Long (2001) contends that while social structures are significant, actors typically have multiple options, and their agency is rarely completely constrained by these structures.

The “constitutive” conception of power

Instead of viewing human agency as the sole source of power, the constitutive conception of power “emphasizes the fundamentally trans-individual and relational processes” through which individuals and society are “constituted by power relations” (Allen, 2014: 5). We differentiate among three constitutive (poststructuralist) perspectives on power, heavily inspired by Foucault and applied within political ecology: discursive power, governmentality and biopower (Svarstad et al., 2018).

In this school, Ahlborg and Nightingale (2018) examine power dynamics in a case involving the electrification in three villages in Tanzania. Emphasizing that forms of power are always specific to historical and spatial contexts, Ahlborg and Nightingale identify four “locations” where power operates within the Mwangweni electrification program. They perceive power as relational, shaped by actions that produce contradictory outcomes for actors in different positions. In their view, resource governance processes can simultaneously empower and establish relationships of domination (Svarstad et al., 2018).

Ahlborg and Nightingale (2018) differentiate between power as human agency and the Foucauldian concept of “constitutive power,” which can be seen as the pressures that emerge from network dynamics and the multitude of interactions. Thus, constitutive power aligns with the two conceptual frameworks discussed earlier, which consider the influence of structures on agency and the intentional and unintentional effects of agency (Svarstad et al., 2018).

The four PE bifurcations and local community participation

As Allen (2014) presented, there are two main conceptions of power (the “action-theoretical” conception of power and the “constitutive” conception of power), as well as

the variant model of the constitutive conception of power (systemic conception). The tensions between the two main conceptions of power led to four PE bifurcations.

The first bifurcation was the relational turn brought about by feminist theory. In this bifurcation, power is a relationship that can be both repressive and productive. The theoretical interest of this bifurcation is in the nurturing and supportive aspects of power as a capacity to empower or transform oneself or others (Allen, 2002; Allen, 2014). This reconceptualization of power as a capacity or ability – specifically, the capacity to empower or transform oneself and others – tended to understand power not as power-over but as power-to (Allen, 2014). Therefore, empowerment is defined as “a process through which individuals, as well as local groups and communities, identify and shape their lives and the kind of society in which they live” (Slocum et al., 1995). This conception of power as transformative and empowering is also a prominent theme in the PE analysis of local community participation in natural resource governance, but it focused on power understood in terms of an oppressive or unjust power-over relationship and a tendency to place dominance and empowerment in opposition (Ahlborg & Nightingale, 2018).

The second bifurcation was the idea of constitutive power as pressures emerging out of multiplicities of interactions. PE scholars borrowed this from works on “socio-nature,” which emphasized the continuous and mutual production of people and their natural environments. The key argument is that the locus of power is decentred into relational dynamics rather than individuals. There are broader and more elusive mechanisms and processes whereby power relations are (re)produced, beyond the exercise of power by individuals (Ahlborg & Nightingale, 2018).

The third bifurcation is drawn from Foucault’s ideas about disciplinary power and Butler’s work on “performativity.” It explains the mechanisms whereby the exercise of power is ambiguous and produces contradictory outcomes in many instances. The integration of these ideas into PE literature was especially important as it led to a body of theoretical and empirical work that managed to capture the “paradox of local community participation.” The outcomes of local community participation can be ambiguous or contradictory.

The fourth bifurcation emerged from work on the topics of “authority” and “governmentality.” The concept of authority leads to the understanding of the dynamics created by “people’s attempts to secure rights to natural resources by having their access claims recognized as legitimate property by a politico-legal institution.” For Sikor and Lund (2009), authority is the capacity of politico-legal institutional actors to influence other social actors and refers to “an instance of power that is associated with at least a minimum of voluntary compliance.” The crucial insight from this bifurcation is that those who seek to exercise power as authority are not necessarily successful. The exercise of power can act to legitimize their authority or to offer openings to dominated groups to assert their claims in new ways (Ahlborg & Nightingale, 2018). In the second article, it was observed that the exercise of power by the local community through the institutional arrangement created an opening for other actors to secure access to benefits.

In this thesis, the framework used highlights the interplay between human agency and constitutive power that enables and constrains actors in their attempts to exercise power. As Ahlborg and Nightingale (2018) suggested, there is a compelling argument for not choosing one of the two main conceptions of power and for trying to understand how power is dynamic, never held, and produced in encounters between spaces, actors, institutions and practices. Since power is relational, emergent and contingent, the thesis attempts to capture the emergence of local community power in environmental governance.

1.2.4.2 The emergence of local community power in environmental governance (Ahlborg and Nightingale's "four locations of power")

Local community participation in REDD+ pilot projects should be defined as the multiple, dynamic and situated moments when local community power emerges. The central premise of this approach is that local community agency and constitutive power interact to determine how local communities are included in REDD+ projects. Local community power is used, internalized, rejected and modified in relation to other actors. The study of local community power should focus on where, how and with what outcomes local communities should be included in REDD+ projects, rather than whether or not they "have" power. With this understanding of local participation in terms of power and the goals to be achieved with that power, it is important to understand how local communities use power to achieve REDD+ pilot project outcomes. First, however, it is critical to identify the moments when local community power emerged and was exercised. From their study of a rural electrification project in Tanzania, Ahlborg and Nightingale (2018) proposed what they called four "locations" (distinct conceptual contexts or levels) in resource governance projects where local community power "emerges" or is made manifest:

- The first location is concerned with **knowledge** and ontologies. The power in this location is related to "how dominant actors shape resource governance projects based on different knowledges and according to certain '**logics**' around what is true and desired: world views and assumptions underlying project interventions regarding what is the problem/situation, what should be protected / maintained / changed / achieved, and how this is to be done" (Ahlborg & Nightingale, 2017: 12). The interactions around the local community's participation in the project's conception or design shaped their power and how they would exercise it. The importance of recognizing and protecting local communities' traditional knowledge in the design and implementation of REDD+ projects was re-emphasized in the Cancun safeguards (Safeguard C).
- The contingent manifestation of these assemblages in dynamic system configurations is the second location. The power in this location is related to these configurations, which include the project's key elements: the actors and their networks; the (natural and material) resources; the activities and practices that constitute the core means by which goals are to be achieved; and the institutions mobilized and established to govern the use of resources. As elements are repositioned and reorganized in relation to one another and the context,

configurations change (Ahlborg & Nightingale, 2017: 12). The institutionalization of local community participation is critical to the emergence of its power. “To characterize community participation in the REDD+ pilot project, it is important to assess the local **institutional arrangements** for project implementation” (Samndong, 2018: 401). The structuring of Local Committees for Development (LCD – in French, Comité Local de Développement,) was one of the specific moments of the emergence of local community power where the exercise of local community power was translated into institutional arrangements. The configuration of the LCD shows how local community power works through a multitude of interactions. It captures both the power that emerges from local community agency and the power that emerges from a multitude of interactions. The configuration of local community involvement was embodied (in LCD) because of processes of translation, negotiation and compromise, as well as manifestations of ongoing disputes.

- The third location is access and entitlements. Power here refers to the processes by which actors seek to access, control and benefit from the available resource system. The process of accessing resources illustrates in great detail the interplay between human agency and constitutive power (Ahlborg & Nightingale, 2017: 12). Sharing the benefits is one of the cornerstones of the power of local communities in REDD+ pilot projects. “It is widely recognised that the conservation of tropical forests largely depends on incentivising and supporting the countries that host these forests and the people who live and work in them. It is also recognised that incentive mechanisms such as REDD+ can quite substantially increase benefit flows to those who depend upon the forest to generate income or to subsist” (Gebara, 2013: 475). The dynamics around controlling these flows shaped the power created by the **benefit-sharing** mechanism. The main focus at their third location is the process of accessing resources. The position of the local community to benefit from the REDD+ pilot project is key for this third location. The aim is to understand how the local community is positioned to benefit from the REDD+ pilot within the power networks configuring access to the benefits of the REDD+ pilots in Mushie. The dynamic analysis of local community participation considers the different access conditions. This helps clarify patterns of resource allocation, points of struggle for power and authority and ways in which notions of power networks and power clusters create powerbrokers that shape local community participation in the REDD+ pilot project. Hence, the multitude of interactions around the benefits of REDD+ create a constitutive pressure that shapes the ability of the local community to access, maintain and control the benefits of REDD+.
- The fourth location where power arises is in people’s everyday lives. Power is related to the **consequences** of how access and use of resources are organized at multiple levels, from the individual through the family, the group, the community and in relation to the surrounding society (Ahlborg & Nightingale, 2017: 12). The way these benefits are distributed shapes the exercise of power by local communities. As Ahlborg and Nightingale noted, resource governance projects

often have unintended consequences and messy outcomes that stem from how intended actions are combined in unexpected ways with constitutive pressures beyond the control of the project implementers (2017: 12).

This framework can be used as a generic methodological entry point to study how power relations and resource governance projects are co-constituted. The four locations are useful for zooming in on the specific moments or contexts in which local community power emerges.

1.2.4.3 Political ecology of local community participation

PE offers a valuable approach to understanding the local community in forest governance projects and their impacts. It pays attention to the power relations that shape environmental changes. In this thesis, the PE framework examines local community power in the REDD+ pilot project from the concepts of power developed by Allen (2014) and the four locations of power developed by Ahlborg and Nightingale (2018). This PE framework will contribute to theorizing local community involvement in natural resource governance by providing empirical examples of the four locations of local community power. In this way, the thesis challenges and updates the prominent interpretations of local community involvement in natural resource governance developed in participation typologies (e.g., Reed, 2008). Stakeholder involvement is supported by a philosophy that emphasizes empowerment, equity, trust and learning. In this thesis, the exercise of power by the stakeholder is used as the basis for stakeholder participation. The idea was to identify where and how power is exercised and with what effects, rather than establishing a simple linear formulation of whether or not people have power.

The framework offers three levels of local community participation analysis:

- Stakeholder mapping is the first level. Multi-stakeholder engagement is essential for effective governance of natural resources and the achievement of desired social and environmental goals. Mapping stakeholders helps to clarify the issues of who can and cannot use what, how and when. Locating local communities that are (re)positioning themselves within this governance is immensely helpful in understanding the motivations for local community participation and their different expectations of their participation. This step encompasses the central elements of the project: actors, their interests, the bundles of power that are central means by which their goals are to be achieved and the institutional arrangements that are to be established. Local communities' participation as forest-dependent communities is the first level of local community participation analysis. Forests and village commons are important sources of supplemental livelihoods and basic needs for rural households in many parts of the world. The local community's stake in natural resource management is higher than that of other stakeholders, making it a key player in forest management. However, these dispositional abilities of the local community do not mean that they hold power, because power is relational,

embodied and encoded in institutions. To locate this power, the moments or situations in which power emerges are crucial. However, stakeholder mapping is still the entry point to understanding the power of the local community, as it puts stakeholders and their interests before the rules of the game.

- The “locations of local community power” framework is the second level of analysis of community participation. The framework is based on an empirical case study of the workings of power within the four locations: knowledge and logics, institutional arrangements, benefit-sharing plan, and its consequences. The purpose of selecting these locations is to answer the question of where local community power arises in the processes of local community participation in natural resource governance. In these locations, specific moments or situations pointed to the emergence of local community power in encounters between the local community and other stakeholders.
- The “paradox of local community participation” is the third level. The emergence of local community power produces contradictory and ambiguous effects. The expectation of community involvement is the emergence of a transformative or empowering local community power. The exercise of local community power is difficult to control because the elusive, contingent and ambiguous nature of power is revealed in encounters with other participants. By drawing attention to the multitude of interactions between the local community and other stakeholders when encountering the knowledge and logics that inform the REDD+ pilot project, the institutions that organize local community participation and the mechanism that distributes the benefits, the framework does not seek to explain the attribution of power to the local community, but to explain those contradictory and ambiguous effects produced by the local community’s exercise of power within the confines of these different logics, institutions and mechanisms. While the REDD+ pilot project expects to show the transformative impact of local community empowerment, the local community may be disempowered through the elitist control and capture of local community participation. As a result, the REDD+ project may not achieve its environmental goals and may confirm the participation of local communities as merely rhetoric.

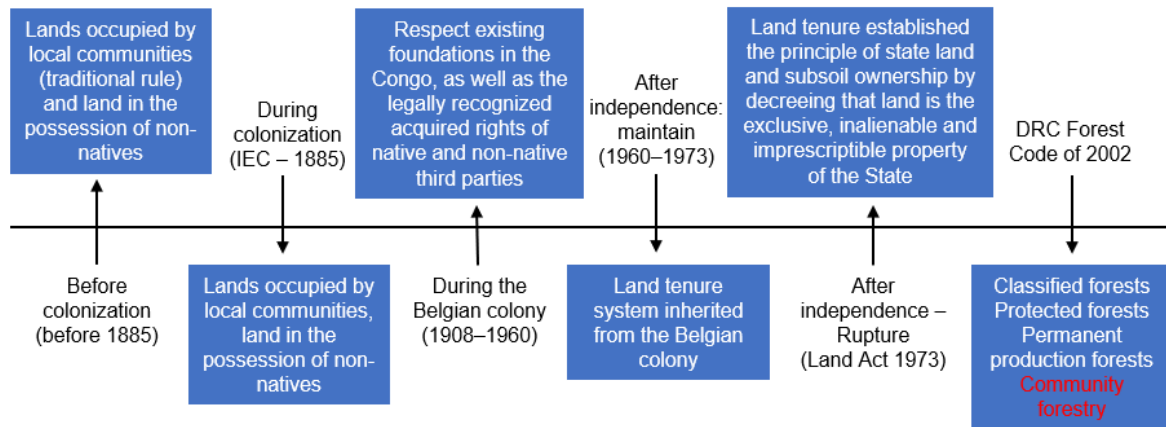
1.3 The study area

1.3.1 Local communities and forest governance in the DRC

It is important to provide a structural explanation of forest governance in the DRC. Having sufficient knowledge about the context and dynamics in the DRC is essential. As Marx put it, “Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past” (1852: 5). Human agency is constrained and largely shaped by historically established social structures. While these structures create the possibilities and limits for the exercise of power, human agency often reinforces these

structures. In the DRC, the participation of local communities in forest governance has been shaped by the historical context.

Figure 2: Historical context – Local communities and forests



- **Pre-colonial era (before 1885)**

In 1870, the vast majority of sub-Saharan Africa was still governed by diverse African polities. In the Congo Basin, such polities had a long history. Before the arrival of colonial powers, land in what is now the DRC was predominantly managed through customary systems (Kengoum et al., 2020; Lonu et al., 2017; Amani, 2008). Large parts of eastern Congo were characterized by stratified social structures which regulated access rights to customary-held land in return for rent. Local communities held land collectively, and usage rights were determined by traditions and lineage. Chiefs and community leaders played a crucial role in allocating land and resolving disputes. As noted by Mutombo and Trefon, “Customary land tenure systems were based on community consensus and respected social hierarchies” (2006). The arrival of Portuguese navigators at the mouth of the Congo River in the 1480s heralded two types of land: land occupied by the Indigenous people, which at the time meant local communities governed by customary law, and land occupied by European traders and missionaries (Dutch, Portuguese and English settlers), based on contracts made with Indigenous chiefs.

- **Colonial period under the Congo Free State (EIC)**

In 1884, Belgian King Leopold authored a unique chapter in global colonial history, establishing himself as the “proprietor” of a vast private colony known as the Congo Free State. The Berlin Conference (1884-1885) granted him this right, and the sovereign of the newly established Congo Free State dedicated the necessary resources to exploration and military expeditions. The imposition of Belgian colonial rule in the late 19th century brought significant changes. The colonial administration introduced a legal framework that prioritized state ownership and control over land (Kengoum et al., 2020; Lonu et al., 2017; Amani, 2008). Large tracts were expropriated for commercial agriculture, mining and

other extractive industries, often disregarding customary land rights. “Colonial policies led to the alienation of large areas of land from local communities, fundamentally altering traditional land tenure systems” (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2002). The Belgian king organized the Congo Free State to expand its economy in order to cover the interests and amortizations of the amounts spent on it. The EIC government implemented a vigorous land policy with the institution of a land tenure system that it considered to be simple and clear and that would provide property with the same legal guarantees as in so-called “civilized” states. King Leopold enacted the Ordinance on the Administration of the Congo (July 1, 1885) establishing the broad outlines of land tenure in the Congo and decrees on August 22, 1885, September 14, 1886, and June 3, 1906, leading to a new conception of Indigenous rights in Congo. It was the ordinance of July 1885 that imported European-style property rights to the Congo Free State, establishing three features of land tenure:

- ✓ The Congo Free State recognized Indigenous ownership of land occupied collectively or individually, in accordance with their traditional practices (extensive farming, grazing and housing) and subject to custom.
- ✓ The Congo Free State registered and brought under state law the lands acquired by European traders and missionaries under valid contracts entered into prior to July 1, 1885.
- ✓ The Congo Free State asserted that the rest of the land was vacant land and henceforth part of the State domain and placed part of it under private domain.

Colonization led to the expropriation of almost all the land of the communities in the DRC. The new legislation of the Congo Free State, which established colonial structures, imposed an individualistic conception of land ownership on the natives.

- **Colonial period as a Belgian colony**

Following public exposure of widespread atrocities committed by his agents, the Belgian king decided to sell “his” colony to the Belgian State. In 1908, the Congo Free State became a colony of Belgium, known as the Belgian Congo. On the annexation of the Congo Free State, the Kingdom of Belgium committed to respecting the existing practices in Congo, as well as the legally recognized rights acquired by third parties, both local communities and European settlers. The colonial land policy proved to be more restrictive, however. The Decree of July 20, 1920, was adopted to preserve the heritage of the Belgian colony by avoiding granting agricultural and industrial land in full ownership (Kengoum et al., 2020; Lonu et al., 2017; Amani, 2008).

- **Post-independence era: Maintenance**

According to Article 2 of the Congolese Fundamental Law of May 19, 1960, regarding the structures of Congo, the laws, decrees, and legislative ordinances, their implementing measures and all regulatory provisions existing as of June 30, 1960, were to remain in effect until expressly repealed. This provision essentially continued the land tenure

system inherited from the Belgian colony (Kengoum et al., 2020; Lonu et. al., 2017; Amani, 2008).

Following independence in 1960, the DRC attempted to reform land policies to reconcile customary and statutory systems. However, these efforts were frequently hindered by political instability and bureaucratic inefficiencies. Conflicts over land ownership and use became more pronounced, contributing to social tensions and, in some cases, violence. According to Turner, “The post-independence government faced immense challenges in harmonizing customary and statutory land laws, leading to persistent ambiguities and disputes” (2007).

- **Post-independence era: Discontinuation**

The discontinuation of the colonial land tenure system occurred gradually (Kengoum et al., 2020; Lonu et. al., 2017; Amani, 2008).

Land tenure before the Land Law

In 1966, by Ordinance-law no. 66/343 of June 7, 1966, commonly known as the “Bakajika” law, in reference to its parliamentary promoter, the legislator decided to carry out an audit of the development of land transferred and granted by its owners, in order to take the necessary measures (Kifwabala Tekilezaya, 2003).

Article 1 of this order stipulates that “the Democratic Republic of Congo Democratic Republic of Congo regains full and free disposal of all its land, forestry and mining land, forestry and mining rights granted or transferred before 30 June 1960 to third parties, whether natural or legal entities.”

This ordinance-law guaranteed the Democratic Republic of Congo full ownership rights over its land and full sovereignty over land, forestry and mining rights throughout its territory. It cancelled all the transfers and concessions successively granted by the Congo Free State, the Belgian colony and in all other capacities before June 30, 1960. However, the ordinance failed to innovate in terms of land rights and make a clean break with the colonial conception of land ownership (Kengoum et al., 2020; Lonu et. al., 2017; Amani, 2008).

The Land Law of 1973

Adopted in 1973, Law no. 73-021 on the general property regime, the land and real estate regime and the security regime forms the basis of the current Congolese land regime. Under this law, the Congolese State is the sole owner of the soil and subsoil, making them its exclusive, inalienable and imprescriptible property. Under the terms of this law, the Congolese, as natural or legal persons, only have the right to be the perpetual or ordinary leaseholder or the owner of the property. This law nevertheless allowed private individuals, without becoming landowners, to obtain lands in the private domain of the Congolese State (Kengoum et al., 2020; Lonu et. al., 2017; Amani, 2008).

The Congolese Land Law of July 20, 1973, introduced the *domanialisation* (recovery) of all land by the Congolese State (art. 53 of the law of July 20, 1973). However, the 1973 Land Law promised to settle the issue of land belonging to Indigenous and local communities by means of a presidential decree. Unfortunately, to date, this presidential order has been slow to sanction the land ownership rights of Indigenous and local communities in the DRC. Furthermore, the Land Law unequivocally states that “land occupied by local communities becomes, from the entry into force of this law, state land.”

- **DRC Forest Code of 2002**

Until 2002, forest management was regulated by a colonial decree issued in April 1949. As this decree became outdated, it was effectively replaced by a technical document known as “The Logger’s Guide.” This guide lacked clear legal status, primarily focusing on the timber industry and failing to address the comprehensive development and conservation of forests. In 2002, the Congolese government launched a series of measures to reform the Congolese land tenure system (Kengoum et al., 2020; Lonu et al., 2017; Amani, 2008). Law 11/2002 of August 29, 2002, commonly referred to as the Forest Code, represents a new forest policy formulated in the 1990s. This Forest Code marks the DRC’s initial attempt to establish its own approach to forest management, aligning with contemporary trends in Central Africa and internationally. The Forest Code was published in the DRC’s Official Journal in November 2003.

As Kengoum Djiegni and his colleagues noted, “Forest governance in *the* DRC significantly changed with the 2002 Forest Code established by Law 11/2002 of 29 August 2002. The Code was an innovation in the DRC as it aligned the country with the requirements of the Central African Forest Commission (Commission des Forêts d’Afrique Centrale, COMIFAC) agenda and tried to adapt to the country’s socioeconomic conditions” (2020: 13).

Articles 10 to 23 outline three main categories of forest lands, each corresponding to specific uses: classified or “gazetted” forests, primarily for nature conservation; permanent production forests; and protected forests, primarily for local development, conversion and other purposes. These uses are prioritized but not exclusive.

The Code defines the rights of local communities to manage forests they own according to custom through community concessions or community forests. Article 22 states, “Upon request, a local community may obtain as a concession part or all of the protected forests among the forests properly owned according to custom.”

Land tenure in the DRC remains a contentious issue, characterized by the coexistence of customary and statutory systems, which often create legal ambiguities and conflicts. The State retains significant control over land, but local communities continue to assert their customary rights. Efforts to formalize land tenure and improve governance have been ongoing, but challenges persist, including weak institutional capacity and continuing conflicts over land resources.

1.3.2 Forest governance in Mushie territory

It is important to note here that Mai-Ndombe province (previously called Lake Léopold II) was part of the former Bandundu province (created pursuant to Ordinance-law no. 66/205 of April 6, 1966) as a district alongside Kwango and Kwilu. Later, under the terms of Ordinance-law no. 90/046 of 12/02/1990, the district of Lac Mai-Ndombe was split in two, giving birth to the Plateaux district. The province of Mai-Ndombe was created during the subdivision of the DRC's provinces in 2006 and the provincial government was established in 2015. Its capital is the city of Inongo and it occupies two districts of the former Bandundu province (226,000 km²): the Plateaux district (31,751 km²) and the district of Mai-Ndombe (99,641 km²). With 131,393 km², including 9.8 million hectares of forests (Fonds National REDD+ de la RDC, 2020), Mai-Ndombe is one of the largest provinces in the DRC. The province contains diverse ecosystems, including agricultural and savannah land in the south and forests with flooded and semi-flooded soils in the north (Gauthier, 2018). The analysis in this thesis is focused on the Plateaux district, since the data were collected following the political and governance structures of the Mai-Ndombe province as established since 2015 (**Map 1.1**).

The Plateaux district covers the territories of Kwamouth, Mushie, Bolobo and Yumbi. The district is made of ten main ethnic groups, Teke (Batéké du Nord), Banunu Bobangi and Batende in the territory of Bolobo; Teke-sud in Kwamouth; Boma, Nunu and Mpee in Mushie, and Tienes (or Tendes) and Nulus in Yumbi. The composition of the local community groups in the Plateaux district is heterogeneous and has ignited serious inter-communal conflict. The relationships among these ethnic groups have been conflictual, particularly in Yumbi. This highly contentious and conflict-prone situation is a source of conflicts within local communities. Forest governance is perceived as a way of getting community members involved in the REDD+ process, reducing conflictual interactions and promoting better resource management.

The province has two systems of governance. The traditional system relates more to access to land and forests, while the statutory system consists of administrative/political decisions and the enforcement of statutory laws and regulations on natural resources (Samndong & Nhantumbo, 2015).

In the administrative/statutory system, the provincial governor, who is elected by the provincial parliament, is the highest authority. Following decentralization reforms (Art 2. GDRC 2006), the Mushie administrative organization includes 2 districts, 8 territories, 23 sectors, 66 tribal chiefdoms, 4 towns (Inongo, Kutu, Nioki, Bokoro), 19 municipalities and 1,751 villages. An executive appointed by the provincial governor heads each of these administrative units except for the traditional chiefdoms, in which the authority is based on local norms and customs. A territory administrator heads the territories and almost every village has a local appointed chief.

Table 1.10: The administrative/statutory and the traditional systems

Territory	Sector (small district)	Tribal chiefdom (<i>groupement</i>)	Town	Municipality	Locality /village
Bolobo	1	2	1	2	51
Kwamouth	1	3	0	1	148
Mushie	1	3	0	1	141
Yumbi	1	2	0	1	39
Plateaux district subtotal	4	10	1	5	379
Inongo	3	11	1	3	491
Kiri	3	16	0	1	232
Kutu	5	10	1	3	389
Oshwe	4	9	0	2	260
Mai- Ndombe district subtotal	15	46	2	9	1,372
Province total	23	66	4	19	1,751

Source: Territory Administration, CNI

In the traditional system, the tribal chief (*chef de groupement*), who is recognized by the provincial governor, heads the traditional chiefdoms and holds authority over the people, the spirits and the land. His main duties are to protect the people and the land and to bring fertility to the soil and the rivers. The tribal chiefdom is the lowest level of state administration and is defined as a homogeneous traditional community territory organized by custom. An individual tribal chiefdom is made up of many villages and clans. The villages are made up of more than one clan and are headed by a traditional chief or his representative called *kapita* (GDRC, 2006; Samndong & Nhantumbo, 2015; Mugangu Matabaro, 2019).

The tribal chief can be a clan leader (political leader) or a land chief (called *muelle* in Baboma tribal chiefdom) or both. It is rare for the political leader to also be the land chief; these are two distinct functions, even though they are sometimes united in the same person. When the tribal chief does not own ancestral lands or is not responsible for ancestral lands, he is only the political leader. Even when the political leader is not an owner, he is still entitled to part of the royalties due to all the land chiefs subject to the authority of the tribal chief. When the tribal chief is a land chief, everything that concerns the soil, its use and its assignment comes under him. He is considered to be the successor of ancestors, responsible for the administration of collective land. He acts as if he has eminent ownership of the land, that is, without being the beneficiary of the land, he has the power to regulate it. Therefore, when the tribal chief is both the political leader and the land chief, power and land rights often rest in him and he exercises power as a

land chief, a sort of custodian of community land (Mugangu Matabaro, 2019). The BioCFplus mission in Mai-Ndombe established that a land chief covered an average 1.2 villages, while in the Plateaux district, the ratio is one land chief for 2 villages (BioCfplus, 2011).

Apart from these two systems of governance, there are many organizations participating in forest governance in Mushie. Some of these organizations run and manage village-centred capacity building through LCDs such as NGO AMAR (Action Massive Rurale) and agricultural service delivery projects (such as beekeepers) supported by the World Bank in partnership with CU-FIP and WWF-DRC, international NGOs, United Nations development agencies, FONAREDD and NORAD. The formation of LCDs at the village level is crucial to the success of REDD+ pilot projects. The Agriculture Law (Dec. 2011), complemented by enabling legislation, was published in December 2013 and describes how all villages in the Plateaux district can be organized into LCDs. Each LCD will represent groups of two to four villages whose territory falls under the authority of the same traditional chief (land chief) (World Bank, 2014: 40).

1.3.3. Roadmap for the REDD process in DR Congo

At the COP 16 in Cancun (December 2010), the Parties to the UNFCCC reached an agreement on three key issues, namely: the scope of REDD+; a phased approach to REDD+ implementation (“Readiness phase,” “Investment phase” and “Results-based payment phase”); and the core elements of the so-called “Readiness phase” (Aquino & Guay, 2013: 2). The REDD+ process in the Democratic Republic of Congo has been structured around a roadmap consisting of four phases. These phases guide the country’s efforts to reduce deforestation and forest degradation while promoting sustainable forest management and conservation.

- **The initiation phase**

DRC engaged decisively and intensively in REDD+ in January 2009. The country then entered a fast track towards reaching REDD readiness. In 2009, the initiation phase served to launch and structure a national REDD+ process. A REDD decree was signed by the Prime Minister on November 26, 2009. In this phase, a preliminary strategic analysis outlined the DRC’s particularities, strengths, weaknesses and political dynamics, and positioned them within the international context of risks and opportunities for REDD (Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation and Tourism, 2010: 5). Establishing institutions and a credible governance system was one of the key goals.

- **The readiness preparation proposal (or plan) for REDD 2010–2012:**

The readiness phase involved preparing the country to implement REDD+ activities effectively. This included developing national strategies, policies and measures to address deforestation and forest degradation. As the Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation and Tourism (2010: 5) stated, “To ensure that the ambitious preliminary

REDD+ objectives are met, the DRC is firmly committed to preparing for REDD+ over the period of 2010–2012. This three-year phase aims to substantiate a national vision of the country by January 2013, as characterized by three fundamental elements: a national strategy for 2030 and the related market plan, a country equipped and ready to become involved in the international REDD+ system and clear programs for a blazing launch.”

- **DRC REDD+ investment plan 2011–2020:**

The forest investment plan worked as a subset of the national REDD+ strategy. It was designed as a tool for mechanisms and project experimentation, to be followed by the REDD+ program in its operational phase (Kipalu & Mukungu, 2013: 10). It is the reference framework for actions implemented over the 2018–2025 period and for emission reductions linked to deforestation, forest degradation and carbon stock increase throughout the national territory. It identifies ongoing activities as well as a portfolio of complementary and diversified activities to support the implementation of the national strategy. The aim of the plan was to centralize, channel and coordinate international, national, public and private funds to support the implementation of the National REDD+ Strategy. This involved structuring a programmatic framework to accommodate sector-based and enabling REDD+-related investments (The Climate Investment Funds, National REDD+ Strategy Investment Plan for the Republic of Congo 2018-2025 (Version 5), 2017: 11).

- **The implementation phase**

As the DRC’s National Program is underway, activities are being implemented, including the completion of key studies, testing of REDD+ pilot projects and training of personnel. The implementation phase focuses on putting into action the strategies and policies developed during the readiness phase. This phase is also centred on achieving and verifying results from REDD+ activities, because countries receive payments based on the results of their efforts to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. Finally, it involves scaling up successful REDD+ initiatives to achieve broader national and regional impacts.

This thesis is focused on the implementation phase, and particularly on REDD+ pilot projects, to generate understanding and learning about the local communities’ participation and to provide meaningful insights for a careful approach to local participation as REDD+ pilot projects expand further.

1.3.4 REDD+ piloting in Mushie territory

Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, promoting the conservation of forest carbon stocks and sustainable management of forests and enhancing forest carbon stocks in developing countries (REDD+) is an international

mechanism that could offer concrete possibilities for the DRC to seek financial rewards for the globally significant environmental services provided by its forests. REDD+ could contribute to the country's efforts to achieve sustainable development, particularly in the forest, agriculture and energy sectors. The DRC has gained international recognition for its leadership role in international negotiations surrounding REDD+ and for implementing a national process of REDD+ Readiness, led by the National REDD Coordination under the Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation and Tourism (MECNT) (World Bank, 2014: 4).

The DRC decided to pilot a coherent and coordinated territorial approach to combat deforestation by targeting key drivers of deforestation and forest degradation and testing certain activities at scale. The Coordination Unit of the Forest Investment Program (CU-FIP) was designated to “pilot replicable models to generate understanding and learning of the links between the implementation of forest-related investments, policies and measures and long-term emission reductions and conservation, sustainable management of forests and the enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries” (World Bank 2014: 87). REDD+ piloting in the DRC is aligned with the Bali Road Map, indicating how its National REDD+ Strategy could be implemented at the local level, as well as illustrating the challenges and the need to reform the existing institutional, regulatory and land-tenure systems. In the DRC, the decision to go ahead with the development of REDD+ projects was based on the judgment that the country has more to gain than to lose from pilot initiatives (Bisimwa, 2012: 47). The National REDD+ Strategy was expected to be finalized after being piloted in different areas of the country (Kengoum et al., 2020).

Two pilot areas were identified in the province of Mai-Ndombe in the Democratic Republic of Congo making the province what Gauthier (2018) called a REDD+ laboratory.

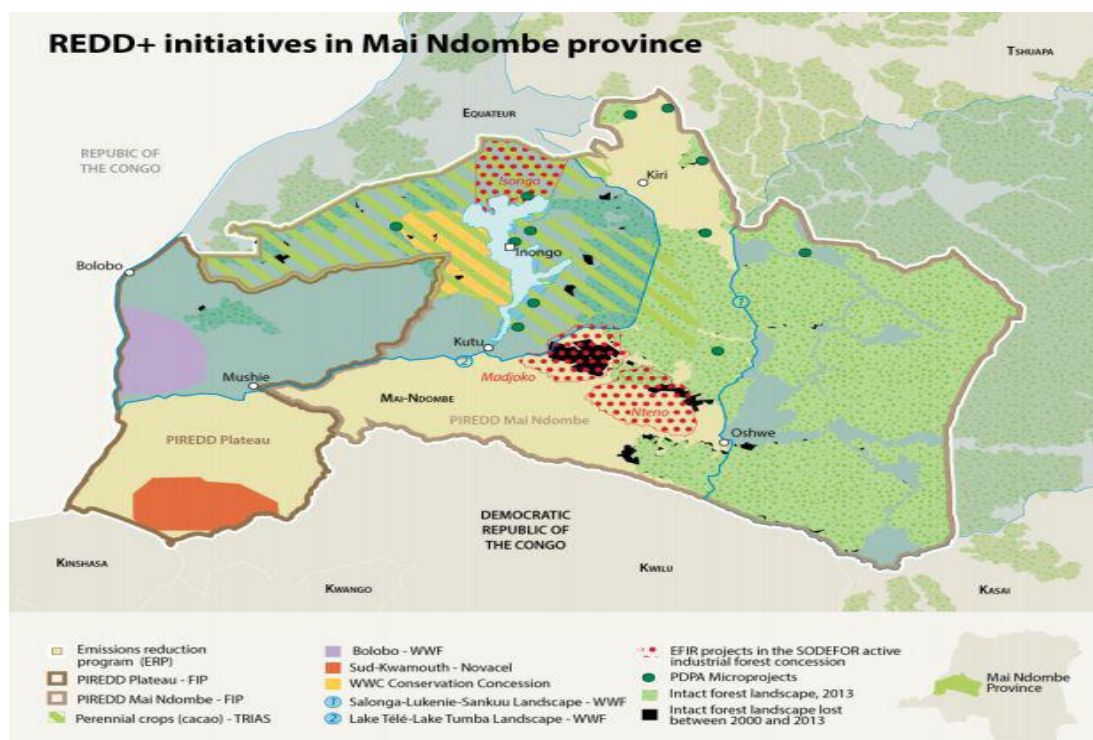
Table 1.11: Eight REDD+ pilot projects in the DRC

REDD+ Project	Pilot	Location	Current Status	Short Description
PIREDD Maniema		Maniema Province	Ongoing	Focuses on forest conservation and sustainable land management.
PIREDD Mongala		Mongala Province	Ongoing	Aims to reduce deforestation and promote sustainable forest management.
PIREDD Equateur		Equateur Province	Ongoing	Focuses on forest protection and community empowerment.
PIREDD Kwilu		Kwilu Province	Ongoing	Aims to conserve biodiversity and enhance community livelihoods.
PIREDD Province Orientale		Province Orientale	Ongoing	Focuses on sustainable forest management and biodiversity conservation.

PIREDD Ubangi	Sud	Sud Ubangi Province	Ongoing	Targets sustainable land management and forest conservation.
PIREDD Ndombe	Mai-	Mai-Ndombe Province	Ongoing	Focuses on forest conservation and community development.
PIREDD/Plateaux		Mai-Ndombe Province	Integrated into PIREDD Mai-Ndombe FONAREDD	Originally a separate project, now integrated into a broader initiative.

The province of Mai-Ndombe in the Democratic Republic of Congo is home to 1.5 million inhabitants, spread over two districts (Plateaux and Mai-Ndombe) and eight territories (**Map 1.1**). The tropical rainforest occupies 87% the land area, but 269,000 hectares (ha) of forest were lost between 2000 and 2012, due to agriculture on burned fallow land and production of charcoal to supply the city of Kinshasa. Deforestation peaks at 8% in certain areas (Central African Forest Initiative, 2023).

Map 1.1: REDD+ initiatives in Mai-Ndombe province

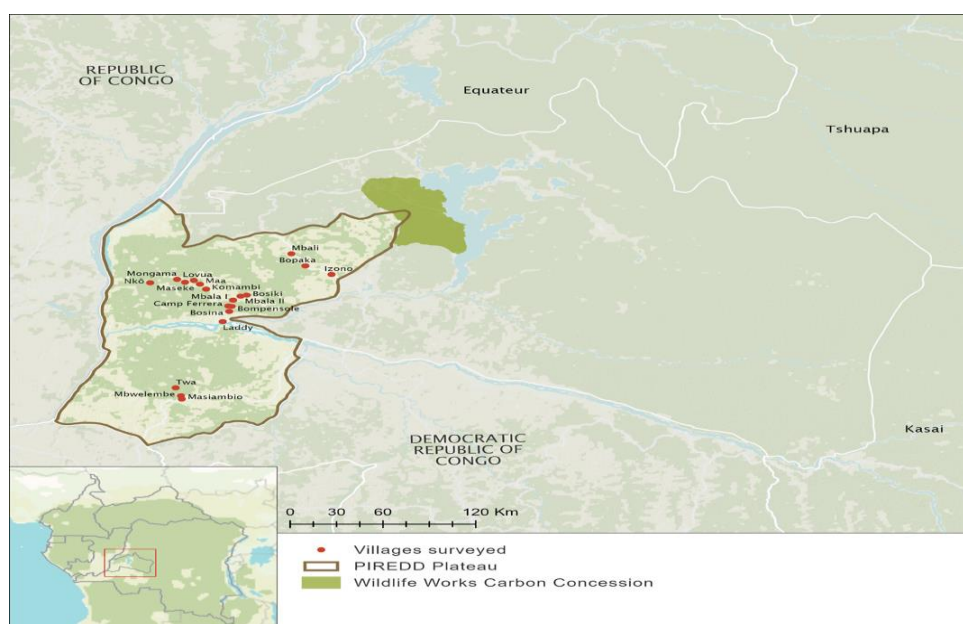


Source: Image by Riccardo Pravettoni, courtesy of the Rights and Resources Initiative

Map 1.1 shows REDD+ activities in Mai-Ndombe province. The first building block of an emission reduction program in the Mai-Ndombe province was the PIREDD/Plateaux

project. As a precursor of the REDD+ pilot project in Mai-Ndombe province, the PIREDD/Plateaux project is considered the most advanced jurisdictional REDD+ initiative in the DRC. It is being implemented in four administrative areas (Mushie, Kwamouth, Bolobo and Yumbi) (World Rainforest Movement, 2022). The PIREDD/Plateaux was one of eight REDD+ pilot projects in the DRC (**Table 1.11**). It covers four territories (32,000 km²) out of the eight that comprise the province: Kwamouth, Mushie, Bolobo and Yumbi. It was initiated in 2016, implemented by the World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF-DRC) and managed by the DRC Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development as part of the Forest Investment Program (FIP), with financial supports from the World Bank. The objective of the project is to promote sustainable forest management in the Plateaux district and the Kinshasa Basin, while improving the living conditions of rural populations and testing innovative mechanisms for forest management in the intervention area (WWF-DRC, 2018).

Map 1.2: PIREDD/Plateaux



Source: Image by Riccardo Pravettoni, courtesy of the Rights and Resources Initiative

Crossing the western part of the Mai-Ndombe province, the Plateaux district was selected by the REDD+ implementers because it has diverse ecosystems including agricultural and savannah land. The World Bank (2014: 3-12) noted that this agricultural frontier region experiences elevated levels of poverty and high levels of deforestation, even while it is of significant importance for its biodiversity. The Plateaux district in the southern and the northern parts of the province forms a Ramsar biodiversity hot spot and has strong potential to combat climate change through REDD+ (Gauthier, 2018; Berk & Lungungu, 2020). Although the deforestation rate over the period from 2000 to 2014 was 0.44% (as a percentage of the existing carbon stock), deforestation in the Plateaux district has been more recent, contrary to Bas-Congo where the deforestation started earlier and the

majority of primary forests have been already altered (World Bank, 2014: 3). The direct drivers of deforestation in the Plateaux district are shifting slash-and-burn agriculture, carbonization of energy wood, industrial logging, artisanal logging and agricultural enterprise. The indirect drivers are lack of land-use planning, demographic growth, infrastructure, urbanization and governance (Gauthier, 2018).

One of the four FIP objectives as defined in the FIP Design Document (July 2009) was:

Objective 2: “To pilot replicable models to generate understanding and learning of the links between the implementation of forest-related investments, policies and measures and long-term emission reductions and conservation, sustainable management of forests and the enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries.”

“Piloting is a way to raise awareness of REDD+ and its likely practice in the future. The impacts of piloting schemes on likely adoption of REDD+ among participating households and whether those households are fully aware of REDD+ goals are not fully understood in a range of contexts” (Pandit, 2018: 107). The FIP was established to pilot a coherent and coordinated territorial approach to combat deforestation. Eight REDD+ pilot projects were initially established by FIP, but the PIREDD/Plateaux project has been integrated into the PIREDD Mai-Ndombe. As of February 8, 2024, there are seven active REDD+ pilot projects: PIREDD Maniema, PIREDD Mongala, PIREDD Equateur, PIREDD Kwilu, PIREDD Province Orientale, PIREDD Sud Ubangi, and PIREDD Mai-Ndombe (**Table 1.11**).

Since 2016, the FIP has invested more than \$US14 million in the PIREDD/Plateaux project in the west of the province, with WWF-DRC as the local implementing agency in charge of technical and fiduciary management. This delegation as implementation agency was monitored by the General Secretariat of the Congolese Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation and Tourism (MECNT) through its CU-FIP team. The program aims to strengthen the capacity of local government and communities to implement REDD+ activities, to improve farming techniques and pilot results-based payments and to develop local infrastructure projects. In 2017, the World Bank received an additional \$US30 million from the Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI) to supplement activities in PIREDD/Plateaux and extend them to the remaining areas of the province that fall under PIREDD Mai-Ndombe (World Bank, 2014; Valiergue, 2018; Berk & Lungungu, 2020). The Democratic Republic of Congo is now transitioning to Phase 2 of REDD+. The outcomes of Phase 1 are essential to demonstrate the feasibility and beneficial effects of REDD+, thereby informing Phase 2 and providing the DRC government with justification to pursue a low-carbon development trajectory that will have significant transformative effects on the entire region.

This project allowed for investments in the Plateaux district of Mai-Ndombe province from 2016 to 2019. The project was approved by the World Bank in June 2014, started in 2016 and ended in December 2019. Additional funding was provided to scale up the pilot

project in Mai-Ndombe province with a new implementing agency, but six months before the end of the project in 2019, there was a “lame duck” period during the transition away from having WWF-DRC as the implementing agency.

1.4 Research design and methods

This study was conducted by the main researcher and a team of three local assistants from July 2019 to December 2020 using the REDD+ pilot project in Mushie as a case study. The territory of Bolobo was the originally planned site at the time of program design, due to its role in the participatory mapping projects. The research team considered the site to be an opportunity to capitalize on the local community's participation in the participatory mapping projects (World Bank, 2016: 214). Due to security concerns related to tenure conflicts in the neighbouring territory of Yumbi and the difficulty of travelling to the original site, the territory of Mushie was chosen to replace Bolobo. Since the project was being implemented in four administrative areas (Mushie, Kwamouth, Bolobo and Yumbi), the research team considered the territory of Mushie to be the best option to replace the territory of Bolobo because it offered ease of travel to the villages and was also the headquarters of the PIREDD/Plateaux project.

The study aimed to situate the local community's empowerment within the REDD+ project. The study was framed within the Ahlborg and Nightingale conception of political ecology to understand the power in processes of resource governance (Ahlborg & Nightingale, 2018).

The study was designed to follow a single explanatory case study format, analyzing the power of the local community within a REDD+ pilot project in Mushie. Although this project was a single-case study, three villages and Mushie city (sites) were used for data collection.

1.4.1 Overview of the research design

Table 1.12: Linking the research questions to key concepts, methods and analysis

Research questions	Key concepts	Methods of data collection	Methods of analysis
RQ1. Where, how and with what consequences are local communities able to exercise power within REDD+	• Community participation, empowerment, institutional arrangement • REDD+ introduction/activities • Governance structure(s), power	• Key informant interviews • Focus group discussions • Field observations • Household questionnaire	• Level/type of participation • Knowledge/information • Local power dynamics / power resources • REDD+ activities • Local perception • Membership in groups

governance structures?	relations and local institutions/authorities • Bargaining power	• Policy document analysis	• Design of REDD+ organizations
RQ2. To what extent have participatory processes translated into the empowerment of local communities that are able to access, control and derive benefits from the REDD+ pilot project?	• Community participation, empowerment, institutional arrangement • REDD+ implementation • Institutional bricolage • Governance structure(s), power relations and local institutions/authorities	• Key informant interviews • Focus group discussions • Participant observations • Field observations	• Contents analysis • Forest governance analysis • Actors and institutions • Local power dynamics • Design of REDD+ organizations
RQ3. How should REDD+ pilot projects be redesigned to better facilitate opportunities for the empowerment of local communities?	• Community participation • Challenges and lessons learned • REDD+ implementation	• Policy document analysis • written information	• Knowledge and use of forests • REDD+ activities • Membership in groups • Participation in decision-making processes/activities • Level of information • Benefits • Power dynamics

1.4.2 Data collection

The research employed various data collection techniques. These research instruments included a household questionnaire distributed to 159 households, an interview guide for 15 local resource people and an interview guide for three focus group discussions (FGDs) with LCDs, all developed by the author. In addition to these instruments, the research employed other techniques to collect data, such as field observation and participant observation.

1.4.2.1 Written information

The research started by collecting written information related to REDD+ pilot projects and undertaking an institutional mapping of natural resource governance in the DRC, especially local community participation. The material included policy documents, legal texts (Forest Code, 2006 Constitution, biodiversity law, etc.) and different administrative

texts related to forest governance. The country's REDD+ policy documents and various administrative texts related to REDD+ implementation were also consulted.

Data were collected through REDD+ pilot project documentation, LCD restructuring documentation – including the final report on the restructuring of LCDs in Mushie and the statutes and bylaws of LCDs – specific project documentation for PIREDD/Plateaux in Mushie territory and documents related to LCDs. The research also collected data through the “Collective payment voucher,” the “Service voucher,” the contract related to Payment for Environmental Services (PES) schemes in agroforestry and the contract related to Payment for Environmental Services (PES) schemes in savannah fire-defence activities.

Reports produced by national NGOs (AMAR) and international NGOs (CIFOR, Rights & Resources Initiative (RRI)) working on forest governance issues, environmental activism and human rights and local community participation in REDD+ pilot projects were also consulted.

Statistics regarding demographic and important socioeconomic developments were consulted through many development agency reports about the DRC, the former Bandundu province and Mai-Ndombe province, the BioCFplus Mission survey in the district of Mai-Ndombe, the 2006 Bandundu Poverty Reduction Strategy Document and the Development Indicators Analysis Unit (French acronym CAID).

1.4.2.2 Interview data

In terms of interview data, information was obtained through household questionnaires in three villages, semi-structured interviews and three focus group discussions with three LCD board committees.

1.4.2.2.1 Semi-structured and key informant interviews

In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted in French and Lingala with 15 key informants representing government agencies at the national level, traditional authorities and local administrative authorities at the provincial level and environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOS), local NGOs, civil society organizations, donor agencies and executive members of village associations in selected village sites. These in-depth interviews covered several aspects of the LCD restructuring process and reflected the perspectives of the many different actors involved in the local communities' participation in PIREDDs in the DRC. The intention was to gather information on the local communities' exercise of power and its effects in REDD+ pilot project governance.

1.4.2.2.2 Focus group discussions

Three focus group discussions (FGDs) were organized with LCD board committees in two selected villages (Bosina and Lobobi) and in Mushie city, to capture the LCD members' insights about their exercise of power in REDD+ pilot project governance. The three focus group discussions addressed interactions between LCDs and other actors involved in the LCD structuring and concerns and issues being raised about their roles as local community representatives and interlocutors between communities and the REDD+

pilot project team. The participants in the three FGDs were selected using purposive sampling. The aim was to select members of the community who could provide the best information about the LCD's role in the project.

1.4.2.2.3 Household survey

The three village sites selected for the research are REDD+ pilot project sites in Mushie known as PIREDD/Plateaux: two villages with a structured LCD (Lobobi from the Ntote Vaka Bonzale traditional terroir in Baboma-Nord and Bosina from the Kembuma traditional terroir in Banunu) and one village without an LCD (Camp Molart from Ntote Vaka Bonzale in Baboma-Nord). These villages were randomly selected (67%) from villages involved in REDD+ activities through LCDs and (33%) from villages without a structured LCD. In Bosina and Lobobi, the lists of households obtained from the LCD leadership show that these villages have 130 households and 630 households, respectively. In Camp Molart village, the list of households obtained from the village leadership shows that there are 120 households. Household surveys were distributed to 159 households in the three selected villages (Lobobi (n=58), Bosina (n=50) and Camp Molart (n=51)). Because of the challenges of recruiting respondents in Lobobi, the research team decided to use a sample of eager respondents from among Lobobi LCD members.

Although Camp Molart went through the LCD restructuring process, the village did not secure the establishment of an LCD because the PIREDD project preferred to set up the LCD in the neighbouring villages. The questionnaire collected data on the perception of households on LCDs in the selected villages, their understanding of the LCDs' relationships with other actors in the pilot project, local people's knowledge about REDD+ and their participation in the REDD+ pilot project in Mushie. Purposive and stratified random sampling were used to select the respondents for the survey. The intention was to ensure that 67% of the survey sample covered people who participated in LCD structuring activities and the rest were selected from among non-participants (33%). Random selection was done with these groups based on the LCD's lists in Lobobi and Bosina and a list of Camp Molart village households. The stratification was to ensure a good representation of the sample and good coverage of those involved in LCD restructuring activities.

1.4.2.3 Other sources

1.4.2.3.1 Field observation

Field observation was also used as an additional data collection method to add depth to the author's understanding of the LCDs' role in the implementation of REDD+ pilot projects activities in Mushie and the multiplicity of interactions around LCDs. This information included tensions related to PES delays, the local actors' panic generated by the end of the pilot project and tensions between the FIP and WWF-DRC generated by the failed negotiations to extend the project with WWF-DRC as the executant.

The author walked into the forest and visited REDD+ pilot project activity sites, the motorcycles and furniture that the administrative authority received, the traditional

authority office and the various services developed by the administrative authority to support local community participation in REDD+ pilot projects in Mushie.

1.4.2.3.2 Participant observation

The author participated in different WWF-DRC meetings (such as the meetings on beekeeping workshops) and wrap-up activities (such as making the video with the traditional authority on the results of the pilot project) held during the “lame duck” period in 2019 (transition period before the end of the REDD+ pilot project in Mushie with WWF-DRC as the executant). The way these meetings and wrap-up activities were organized was observed, along with what transpired in the process, formalities of local inclusion in the process, mechanisms of community engagement and deliberation, the type of information provided, the overall dynamic of the process and the way conflicts were resolved.

Participant observations helped add depth to an understanding of local communities in Mushie and their environment, including interactions and relationships with external actors and social institutions, different conflicts, life modes, social interactions and economic interests. It also helped the author identify informants who could provide insights through informal conversations. This was particularly relevant for the papers about the multiplicity of interactions around LCDs and the local communities’ role in REDD+ pilot projects.

1.4.3 Research limitations and challenges

During the field research, some challenges emerged:

The first challenge was related to site visits. The process for obtaining site visits and consent was rarely straightforward, and the terms of data collection were rarely unconditional (Bengry, 2018). The study sites were difficult to assess. In July 2019, officials from the Coordinating Unit for the Forest Investment Program (CU-FIP) verbally requested that the field study be delayed without justification. Meanwhile, two major events in Mai-Ndombe (political unrest and PES delays) in 2019 may have explained their recommendations. The field research was moved from Bolobo to Mushie because Bolobo was too close to Yumbi, which was considered the centre of political unrest. The security concerns restricted movement and increased costs for security measures and psychological stress. Subsequent attempts to establish field access failed. The mitigation strategies were flexible Planning (Adapt research plans to unexpected challenges) and local Partnerships (Collaborate with local organizations to facilitate access and gain insights into local conditions).

The CU-FIP was particularly concerned about PES delays. Although a permit is not required to conduct fieldwork in the DRC, the CU-FIP insisted on its recommendation to reschedule fieldwork. After careful assessment of the associated risks, the fieldwork was successfully launched in the area of the Mushie REDD+ pilot project (from July until August 2019, then again from December 2019 to January 2020). Although, the local

context of data collection made it difficult to negotiate entry into the field sites, the research team was prepared to adapt research plans and methodologies in response to unforeseen challenges and changing field conditions.

The second challenge was the accessibility of the field sites. The sites of Mushie's REDD+ pilot project can only be reached within a reasonable time by plane or boat. The on-site setup presented serious challenges due to irregular planes and unsafe boats. Locally, poor roads and lack of transportation forced the team to stay in the town of Mushie, involving about four to six hours a day of travel time to and from the three selected villages. This resulted in fatigue, logistical stress, higher travel costs and lost time. To address the unreliable access to research sites, the research team developed contingency plans in place by including local assistants.

The third challenge was related to technical problems encountered in the distribution of the household surveys. To keep costs down, tablet-assisted household surveys were conducted using the ODK Collect apps. Unfortunately, various limitations of the technology were encountered. First, using the ODK without cellular internet service did not work as expected by the research team. Even with the extra battery, maintaining battery performance in rural areas proved to be more difficult than expected. Additionally, in many cases, the signal strength was insufficient to transmit the survey data, and in some cases, data were received multiple times or not at all, due to outages. As a result, the collected data were corrupted, and all the data had to be stripped down. The research team had to go back into the field and distribute the questionnaire again to obtain usable data. Unable to generate accurate data, the research team decided to go back to paper household surveys in March and April 2020. In this case, the IT system used had problems exporting and analyzing the data. This added costs (especially transport costs for research materials and equipment associated with paper household surveys) and led to lost time. Data loss and limited ability to use advanced research tools led to stress related to equipment failure and increased planning complexity. The research team addressed the possible data quality issues by using paper survey.

The fourth challenge had to do with the refusal of certain key informants to participate in the research. Although the research team ensured that all key informants identified at the local level were interviewed, refusal rates by the national stakeholders and international funders were higher than expected. The respondents of all three international funders and the CU-FIP team refused to participate or be interviewed. They knew they were the designated informants for the study and had agreed to participate but withdrew during the presentations and interview scheduling. The breaking point for this was the thorny issue of delays in PES. Further contact attempts were made, but these did not lead to a full interview. The official reason for the refusal is unknown, as the informants did not respond to our attempts to contact them again. Looking at the point at which communications were terminated, however, one factor may have influenced their decision to participate: the data collection context. The two common categories for this refusal were a general denial of interview (statements such as "I am generally not willing to do the interview") and

hesitations about the questionnaire design (statements such as “this question is too sensitive”). Despite the efforts to secure interviews with all the key informants, some of them withdrew. Securing informed consent from local communities and stakeholders can be challenging, particularly if there is mistrust or previous negative experiences with researchers.

The fifth challenge involved the recruitment of three local research assistants. Three research assistants were recruited locally to reduce the workload related to the focus groups and household surveys and to maximize data collection efficiency. The risk of misunderstanding or missing details was minimized by recruiting well-informed research assistants based on their experience as early-stage project facilitators and their experience with various organizations to collect data in Mushie. In addition, they were trained as research assistants to streamline the understanding of research fieldwork and update data collection best practices. There were differences among them. Two were at the early stage of a REDD+ pilot project and one had experience with international NGOs but was not involved in a REDD+ pilot project.

The sixth challenge was related to COVID-19. The pandemic highlighted not only fieldwork risks for researchers, respondents and informants, but also mental health challenges during lockdown. As consequence, the research team has to deal with reduced fieldwork efficiency, health-related interruptions, increased stress and anxiety and need for contingency planning. In 2020, contingency planning focused on moving remaining fieldwork and data collection to virtual platforms, relying on a network of research assistants to complete fieldwork and taking time off for mental health purposes (summer 2020 session). This contingency plan helped minimize risks to the research team, respondents and informants and improved the mental health of the research team.

The seventh challenge was the “*Djika* trap.” Cultural misunderstandings can lead to inaccurate or biased data and emotional strain from navigating complex social dynamics and potential conflicts. There is a false assumption that Congolese people who live outside of the DRC (called *Djika*) have money to spend and are naïve, meaning that every move in the field can be costly or end in a trap. In Kinshasa, the main researcher was perceived as *Djika*, but in the territory of Mushie this did not make a difference. The main researcher was able to avoid the *Djika* trap because he was already aware of this perception, he speaks two local languages, and he has a network at the University of Kinshasa and in the territory of Mushie. Even so, he was not able to secure some interviews, such as with the CU-FIP, mainly because of its critical approach to REDD+ projects. He spent time discussing immigration process questions with some respondents. However, aware of his own biases and the potential impact on the research, he engaged in reflexive practices to continually assess and adjust his approach to the fieldwork. He also established and adhered to professional boundaries in all interactions, avoiding favoritism or dependency on specific individuals to preserve objectivity.

1.4.4 Data analysis

1.4.4.1 Exploratory data analysis

Policy papers and grey literature were consulted to gain a meaningful understanding of REDD+ pilot projects and stakeholder engagement in forest management. Information search activities were conducted as exploratory data analysis to obtain information from documents related to specific topics of interest to this thesis. This included extensive and rapid reviews of documents to identify specific issues such as participants and institutions involved in forest governance (Thai et al., 2008).

1.4.4.2 Iterative content analysis

Exploratory data analysis combined with iterative content analysis revealed the majority of institutions and actors involved in forest governance and their diverse sources of power. Iterative content analysis involves deep analysis to produce a specific sequence of information (White & Marsh, 2006). Iterative content analysis was particularly helpful in understanding the reorganization of local community organizations to facilitate local community participation in REDD+ pilots and the role of traditional authorities in these organizations.

1.4.4.3 Themes and illustrative quotes

All focus group interviews and field notes were typed into a computer and transferred to a prepared Word template. Interviews and information recorded by voice were downloaded to a computer and transcribed. The data were analyzed by coding which statements and narratives were categorized as topics related to the questions in the interview guide. Some data were coded to highlight themes and explanatory citations.

1.4.4.4 Descriptive statistics

The household questionnaire data were interpreted and manipulated using the statistical software SPSS to clean and map it to provide valuable insights. SPSS software was used to analyze descriptive statistics and get consistent data.

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Essay 1

Contested visions of community participation for carbon management: Evidence from the PIREDD/Plateaux project in Mushie, Democratic Republic of Congo

Maurice Mukoie Dikaya

School of International Development, University of Ottawa

Abstract

Local communities can make valuable contributions to forest governance, as articulated in the UN's decisions on Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) projects. Furthermore, the Cancun Agreement recognizes that participation of local communities is necessary for effective action on all aspects of climate change. Local community participation is thus an essential element of REDD+ social safeguard guidelines. However, while REDD+ projects state their desire to empower local communities and make them proactive through participatory activities, many researchers have observed only a token or symbolic transfer of power. This paper aims to better understand and illustrate the origins of this disconnect using the case of a REDD+ pilot project in Mushie, Democratic Republic of Congo. Presenting data collected through household questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions, field observation and participant observation, this paper illustrates how conflicting visions of "local community participation" among the various institutions that organize this participation are barriers to the agency and empowerment of local communities in REDD+ projects. This paper applies Ahlborg and Nightingale's (2018) framework of four "locations of power" in resource governance projects to analyze local community participation in REDD+ projects when it is structured in the form of Local Committees for Development (LCDs). The paper finds that local community participation in REDD+ pilot project through LCDs led to a clash of epistemologies (first location of power) that translated into operational differences (second location of power). Payment for ecosystem services (PES) was promoted as the main motivator to get communities to sign up for LCDs, but LCDs were given no power over the PES process. This appeared to have enabled traditional authority authorities to secure special roles for themselves in LCDs and to populate LCDs with their own supporters. Furthermore, failure to deliver on the promised PES led to widespread frustration.

Keywords: local community participation, constitutive power, local epistemologies, contestation, REDD+ pilot project, DR Congo

2.1 Introduction

The participation of local communities in forest conservation and development interventions has become a cornerstone of environmental governance initiatives. Local communities can make valuable contributions to forest governance, as articulated in decisions by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) on Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+⁷) projects. “The idea behind the participation of local communities is that community involvement should promote desirable collective decisions, enhancing both the effectiveness and the legitimacy of these initiatives. Community agency is at the heart of forest conservation and development interventions’ interest in local community participation (Agrawal & Gibson, 1999; Eversole, 2011; Skutsch & Turnhout, 2018; Samndong, 2018). Local communities should play a significant role because they are impacted directly by REDD+ projects.

The perspectives on the level of local communities' participation have been found to be highly context specific. Participation in REDD+ is perceived at the national level as one of the most significant outcomes of the policy process in the DRC” (Fobissie et al., 2014). For experts from Cameroon, “in DRC, civil society is very much coherent than in Cameroon and they work in a more positive manner with the government” (Fobissie et al., 2014: 2416). For experts from DRC, “in DRC, the civil society organizations are not adequately involved in the REDD+ process. They lack the resources to implement their activities, are often manipulated and play little or no role in the decision-making process” (Fobissie et al., 2014: 2416). However, the fact that the international REDD+ community pushes for local community participation is one of the key impulses behind the implementation of REDD+ projects. The Cancun Agreement recognizes that the participation of local communities is necessary for effective action on all aspects of climate change (UNFCCC, 2010). The 2009 Anchorage Declaration of Indigenous People on Climate Change affirms the right of Indigenous people and local communities to conserve and access forest products (Dirgantara, 2020). As such, ensuring a consultative process is dictated by the need to comply with the international requirements of environmental democracy. In some countries, there has been an increase in stakeholder participation at national REDD+ events, and DRC has taken steps to “increase its presence and visibility in COP⁸ event[s] and to showcase its achievements within

⁷ REDD+ is a climate change mitigation solution developed by Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). <https://www.un-redd.org/about/about-redd>

⁸ The COP is the supreme decision-making body of the Convention. All States that are Parties to the Convention are represented at the COP, at which they review the implementation of the Convention and any other legal instruments that the COP adopts and take decisions necessary to promote the effective implementation of the Convention, including institutional and administrative arrangements. <https://unfccc.int/process/bodies/supreme-bodies/conference-of-the-parties-cop>

international fora by effectively packaging and communicating achieved, current and planned REDD+ activities and moves” (Kengoum, 2019: 3, 2418).

Skutsch and Turnhout (2018) have noted that communities entered into the international REDD+ discourse as a result of fears by some negotiators and observers to the UNFCCC that commercial interests might take up REDD+ as a money-making enterprise and force communities and local people out of the forests, denying them access to the forest products on which many partially depend (Skutsch & Turnhout, 2018). The Congo Basin is one example that justifies this fear.

The Congo Basin, the second largest rainforest in the world after the Amazon, covers about 227 million hectares in six countries and represents about 18% of the world's tropical forests. The region's forest cover is slowly being destroyed or degraded mainly by firewood extraction, shifting agricultural activities, mining, logging, agri-business expansion, and infrastructural development. (Fobissie et al. (2014), citing World Bank, 2013)

This need for “full and effective participation”⁹ of local communities in design and implementation of REDD+ is widely stressed in both policy and academic literature. UN-REDD¹⁰ has developed and deployed a set of policies and practices to advance the participation of local communities. This range of policy guidance supports countries with social inclusion and equity in the development and implementation of REDD+ policies and measures. UN-REDD helped countries to set up a manifold participatory process, in addition to programmes to enhance local communities' capacity to fully inform national processes. In the first (so-called “pilot”¹¹) phase, the community-based REDD+ initiative was conducted in six countries: Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, Panama, Paraguay, and Sri Lanka. The initiative aimed to empower Indigenous and local communities to inform national policy, and to demonstrate to governments the value of community funding instruments and informing national schemes to use REDD+ proceeds (UN-REDD, 2022).

By 2014, DRC had more REDD+ projects than the other five pilot countries. DRC had eight REDD+ pilot projects.¹² Its presentations to the international REDD+ community emphasized the importance of local stakeholders' participation and engagement as

⁹ Decision 1/CP.16, also known as the Cancun Agreements: “the full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, in particular indigenous peoples and local communities, in actions referred to in paragraphs 70 and 72 of this decision”.

¹⁰ The United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (UN-REDD) is the UN knowledge and advisory platform on forest solutions to the climate crisis. <https://www.un-redd.org/about/programme>

¹¹ REDD+ Pilot project: DRC Ministry in Charge of Environment approved and piloted activities geared at reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. There are seven REDD+ pilot projects: PIREDD Maniema, PIREDD Mongala, PIREDD Equateur, PIREDD Kwilu, PIREDD Province Orientale,

¹² There were Eight REDD+ pilot projects but PIREDD/Plateaux has been incorporated in the PIREDD Mai-Ndombe FONAREDD. There are seven active REDD+ pilot projects: PIREDD Maniema, PIREDD Mongala, PIREDD Equateur, PIREDD Kwilu, PIREDD Province Orientale, PIREDD Sud Ubangi and PIREDD Mai-Ndombe. (consulted August 20, 2023) <https://fonaredd-rcd.org/nos-programmes/>

part of this rapid growth (Fobissie et al., 2014; Mpoyi et al., 2013). Critics, however, questioned the effectiveness of stakeholders' participation in REDD projects in an authoritarian state. "Participation is a big challenge in a country where the State has always excluded actors like CSOs from policy making" (Mpoyi et al., 2013).

While participation is perceived by government and international actors as one of the biggest achievements of REDD+ in the DRC, non-state actors—particularly civil society organizations and Indigenous groups—are skeptical about inclusiveness within the decision-making process. Social inequalities and local power relations may hinder the implementation of participation instruments and the involvement of local and Indigenous communities, impeding their ability to achieve reduced deforestation and poverty alleviation. (Kengoum, 2020 pp. 1, 47)

Many of these critiques address structural issues, for example questioning the effectiveness of local participation, "if social inequalities and local power dynamics are not recognized and addressed" (Samndong, 2018: 402).

Employing a political ecological framework for analysis of local communities' participation in REDD+ pilot projects, this paper draws from the work of Arnstein (1969) and Alhborg and Nightingale (2018) to ask where, how and with what consequences local communities exercise power within REDD+ governance structures. The paper argues that in REDD+ pilot projects, local community power is correlated with the interactions (or the limitation of possible interactions) that configure the local community's participation. This power is embodied and encoded in participation structures such as LCDs and produces effects which are difficult to control. Most analysis of the participation of local communities in REDD+ pilot projects have focused on the power allocated to local communities, without taking into consideration the power dynamics between local communities and other stakeholders. This naïve vision of outsiders of local community "participation" has allowed local elites to capture what little power was handed over to "communities" (financial power, but also some decision-making power). The paper also reviews the initial stages of the process, to examine the actions taken by project implementers to include local communities, and the reactions and responses of local communities in the villages shaping the participation process. These represent situated moments in a field of constitutive power, where local communities were not given—and were not able, as communities, to take—effective space in those initial encounters to have any chance of negotiating the power configurations that only later would reveal themselves (or that REDD+ deserved).

The paper is divided into five sections. Following this introduction, section 2 outlines scholarly debates on local community participation and agency and discusses the locations of power in resource governance projects. Section 3 provides a brief description of research methods and the broader context of the PIREDD/Plateaux project in the territory¹³ of Mushie. Section 4 presents and discusses the findings regarding the

¹³ The territory is a subdivision of the province. It is a level of impetus, coordination, support, and inspection of the action of the State and the province. It has no legal personality. Articles 2, 3 and 4 Loi

structuring or revitalization of LCDs. Section 5 concludes with the broader relevance of the findings and directions for potential future research.

2.2 Power and local community participation: An analytical framework

UN-REDD¹⁴ has devised and implemented a wide range of policy instruments and development practices to promote the participation and inclusion of local communities in the development and implementation of REDD+ projects. The 2010 Cancun Agreements by the UNFCCC¹⁵ established “guidelines and safeguards” that would ensure policies and actions taken by parties would align with and support (rather than undermine) sustainable development. Safeguards included ensuring that actions were “consistent with ... national forest programmes and relevant international conventions and agreements” (2.a), used “transparent and effective ... governance structures” (2.b), and respected “the knowledge and rights of Indigenous peoples and ... local communities” (2.c). Safeguard 2.d recommends “the full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, in particular Indigenous peoples and local communities, in actions referred to in paragraphs 70 and 72 of this decision”. Paragraph 70 refers to actions that contribute to the reduction of emissions from deforestation, the reduction of emissions from forest degradation, the conservation of forest carbon stocks, the sustainable management of forests and the enhancement of forest carbon stocks. The actions referred to in paragraph 72 are related to actions to address the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, land tenure issues, forest governance issues, and gender considerations.

The full and effective participation of Indigenous peoples and local communities is essential to the effectiveness of forest governance and forest-based climate solutions. It also results in multiple benefits and societal transformations, such as the promotion of human rights, the development of forest-related policies with high social legitimacy, strengthened democratic governance, the mobilization of forest knowledge, the forging of socioeconomic forest partnerships, enhanced local livelihoods and the fostering of social equity and gender equality in climate finance (UN-REDD, 2022:11).

The DRC National Framework Strategy on REDD+ applied the Cancun Agreements’ “safeguards” on governance and local participation by structuring communities into Local Committees for Development (LCDs), strengthening their capacities as well as their consultation and coordination frameworks, and clarifying and securing rules for access to resources and distribution of benefits from REDD+ projects. The National Framework Strategy envisions the role of local community participation in the DRC as: “to give local communities and Indigenous peoples a special position in local forest governance, and to recognize and strengthen their rights with the purpose of sustainable

organique n° 10/011 du 18 mai 2010 portant fixation des subdivisions territoriales à l'intérieur des provinces

¹⁴ United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries

¹⁵ UNFCCC Decision 1/CP.16 (2010) in Cancun

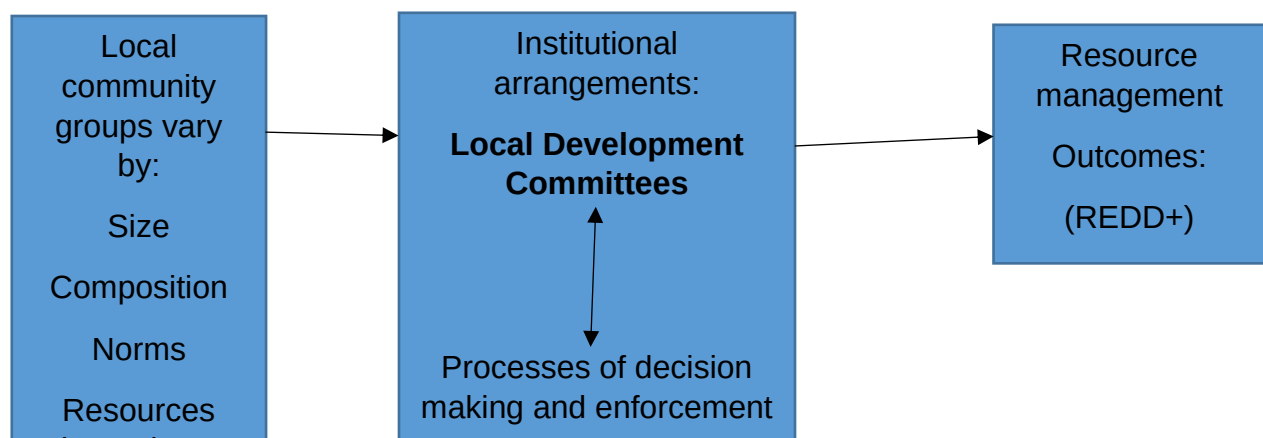
<https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf>. The “safeguards” are listed in Appendix I (pp. 26-27).

and equitable management, including improvement of their living conditions” (MEDD, 2018). At the ground level, local communities’ participation was designed by the local implementing agency around three elements: 1) institutional arrangements; 2) Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) to structure the local communities; and 3) a benefit-sharing plan to help local communities gain access to benefits generated by the projects. The REDD+ project design defines participation as the involvement of a substantial number of local community members in events or actions (institutional arrangements and benefit-sharing plans) which enhance their well-being (e.g., their income) and their role in decision making processes. The key tenet of community participation in REDD+ is including the local community in decision-making, controlling resources, and implementing decisions over their own lives (Agarwal, 2001). However, this conception of participation did not pay adequate attention to how “local community” is defined, nor to the social inequalities and local power dynamics that shape local communities’ participation.

In the literature on environmental governance, the local community is conceived in three ways: as a spatial unit, as a social structure, and as a set of shared norms (Agrawal & Gibson, 1999). As Agrawal and Gibson (1999: 636) stated, the vision of local community related to resource use and conservation should focus “on three critical aspects of communities: the multiple actors with multiple interests that make up communities, the processes through which these actors interrelate, and the institutional arrangements that structure their interactions” (see **Figure 2.1**). The focus should be more on the institutions representing the “local community,” rather than the “local community” themselves, to realize the vision of local community as the centerpiece of conservation and resource management. As Samndong (2018: 391) acknowledged, “Local communities are not homogenous, rather they are composed of people with different social statuses and characterized by relations of power and privileges.” Local community characteristics affect the interactions of different actors around conservation and these interactions shape and are shaped by the institutions (see **Figure 2.1**).

This paper will focus on the institutional arrangements known as Local Committees for Development (LCDs) to better understand efforts to channel greater power toward local communities and their effects on resource use and conservation. LCDs were established to ensure collective choice arrangements that actively involve many community members impacted by REDD+ projects (Samndong, 2018). The institutional arrangements between local communities and project implementers provides the basis for the exercise of the local communities’ power and thus can also provide a better understanding of how pre-existing norms, institutions, and relationships have shaped the ability of the LCD (or other actors) to enact or use their power.

Figure 2.1: *View of local community participation (adapted from Agrawal & Gibson, 1999)*



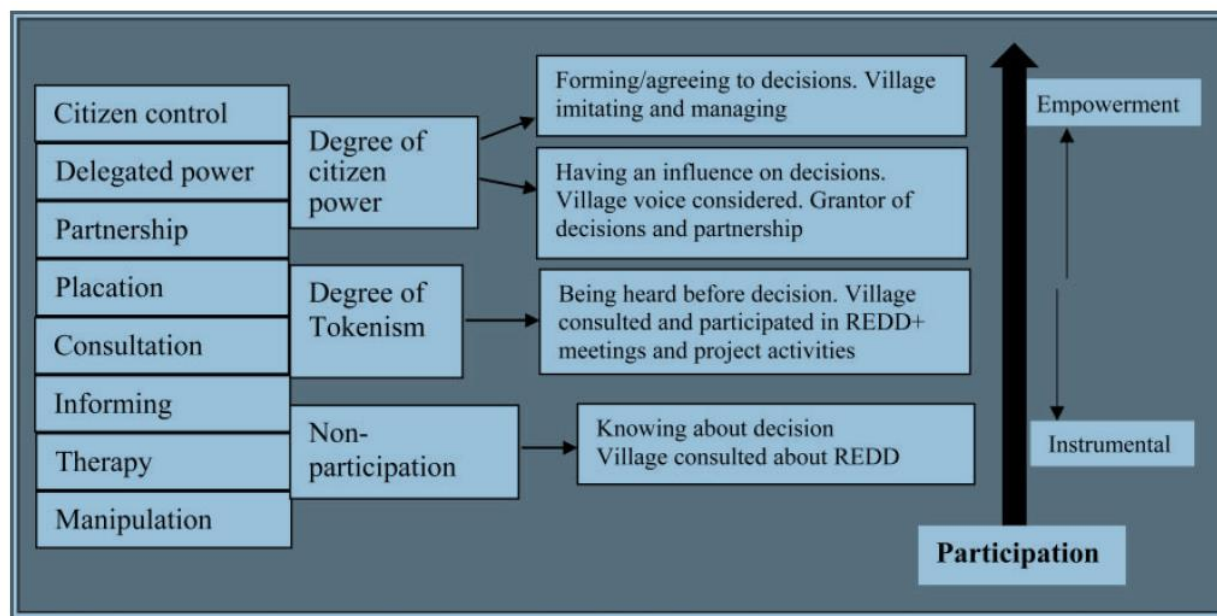
Samndong (2018) studied participation in a REDD+ pilot project in the Équateur province known as the Zamba Malumu project, observing a combination of effectiveness and empowerment participation approaches (Cleaver, 1999; Samndong, 2018).

Samndong (2018) explains tokenism based on Arnstein's (1969) typology of citizen participation, which denotes a range from low to high quality participation and a set of associated actions. Tokenism occupies a middle space between these two poles, and corresponds with actions such as informing, consultation, and placation (see **Figure 2.2** below). Samndong (2018) used this conceptualization of local community participation to analyze REDD+ pilots' projects in RDC. Central to the 'ladder of power' conceptualization is the level of power the local community accesses through its participation in the REDD+ pilot project. Here, power is conceived as the resources that a local community needs to control in order to influence REDD+ project outcomes. This approach views participation as a way of moving between various levels of power. The higher levels or rungs of the ladder represent increased capabilities of the local community, while the bottom rungs represent instances where the local community was used by the implementers to achieve better project outcomes at reduced cost, while key decisions were made by external actors (Samndong, 2018). Citizen control over a project appears at the top of the ladder and non-participation at the bottom, spanning a range from empowerment to instrumental use of participation (**Figure 2.2**). Between these two categories sits tokenism, which according to Arnstein (1969), tends to be the form of participation most typically promoted by development organizations. For Arnstein (1969), consultation is used by powerholders as a means of legitimating previously made decisions. She associates citizen power—which includes citizen control, delegated power, and partnership—with empowerment. Arnstein argued that participation at higher levels is empowering and fair to citizens who then have genuine control and influence over decision-making and broader political and social processes (Samndong, 2018: 392). In this logic, local community participation is the "degree of power (or control) which guarantees that participants or residents can govern a program or an institution, be in full charge of policy and managerial aspects, and be able to negotiate the conditions under which 'outsiders may change them'" (Arnstein, 1969: 223).

Arnstein's (1969) influential article developed criteria for judging the strength of citizen participation in development projects. For her, the central issue was to assess the degree to which citizens involved in participation processes could gain enough power to make the target institutions responsive to their aspirations, views, and needs. This was the degree to which they had progressed up the 'ladder of power' from weak consultations toward strong forms of participation such as shared decision making and control of decisions and resources (Mbeche, 2017: 427). Arnstein's (1969) model is descriptive of

how ‘participation’ ventures are or are not interested in sharing real power, but is not prescriptive about how real community power is won from the powerful or willingly transferred or redistributed. “The typology does not include an analysis of the most significant roadblocks to achieving genuine levels of participation” (Arnstein, 1969: 217). On the powerholders’ side, she lists “racism, paternalism, and resistance to redistribution of power”, and on the communities’ side, an inadequate “political socio-economic infrastructure and knowledge base” and the challenge of “organizing a representative and accountable citizen’s group in the face of futility, alienation, and distrust” (Arnstein, 1969: 217). Many REDD projects envision local community power at the tokenism level (Samndong, 2018), even if Arnstein warns them that “obviously, the eight-rung ladder is a simplification, but it helps to illustrate the point that so many have missed—that there are significant gradations of citizen participation” (Arnstein, 1969: 215). The main problem with Arnstein’s model is that it is implicitly hierarchical (lower steps lead or build towards higher, better ones) and linear (movement back and forth between steps does not really make sense). Neither Arnstein (1969) nor Samndong (2018) really provide us with an understanding of how empowerment might be very contextual (token in one context, but quite significant in others), or how levels of participation could be very contrasting for the same actor with respect to different resources. The present article aims to demonstrate how local elites were effective at securing places within the LCD structure of REDD+ projects, but with various levels of power over either project decision-making, the PES process, or indeed, carbon management.

Figure 2.2: Characterizing community participation in REDD+ implementation, adapted from Arnstein (1969)



Source: Samndong (2018: 393)

The REDD+ project’s conceptualization of local community power (as observed by Samndong [2018]) is a static and binary understanding of power, and is analytically limiting. Power is relational, emergent, and productive. The mere involvement of local

communities in REDD+ projects does not necessarily mean that they are “in power” or “hold power” in the design and implementation of REDD+. A local community’s power is produced through its exercise of power and is only evident in relational, performative moments. Local community agency arises from multiple, dynamic, and situated moments wherein power is exercised, internalized, resisted, and transformed in relation to other humans and the forests. Any local community’s power can thus only be understood as a set of situated and embodied practices. It is therefore crucial to probe how local communities’ power is situated, embodied, and placed in REDD+ projects. In their study of a rural electrification project in Tanzania, researchers Ahlborg and Nightingale (2018) suggest four ‘locations’ that can be used as generic methodological entry points to study how power relations and resource governance projects become co-constituted: i) knowledge and ontologies; ii) their contingent manifestations into dynamic system configurations; iii) access and entitlements; and iv) the everyday lives of people (p. 390). The workings of local communities’ power within these four locations in REDD+ projects capture the tension between local community agency and constitutive power and illustrate the production of local community power at these locations. Ahlborg and Nightingale (2018) here provide a useful framework for understanding how and in which contexts power is contested. This definitely goes beyond Arnstein’s (1969) observation that the eight steps of her ‘ladder’ are a simplification of different approaches to empowerment. In her vision, she refers to blurring or complexity, acknowledging that, “In the real world of people and programs, there might be 150 rungs with less sharp and ‘pure’ distinctions among them” (Arnstein, 1969: 217). She also does not consider different conceptual or physical locations or battlegrounds for contestation. The participation of local communities is not about whether local communities “have” power or not. It is about the emergence or suppression of local community power in REDD+ projects, or where and how actors within “local community” exercise power and with what effects.

UNFCCC REDD+ policies, governments, donor agencies, international support agencies and NGOs use this conceptualization of local community participation to articulate their vision of empowerment of local communities through their inclusion in REDD+ projects (Cornwall, 2008; Penderis, 2012; Skutsch & Turnhout, 2018). However, Samndong (2018) found that based on the ‘ladder of power’ approach, participation in the Zamba Malumu REDD+ pilot project in Équateur was best characterized as tokenism. It may indeed be the case that the overarching vision of REDD+ projects is characterized by tokenism. Using Arnstein’s (1969) lens of local community participation, this paper aims to verify if, from the perspective of local communities, the REDD+ pilot project in Mushie is also best characterized as tokenism or whether the project attained the higher steps of the ladder in its empowerment of local communities (see **Table 2.1**).

Table 2.1: *Characterizing local community participation in Mushie REDD+ pilot project*¹⁶

Participation ladder	Amount of power	Actions	Participation approaches
Citizen control			Empowerment

¹⁶ **Source:** Adapted from Samndong’s (2018) work on Arnstein’s (1969) typology of participation

Delegated power	Degree of citizen power	Forming / agreeing to decisions. Local community initiating and managing.	
Partnership		Having an influence on decisions. Local community's voice considered. Grantor of decisions and partnership.	
Placation	Degree of tokenism	Being heard before decision. Local communities consulted and participated in REDD+ pilot project meetings and project activities.	
Consultation			
Informing	Non-participation	Knowing about decision.	
Therapy		Local communities consulted about REDD pilot project.	
Manipulation			
			Instrumental

Critiques of this conceptualization argue that it is analytically limited in its understanding of local community participation through institutional arrangements. While Arnstein's ladder does acknowledge complexity, and was not intended to be linear or prescriptive, authors like Mbeche (2017) observe that this framing of participation is inherently de-politicising:

...it appears that it is a ladder to get projects from conception to implementation with the least resistance. It is not a ladder for popular emancipation. It is a ladder for stepping over the inconvenience of inclusion—for eliminating politics from what should be a fundamentally political process. (Mbeche, 2017: 436)

The actors within given contexts can exert some types of power and agency, but not all types. It is important therefore to emphasize the multiplicity of interactions between the local community and other actors in the production of local community power and the different visions of local communities' participation (see **Table 2.2**).

The adapted version of Ahlborg and Nightingale's locations of power to REDD+ context offers new dimensions and tools for considering which types of power are important at which stages, and that power is produced (or appears / becomes important) through interactions. Combining the frameworks of Arnstein (1969) and Ahlborg and Nightingale (2018) opens new avenues for empirical analysis of participation in the project by recognizing and addressing social inequalities and local power dynamics.

Table 2.2: *Approaches to local community participation*

	Arnstein's (1969) typology of participation	Locations of local community power (Ahlborg & Nightingale, 2018)
Definition of local community participation	The involvement of local community in decision-making or actions to empower them and sustain the REDD+ project's activities.	The multiple, dynamic, and situated moments of the emergence of the local community's power in REDD+ projects.
Effects	The devolution of power and responsibility to communities including "codifying" or "formalizing" these responsibilities in statutes, bylaws, etc.	The effects of the exercise of power produced by the multiplicity of interactions.
Local community participation approach	The ladder of power: Empowerment ↑↓ Instrumental	The spectrum of power: Empowerment ←————→ Domination
Community power	Power as a resource that can be possessed and directed.	The exercise of power by the local community in the spaces created for interactions between community members and other stakeholders in resource use and conservation.

In this alternative framing (contrasted with that of Arnstein [1969] in **Table 2.2** above), local community participation is conceived as the multiple, dynamic, and situated moments of the emergence of the local community's power in REDD+ projects. Central to this conceptualization is the idea that the inclusion of the local community in REDD+ projects consists of an interplay between local community agency and the constitutive power. The local community power is exercised, internalized, resisted, and transformed in relation to other actors. The inclusion of local community in REDD+ projects should not be a question of whether the local community 'has' power or not, but rather, where, and how local community power is exercised and with what effects. Ahlborg and Nightingale (2018) suggest four locations of power in resource governance projects to identify where the production of power occurs:

- The first location, knowledge, and ontologies, underlies how dominant actors shape resource governance projects based on different knowledge and according to certain "logics" around what is true and desired.

- The second location is the contingent manifestation of these assemblages in dynamic system configurations. This location underlies configurations including the key elements of the project: the actors and their networks; the (natural and material) resources; the activities and practices that constitute core means by which goals are to be achieved; and the institutions mobilized and established to govern the use of resources.
- The third location, access, and entitlements, underlies the processes through which actors try to access, control, and derive benefits from the available resource system.
- The fourth location is the everyday lives of people. This location underlies how resource access and use become organized, the consequences of which manifest at multiple levels, from the individual level to the family, group, community, and surrounding society levels.

This framework offers generic methodological entry points to study how power relations and resource governance projects become co-constituted (Ahlborg & Nightingale, 2018). The first location is useful in understanding how resource governance projects are shaped according to certain “logics,” and the second location permits a ‘zooming in’ to the specific moment where the local community’s power emerges. This article describes the structuring of the LCD as the specific moment where the exercise of the local community’s power was supposed to be translated into institutional arrangements. The configuration of the LCD can show the workings of local community power through the interactions (or lack of interactions). It can also capture both the power emerging from local community agency and power that arises out of interactions and lack of interactions. In the context of this paper, the configuration of the inclusion of local community in REDD+ pilot projects will contribute to understanding the results of processes of translation, negotiation and compromise, as well as manifestations of contestations, that are embodied and encoded in the LCD.

2.3 Methods

2.3.1 Geographical context

The REDD+ pilot project known as PIREDD/Plateaux was a precursor of REDD+ in one of the two oldest districts of Mai-Ndombe province, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). PIREDD/Plateaux was the first phase of the Mai-Ndombe REDD+ programme and is considered the most advanced REDD+ initiative in DRC to date. Initiated in 2016, it was implemented by the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF-DRC) and managed by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development of the DRC as part of the Forest Investment Program (FIP) with financial support from the World Bank. The objective of the project was to promote sustainable forest management in the former Plateaux District and the Kinshasa Basin, while improving the living conditions of rural populations and testing innovative mechanisms for forest management in the intervention area (WWF, 2018).

Crossing the western part of Mai-Ndombe, the Plateaux District was selected as one of the REDD+ pilot project sites because of its diverse ecosystems including agricultural and savannah land. The Plateaux District in the south, and the north part of the province together form a Ramsar biodiversity hot spot and have strong potential to combat climate

change through REDD+ (Gauthier, 2018; Berk & Lungungu, 2020). However, with a deforestation rate over the period of 2000–2014 of 0.44 percent (as a percentage of the existing carbon stock), the Plateaux District is also considered to be one of the major deforestation hotspots (Valiergue, 2014). The direct drivers of deforestation in the Plateaux District are shifting slash-and-burn agriculture, carbonization of energy wood, industrial logging, artisanal logging, and agricultural enterprise. The indirect drivers are lack of land use planning, demographic growth, infrastructure and urbanization, and governance (Gauthier, 2018).

PIREDD/Plateaux covers four of the eight territories in Mai-Ndombe¹⁷ province: Kwamouth, Mushie, Bolobo and Yumbi. The Plateaux District is home to ten main ethnic groups: Teke (Batéké du Nord), Banunu Bobangi and Batende in the territory of Bolobo; Teke-sud in Kwamouth; Boma, Nunu and Mpee in Mushie, and Tienes (or Tendes) and Nunus in Yumbi. The composition of the local community groups in the Plateaux District is heterogeneous and relationships among these ethnic groups have been conflictual, particularly in Yumbi. This highly contentious and conflict-prone situation in Plateaux District has ignited serious inter-communal conflict as well as conflict within the local communities. Institutional arrangements were perceived as a way of getting community members involved in the REDD+ process, reducing conflictual interactions, and promoting better resource management. However, the inter- and intra-ethnic conflicts presented significant challenges in structuring LCDs (AMAR, 2017).

Mai-Ndombe province has two systems of governance. The traditional system relates more to access to land and forests, while the statutory system consists of administrative/political decisions and the enforcement of statutory laws and regulations pertaining to natural resources (Samndong & Nhantumbo, 2015). In the administrative/statutory system, the provincial governor, who is elected by the provincial parliament, is the highest authority. Following decentralization reforms (Art. 2, GDRC, 2006), Mushie administrative organization includes two districts, eight territories, twenty-three sectors, 66 Tribal Chiefdoms, four towns (Inongo, Kutu, Nioki, and Bokoro), 19 municipalities and 1,751 villages (as shown in Table 3). An executive appointed by the provincial governor heads each of these administrative units, except for the sixty-six traditional Tribal Chiefdoms in which the authority is based on local norms and customs. Territory administrators head the territories and almost every village has an appointed Chief.

Table 2.3: *The administrative/statutory and traditional systems of Mai-Ndombe, DRC*

Territory	Sector (small district)	Tribal Chiefdom (groupement)	Town	Municipality	Locality/Village	Implementing NGOs
Bolobo	1	2	1	2	51	Tombokolo

¹⁷ The province of Mai-Ndombe has 8 territories: Inongo, Kiri, Kutu, Oshwe, Kwamouth, Mushie, Bolobo, Yumbi.

Kwamouth	1	3	0	1	148	GI Agro
Mushie	1	3	0	1	141	AMAR
Yumbi	1	2	0	1	39	CIAPAFED
Subtotal Plateaux District	4	10	1	5	379	
Inongo	3	11	1	3	491	
Kiri	3	16	0	1	232	
Kutu	5	10	1	3	389	
Oshwe	4	9	0	2	260	
Subtotal Mai-Ndombe District	15	46	2	9	1372	
Total Mai-Ndombe Province	23	66	4	19	1751	

Source: Territory Administration, CNI

In the traditional system, the Tribal Chief (*Chef de groupement*), who is recognized by the provincial governor, heads a traditional Chiefdom, and holds authority over the people, the spirits, and the land. Tribal Chiefs' main duties are to protect the people and the land and to bring fertility to the soil and the rivers. The Tribal Chiefdom is the lowest level of state administration and is defined as a territory homogenous traditional community organized by custom (GDRC, 2006; Samndong, 2018). The traditional *terroir*¹⁸ of each Tribal Chiefdom is an area that local people regard as theirs, consisting of a grouping made up of many villages and clans (see **Table 2.4**). The villages include more than one clan and are headed by a traditional Chief or Chief's representative called a "KAPITA" (GDRC, 2006; Samndong & Nhantumbo, 2015; Mugangu Matabaro, 2019).

The traditional system also invests power in Land Chiefs (called "MUELLE" in Baboma Tribal Chiefdom), which is a distinct function from the political leadership, even if it is sometimes united in the same person. A Land Chief is responsible for the lands in which local communities live, cultivate or exploit resources (as individuals or collectively), according to local habits and customs. Everything concerning the soil, its use, and its assignment falls under their authority. They are held to be the successor of ancestors,

¹⁸ Customary terroir or village land is the rural area managed by a community which claims to exercise exploitation and occupation rights within the defined socio-economic and cultural framework. Republique Democratique Du Congo Ministere D'etat, Ministere Guide methodologique pour la realisation du zonage participatif des territoriales dans le cadre de PIREDD et sur base des demarches locales des planifications existantes. https://swm-programme.info/documents/20142/1234670/COD_MI_LP_20210531.pdf/7490d153-2dd1-b572-6409-bb6863f41a56?version=1.1&t=1662383893330&

responsible for the administration of collective land. They act as if they hold eminent ownership of the land—that is, without being the beneficiary of it, they have the power to regulate it. It is important to note that the Land Chief is not the land's owner—they are only an administrator, regulating its management and ensuring its governance in keeping with the interest of all members of the lineage community (Oyono, 2011). As administrator and heritage regulator, the Land Chief is the key actor in forest governance. The Tribal Chief, however, is only a political leader when they do not have ancestral land or are not responsible for ancestral land. When the Tribal Chief is a political leader but not a Land Chief, they are still entitled to part of the royalties due to all Land Chiefs subject to its authority. However, when the Tribal Chief is both political leader and Land Chief, the power and land rights often remain with them, and as a Land Chief, they exercise a sort of custodianship of community land (Mugangu Matabaro, 2019). In two of the study villages, Lobobi and Camp Molart (of the Ntote Vaka Bonzale traditional *terroir* in Banunu), Chief Jean Boleme Bokumusili was both political leader and Land Chief. In Bosina (of the Kembuma traditional *terroir* in Banunu), Chief Mputu Isakekani was also both political leader and Land Chief. The BioCFplus mission in Mai-Ndombe established that a Land Chief presided over an average of 1.2 villages, while in the Plateaux District, the ratio was one Land Chief per two villages (BioCfplus, 2011). However, Chief Arsène Mpiansele Bolilanga in Baboma-Nord was only the political leader.

Apart from these two systems of governance, many organizations participate in forest governance in Mushie. Some of these organizations run and manage village-centered capacity building through Local Committees for Development (LCDs) such as the NGO Action Massive Rurale (AMAR), and agricultural service delivery projects (such as beekeepers) supported by the World Bank in partnership with Forest Investment Program Coordination Unit (CU-PIF) and World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), International NGOs, United Nations development agencies, Fonds National REDD+ (FONAREDD) and Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad).

WWF-DRC, recruited as a local implementing agency, subcontracted four organizations, each responsible for a territory¹⁹, to accompany the technical services and give structure to the LCDs. The NGO AMAR was responsible for Mushie territory. The LCD structuring process in Mushie took place at the *groupement* level of Tribal Chiefdom from September to December 2016. Mushie is subdivided into three Tribal Chiefdoms (*groupements*): Baboma-Nord, Bampee and Banunu (see **Table 2.4**). Within each Tribal Chiefdom, the LCDs were structured or revitalized at the village level. The intention was to have a more homogenous composition of local community for the institutional arrangements and to reduce the conflictual interactions within the local community being structured. The idea of organizing the local community solely at the Chief's village was a weak foundation upon which to base local community participation in the REDD+ pilot projects. The distance between other villages and the Chief's village and conflicts between the villages were obstacles to local community participation.

¹⁹ WWF recruited the organization Action Massive Rurale (AMAR) to structure LCDs in Mushie, Tombokolo was recruited for Bolobo, GI Agro for Kwamouth, and CIAPAFED for Yumbi.

Therefore, some traditional *terroirs* have more than one structured LCD. Even the defining of “communities” and boundaries by PIREDD/Plateaux Mushie caused conflict. Inter-community disputes intensified in the process of delimiting village boundaries. Tensions rose between villages as they were forced to accept borders upon which they collectively disagreed (Berk & Lungungu, 2020). Furthermore, the terms used are sociologically equivocal—the concept of “local community” does not have a precise definition and outline; as such it was difficult to determine the bounds of “land occupied by local communities” (Matabaro, 2009).

Table 2.4: *Three Tribal Chiefdoms*

	Baboma-Nord		Bampee	Banunu
	Baboma-Nord	Mushie City		
Population	37 371	57 155	19 833	10 380
Traditional terroirs	29		19	11
Main activities	80%: Subsistence farming 20%: Fishing, livestock keeping and hunting		75%: Fishing 20%: Subsistence farming 5%: Livestock keeping	50%: Fishing 40%: Subsistence farming 10%: Livestock keeping
Study village • Chief • Terroir	Camp Molart (n = 51) • Jean Boleme Bokumusili • Ntote Vaka Bonzale terroir			Lobobi (n = 58) • Jean Boleme Bokumusili • Ntote Vaka Bonzale terroir
	Bosina (n = 50) • Mputu Isakekani • Kembuma terroir			

Source: Development Plan 2009-2014 Mushie Territory

2.3.2 Research methods

This research is based on fieldwork conducted during several visits from July to August 2019, with follow-up visits December 2019 to January 2020. Data was collected through a total of 159 household questionnaires in three villages as well as fifteen semi-structured key informant interviews and three focus group discussions with three LCD Board Committees.

The three village sites selected for the research are pilot sites of the REDD+ pilot project in Mushie: two villages with structured LCD (Lobobi of the Ntote Vaka Bonzale traditional *terroir* in Banunu with Tribal Chief Boleme Bokumusili, and Bosina of Kembuma traditional *terroir* in Banunu with Tribal Chief Isakekani) and one village without an LCD (Camp

Molart of Ntote Vaka Bonzale in Baboma-Nord). In Lobobi and Bosina, the lists of households obtained from the LCDs' leadership show that there are 130 households in Bosina and 630 in Lobobi. In Camp Molart village, the list of households obtained from the village leadership shows that there are 120 households. Household surveys were distributed to 159 households in the three selected villages (Lobobi [n=58], Bosina [n=50] and Camp Molart [n=51]). Although Camp Molart went through the LCD structuring process, the village did not secure the establishment of a LCD because the PIREDD project ultimately preferred to install the LCD in neighbouring villages. The questionnaire collected data on the households' perception of LCDs in the selected villages, their understandings of the LCDs' relationships with other actors in the pilot project, local people's knowledge about REDD+ and their participation in the REDD+ pilot project in Mushie. Purposive and stratified random sampling was used to select the respondents for the survey. Respondents were selected based on the assumption that they possess knowledge and experience with the REDD+ pilot project in Mushie as members of LCDs and participants in (re)structuring meetings, and thus would be able to provide information that would be both detailed and generalizable. The intention was to ensure that 90% of the survey sample covered people who participated in LCD structuring activities and the remainder would be selected among non-participants. Random selection was conducted within these groups based on the LCD's lists in Lobobi and Bosina and a list of Camp Molart village households who participated in (re)structuring meetings. Stratification was based on knowledge and experience with the REDD+ pilot project and availability to respond to survey questions to ensure a good representation of the sample and good coverage of those involved in LCD structuring activities.

In-depth semi-structured interviews²⁰ were conducted in French and Lingala with fifteen key informants representing government agencies at the national level and Traditional Authorities and local administrative authorities at the provincial level, environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOS), local NGOs, civil societies, donor agencies, and executive members of village associations in the selected village sites. These in-depth interviews covered various aspects of the LCD structuring process and reflected the perspectives of the many different actors involved in the local communities' participation in PIREDDs in DRC. The intention was to gather information on the local community exercise of power and its effects on REDD+ pilot project governance.

Three focus group discussions (FGDs)²¹ were organized with the LCDs' Steering Committees in two of the selected villages (Bosina and Lobobi) and in Mushie City (with Tribal Chief Boleme Bokumusili) to capture the Steering Committees' insights about their exercise of power in REDD+ pilot project governance. The three focus group discussions focused on interactions between LCDs, various actors involved in the LCD structuring, and concerns and issues regarding their roles as local community representatives and interlocutors between local communities and the REDD+ pilot project's team (Berk & Lungungu, 2020).

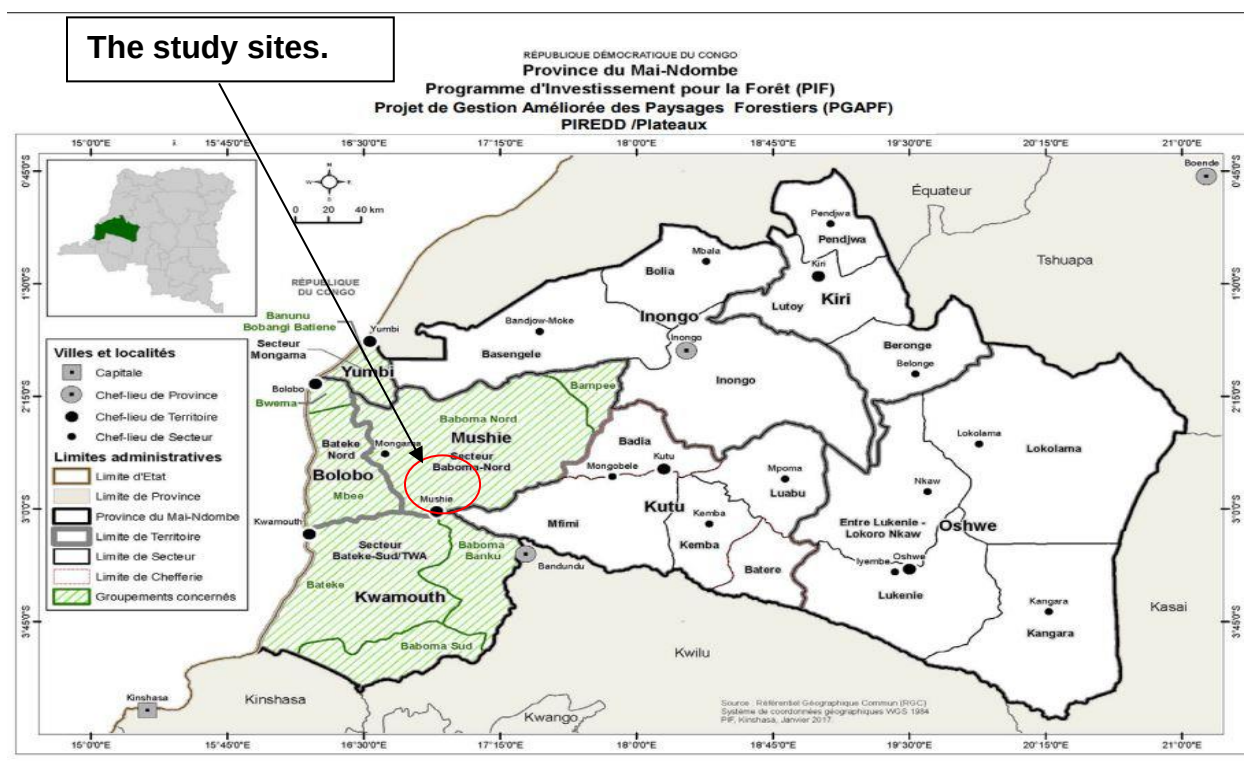
Data was also collected through analysis of secondary literature (project documentation and LCD structuring documentation, including the final report on the structuring of LCDs

²⁰ All the interviews were either in French or in Lingala and were later translated to English.

²¹ The FGDs were conducted in Lingala and the notes were later translated to English.

in Mushie), the LCD's statutes and bylaws, specific project documentation for PIREDD-Plateaux-Mushie and other documents related to LCDs. Field observation was also used as an additional data collection method to add depth to the author's understanding of the LCD's role in the implementation of REDD+ pilot projects activities in Mushie and the multiplicity of interactions around LCDs. The present author participated in different WWF-DRC meetings (such as meetings on beekeeping workshops) and wrapping activities (such as making a video with the traditional authority on the results of the pilot project) organized during the "lame duck" period (the transition period before the end of the REDD+ pilot project in Mushie with WWF-DRC as an executant).

Map 2.1: PIREDD-Plateaux-Mushie



2.4 Findings and discussion: Local community power in PIREDD–Plateaux–Mushie

“The full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders” is a safeguard²² designed to produce tangible and material institutional forms, which themselves then enable local communities to shape and access decision-making processes related to the REDD+ project. In PIREDD–Plateaux–Mushie, the Local Committee for Development was structured/ revitalized as a space where the exercise of power would enable the full and

²² Safeguard 2(d), referred to on p. 26 in Appendix I of Decision 1/CP.16 (UNFCCC, 2010)

effective participation of local communities. In reality and according to WWF-DRC, the project implementer, there was a lack of a representative structure at the community level through which development actions should be channelled and steered. LCDs (or their equivalent) are therefore the only structures to date that effectively address this issue (WWF-DRC, 2018).

Encounters between local communities and different actors in the configuration of LCDs are central to understanding what, how, when, and where local community empowerment is produced. This section, therefore, uses the locations of power in Ahlborg and Nightingale's (2018) framework to analyze the emergence of local communities' power at the introduction of the REDD+ pilot project in Mushie.

2.4.1 First location: Contested visions of community participation in REDD+ pilot project

Ahlborg and Nightingale's (2018) first location of power, knowledge, and ontologies, describes how the views and assumptions underlying project interventions become the underpinnings of what organizes local community participation. Dominant actors shape resource governance projects based on different knowledge and according to certain "logics" around what is true and desired (Ahlborg & Nightingale, 2018: 12). From the beginning, project documents described considering it a priority to ensure the full, effective, and inclusive participation of local communities. However, it was equally clear from the outset that different actors had different visions of how this priority would be operationalized. Consultants Ngono and Mto Wa Sokye (2021:16), who ran an independent evaluation of the project in Mushie, found that the design of the program considered the results of the participatory consultations at the national level.

The original documents at the World Bank level envision a reasonably fulsome idea of "participation," consistent with the dominant thinking about community involvement in natural resource governance (Agrawal & Gibson, 1999; Fobissie et al., 2014). According to the World Bank project appraisal document on a proposed Strategic Climate Fund Grant of \$36.9 million USD to the Democratic Republic of Congo for an improved forested landscape management project, "there will be scope for stakeholder participation in all project components. Land-use planning and social infrastructure investments in the Plateaux District will have *both top-down and bottom-up* elements (World Bank, 2014: 102). [The modalities for such] stakeholder participation, however, favoured "existing mechanisms (Agricultural and Rural Management Councils, Bandundu Provincial Forest Forum)," believing that existing structures would be more sustainable than structures created specifically for the project" (World Bank, 2014: 102).

However, as we shall see below, the economic and institutional efficiency of working through existing structures has the downside of reproducing or reinforcing existing power structures. In anticipation of such challenges, the proposal indicated it would:

directly enhance the capacity of local communities to participate in decision-making on land use planning and forest management, through training, communication, and extension. There will also be a grievance and redress

mechanism for stakeholders who feel they have been disadvantaged by project activities (World Bank, 2014: 102).

Project implementers, like the WWF, held a more dilute and instrumental view. They argued that effective and inclusive local community participation relied on providing “all possible information on the idea of the project to the different target communities” who would then “decide together whether or not to collaborate on its implementation” (Malungu & Akana: 2018). While informing communities about a project is clearly a fundamental first step in building support, the WWF strategy did not allow community knowledge to influence or reshape the project. Malungu and Akana (2018) quote Flory Botamba, the REDD+ Focal Point²³ at WWF:

The decision belongs to the communities to participate. The information is correctly given to them. Then, local governance organs are established for which the communities identify their representatives. Similarly, where there are Indigenous peoples, we ensure their effective participation. The WWF implements no project without effective participation of communities. (Malungu and Akana, 2018)

It is little wonder that this shallow vision, without legal safeguards and explicit accountability, does not impress local community organizers and environmental groups. In the same region, Malungu and Akana (2018) quote Chouchouna Losale, Program Officer at the Coalition of Women Leaders for the Environment and Sustainable Development, and REDD+ Focal Point at the REDD-Renovated Climate Working Group:

These projects were developed in Kinshasa before being shared with communities, that, therefore, they did not participate in drafting these projects or give their consent. To succeed, these projects must include the communities that have managed these forests for generations. (Malungu and Akana, 2018)

According to the REDD+ Focal Point at the WWF, the WWF provided the information about the design of local community participation for validation by those communities. Consequently, local community participation was shaped in fundamental ways by the implementing NGO (AMAR), by the ways that local communities, AMAR, and the WWF envision “managing carbon” as a means to an end, and by their different assumptions and priorities regarding both why and how to organize a community. These elements led directly to the actual configuration of the LCDs, while the WWF and AMAR technical orientation of LCDs shaped their configuration. For example, WWF-DRC and AMAR conceived the LCD as a technical, managerial oversight body of local communities’ activities (forestry and plantation management). For WWF-DRC,

Effective participation and efficient contribution of the rural populations in the Kwamouth and Mushie territories, organized into local governance structures called Local Development Committees [LCDs] ensure the success of the project. Populations focus on plantations of *Acacia auriculiformis*, *Acacia mangium* and

²³ Esombo “Flory” Botamba was WWF’s REDD+ Project Manager in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). He managed one of WWF’s REDD+ initiatives, the Mai Ndombe project in DRC’s Mai-Ndombe Province and interacted with the local communities of remote Mai Ndombe.

hybridization of these two species, intended for wood-energy production. (WWF-DRC, n.d.)

“The National REDD+ Strategy was expected to be finalized after being piloted in different areas of the country, pilot programs are implemented to test certain activities at scale. They aim to provide information and feedback to enrich the strategy on specific issues. The DRC FIP outlines some priority intervention zones” (Kengoum et al., 2020: 48). The REDD+ pilot project in the district was one of eight²⁴ pilot projects aiming to develop

a coherent and coordinated territorial approach to combat deforestation by targeting key drivers of deforestation and forest degradation (...) Based on an initial diagnostic of local drivers of deforestation and land management challenges in each group of villages, the project supported the development and implementation of sustainable management plans by financing various activities including capacity building activities for communities, and in particular for LCDs. (World Bank, 2014: 12)

“The formation of LCDs at the village level was perceived as crucial to the success of Plateaux PIREDD. The law on Agriculture (Dec. 2011) complemented by enabling legislation was published in December 2013, and describes how all villages of the Plateaux region can be organized into LCDs. Each LCD was supposed to represent groups of 2 to 4 villages whose territory falls under the authority of the same traditional Chief (Land Chief)” (World Bank, 2014: 40). LCDs were established for better management of natural resources.

Like all Delegated Implementation Entities, the WWF-DRC and subcontractor AMAR signed the Terms of Reference which include the following objectives (World Bank, 2014: 40-45):

- Strengthening governance for sustainable management of natural resources of the Plateaux District in particular, participating in (re)structuring at the local level (LCDs).
- Capacity building for decentralized technical services including registering the constitutions of LCDs, and providing relevant registration documents.
- Support for LCDs of local-level planning for natural resource use and the implementation of these plans including continuing to support the LCDs for the duration of the project, and allowing them to monitor and supervise execution of the project once an initial plan has been approved.
- Implementation of planned investments in management plans including contractual agreements to underpin the performance of the project activities, in return for the LCDs' effort to protect the forest and savannah areas or to experiment with alternative means of production.

²⁴ There were Eight REDD+ pilot projects but PIREDD/Plateaux has been incorporated in the PIREDD Mai-Ndombe FONAREDD. There are seven active REDD+ pilot projects: PIREDD Maniema, PIREDD Mongala, PIREDD Equateur, PIREDD Kwilu, PIREDD Province Orientale, PIREDD Sud Ubangi and PIREDD Mai-Ndombe. (consulted August 20, 2023) <https://fonaredd-rdc.org/nos-programmes/>

LCDs are considered to be local governance structures, with democratically elected steering committees for better natural resource management and benefit-sharing of rural and agricultural development. AMAR and WWF's local community participation design appears to serve more as a way to mobilize labour and attract more communities to sign up as participants in the project in exchange for payment. In their independent evaluation, consultants Ngono and Mto Wa Sokye (2021) called it "cash for work". They identified two local communities' main contributions: execution of paid tasks (cash for work), here called PES, and land (62-63). Ngono and Mto Wa Sokye's words were confirmed by one respondent interviewed: "the REDD+ project must offer more than other activities. (...) And because the money that REDD+ gives does not allow local communities to support themselves, they continue to put pressure on forests" (Interview with respondent from GTCR Rénové and CTIDD, Kinshasa, August 2019). The participation is more focused on the REDD+ activities²⁵. The local community's representatives within the "formal structures" (71 LCDs, signed agreements, statutes, bylaws, FPIC, etc.) mentioned by the REDD+ Focal Point at the WWF looks like proof of "empowerment", but no real power was handed over, such as control over key resources (much like PES, which had been used to motivate initial agreements).

Several [LCD] members also expressed confusion and dissatisfaction with the project Each [LCD] is supposed to sign a contract with WWF that defines which activities the village will carry out and what it will receive in return. Rather than being consulted on which activities would be useful for the community or negotiating the terms of the contracts, [LCD] members were reportedly given final versions to sign, often without fully understanding their contents. [LCD] presidents of the villages Bosina, Laddy and Mbala claimed they were given a contract to sign by WWF and told that if they did not take the agreement, other villages would. (Berk & Lungungu, 2020: 10)

The forest-centred narrative on the local communities' participation is building local trust and legitimacy in the villages and with LCDs on incomplete information on the opportunity costs for local communities. In many, LCDs do not have choose than to sign. As one participant in the focus group explained:

The issue we, as LCD, have now is related to our collaboration with PIREDD, and this is the source of the difficulties we are facing now. PIREDD decides on everything, even the activities and the amount to be paid for these activities. They do not negotiate with us. The promise of collaboration is not effective because PIREDD decides, and we only execute even if we have a collaboration agreement with them. (Focus group discussion with Mushie LCD Steering Committee, August 2019).

Steering Committee members in all three focus groups emphasized a perception of the LCD as structuring the supply of local community labour for PIREDD activities (such as agroforestry activities) and as an instrument for legitimating REDD+ piloting in Mushie. Neither leaders nor community members put much emphasis on the potential roles of

²⁵ The actions referred to in paragraphs 70 and 72 of UNFCCC Decision 1/CP.16 (2010) in Cancun

LCDs in combatting climate change or in more sustainable forest management (i.e., fewer than 20% of respondents in the household survey in Lobobi and Bosina cited this as a motivation for their active participation). This was also confirmed by a respondent from the civil society organizations interviewed who noted that “local communities were only informed about work they are going to do and how much they will receive” (Individual interview with respondent from LICOCO, Kinshasa, August 2019). The same respondent added that “all the tools for REDD+ governance weren’t ready when the pilot project in Mushie started. (...) The local communities need to consider REDD+ not only as a means of living but also as a climate change attenuation strategy” (Ibid).

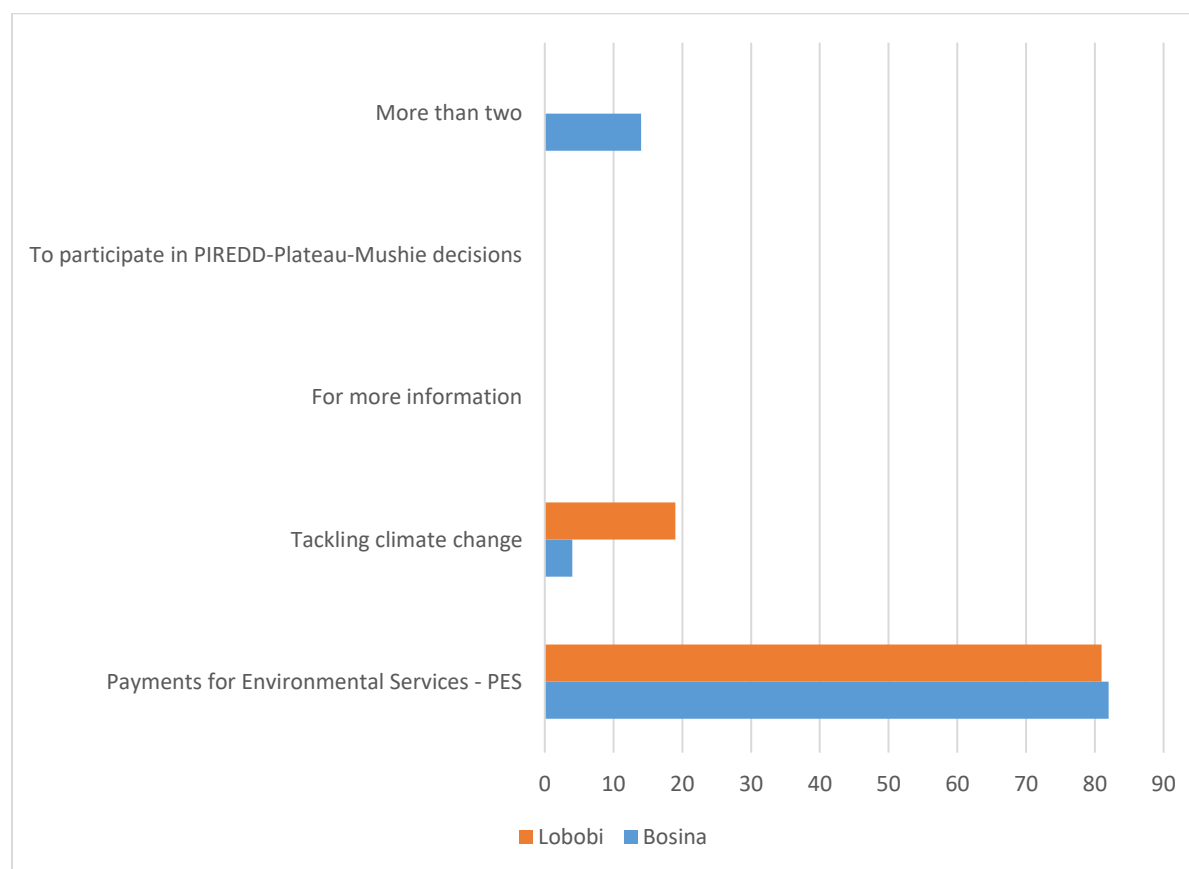
As **Figure 2.3** reveals, no LCD members mentioned managerial power in REDD+ pilot projects as a leading reason to participate in a REDD+ pilot project. More than 80% of study participants in both Bosina and Lobobi reported PES as their main motive for participation. One reason for this focus can be found in the awareness strategy developed by AMAR. To attract large numbers of participants and structure many LCDs, AMAR promoted the project by emphasizing PES, not carbon benefits. Through its local community campaign to recruit LCD members, AMAR successfully increased PES awareness among around 4,581 inhabitants including 79 in Bosina and 36 in Lobobi (AMAR, 2016). AMAR did not have enough time for a campaign to increase awareness about the REDD+ pilot project, particularly about carbon outcomes, so they focused on PES. In their evaluation, Berk and Lungungu (2020) were told that all four local organizations used by WWF to implement the project took a very slapdash approach to informing and recruiting potential communities:

[They] swept through PIREDD Plateaux spending as little as an afternoon to inform communities of what REDD+ is, the role of the LCD, and to organize elections to choose LCD members (...). The researchers also found that LCD members were often unaware of their role and responsibilities. Of the 95 LCD members interviewed, over half of them, or 55 percent, had either never heard of REDD+ or could not accurately describe what it was. (Berk & Lungungu, 2020: 10)

In the words of a respondent from a civil society organization, “not only the local community expectations were ignored but the ‘Information, Education and Communication’ period failed because there were not enough resources and time devoted to informing the local community on the REDD+” (Interview with respondent from LICOCO, Kinshasa, August 2019).

There are critical differences between the views and assumptions of local communities and those of AMAR/WWF regarding what ought to be achieved and how this should be done. Underlying the project interventions, AMAR and WWF-DRC had a crucial and unmatched role in shaping the early stages of project planning, design, and implementation by setting goals and objectives, selecting strategies and framings in their communication with and justification of the Mushie REDD+ pilot project in relation to local communities (Zimmerer, 2000; Rangan & Kull, 2008; Goldman et al., 2011).

Figure 2.3: Leading reasons for participating in PIREDD–Plateaux–Mushie



Source: Data from household questionnaires in Bosina and Lobobi villages. 1= these categories were predefined in the questionnaire and the respondents were allowed to choose only one option.

In their final report for the project, AMAR (2017: 14) acknowledged that awareness of the project was based on the history of the project, explaining the reasons and different stages that led to its realization and the benefits and achievements for local communities. The discrepancy between the implementers' vision of local communities' participation and the local communities' perception of their roles in the REDD+ pilot project is a symptom of a deep information gap between implementers and local communities. The discrepancy shaped the process of structuring or revitalizing structures to represent local communities. Local community agency is particularly important indeed in shaping REDD+ pilot projects, but to a large degree, local communities act in response to constitutive pressures—such as the expectations and assumptions established by the discourses of AMAR and WWF-DRC (Goldman et al., 2011). One respondent from the civil society organizations stated that local communities made it clear to the NGO:

We are not the ones who call the REDD+ project, but rather [it is] the REDD+ project that came to us. Now we cannot live anymore. The REDD+ project found us with our way of life and now our livelihoods are affected by the implementation

of this project. We want to go back to the period before the arrival of this project because if we stay, we will become poorer and poorer. (Interview with respondent from LICOCO, Kinshasa, August 2019)

2.4.2 REDD+ in Mushie: The NGO AMAR and newly (re)structured LCDs

LCD structuration was an arena for contesting control of the REDD+ pilot project in Mushie. In Ahlborg and Nightingale's (2018) framework of four locations of community power identified in resource governance projects, the contestation of knowledge and ontologies (the first location) produces the second location: the configuration of a given system. Two key elements of such configurations are the actors and their networks, and the institutions mobilized and established to govern the use of resources.

AMAR drove the process of structuring and revitalization in Mushie in consultation with the WWF, the Traditional Authorities, and the administrative authorities at the territorial level. The process aimed to organize the local community of the territory of Mushie into structures of local governance (LCDs). This process was presented as a way to increase the communities' ability to participate in decision-making processes on REDD+ pilot projects.

The REDD+ pilot project in Mushie provides some empirical examples of the production of local community power in REDD+ projects. PIREDD+ Plateaux–Mushie worked with communities to structure LCDs to ensure “full and effective participation” of local communities in the REDD+ pilot (Copenhagen, 2009). In its own view, the PIREDD project did not “create” LCDs but merely “supported their set up” for local communities' participation in PIREDD projects. REDD+ pilot projects recognized that working with Local Committees for Development is a way to ensure collective choice arrangements that actively involve the majority of community members impacted by the REDD+ projects (Samndong, 2018). LCDs were created in accordance with Congolese law²⁶ laying down general provisions in their bylaws applicable to Non-Profit Associations and Public Utility Establishments and aligned with Article 22 of the Forest Act²⁷, which organizes local communities' participation in forest governance. The REDD pilot project supported the structuring (in villages where LCDs were not established) or revitalization (in villages where LCDs were already functioning).

It is important to note that instead of using the existing local administration and accountability structures, the project implementers and their contractors set up LCDs as their own governance and participation structures. For the most part, these LCDs were entirely new creations, designed to represent villages and function as interlocutors between local communities and WWF. In Mushie, all (100%) of the 71 LCDs were newly established (**Table 2.5**). In the other territories (Kwamouth and Bolobo), even these few “revitalized” LCDs had, of course, been created as new entities by other types of development intervention.

²⁶ Loi n°004 du 20 juillet 2001, which covers general provisions applicable to non-profit associations and public utilities <http://www.leganet.cd/Legislation/Droit%20Public/loi0042001.20.07.2001.asbl.htm>

²⁷ Forest Act n°011/2002

Table 2.5: REDD+ pilot project LCDs (new and old)

Territory	No. of LCDs	Newly established	Revitalized
Mushie	71	100%	0%
Kwamouth	95	98%	2% (of 95 LCDs)
Bolobo	55	82%	18% (of 55 LCDs)

The project's need to create or set up its own participation structures is rooted in arguments about legitimacy and efficiency. The legitimacy argument highlights the idea that a new or revitalized participation structure will provide more legitimacy for the project, by recognizing local communities as stewards of forests through new or revitalized participation structures intended to increase the likelihood of the project being accepted by the local communities. The forests under threat are also home to the local communities, whose livelihoods and cultures are heavily dependent on the natural environment. To protect these areas, it is vital to engage and empower these local communities through legitimate participation structures. The old-fashioned divide of 'nature versus people' is simply not sustainable. The effectiveness argument (Samndong, 2018) implies that the new or revitalized participation structures are important in the construction of the perceived position of local communities in the REDD+ pilot project, which are shaped by the symbolic power they possess and the multiplicity of interactions with other stakeholders. In line with this argument, Giddens (1984: 16) notes that "knowledge, power and capability play a crucial role in both the actions of agents and the structures that are created over space and time". The LCDs embodied the participation vision of the PIREDD Plateaux–Mushie implementers (WWF-DRC and AMAR), together with the local community power encoded in the LCD's mandate.

The NGO AMAR took four steps to structure LCDs in Mushie and implement the project's participation vision:

Identification of villages and traditional terroirs was the first step of the institutionalization of local community participation in PIREDD. The bounded and stationary character of terrestrial resources such as forests made territorial affiliation proxies for community and spatial bases for allocating resource management (Agrawal & Gibson, 1999). Local development committees were the pivotal structures serving as consultative bodies for communities. AMAR defined and traced the "local community" that should be participating in PIREDD-Plateaux based on villages and *terroirs* in Mushie. Each LCD was designed to represent a village whose territory falls under the authority of the same traditional Chief (land Chief). Some traditional *terroirs* have more than one LCD because more than one village was selected. As a result, in the fifty-nine traditional *terroirs* in Mushie, the process identified seventy-one spatial units in which to structure LCDs (see **Table 2.6**), including 32 LCDs in Baboma–Nord Tribal Chiefdom, twenty-one in Bampee Tribal Chiefdom and nineteen in Banunu Tribal Chiefdom. All 71 LCDs signed structuring meeting minutes, agreements with the REDD+ pilot project and all administrative documents (including LCD statutes, bylaws, and authorization for functioning). All of these formal arrangements were the forms of participation most typically promoted by the REDD+ pilot project. However, there were controversies about the number of villages and *terroirs* used to identify the area and the communities that

would benefit from the project. The absence of a national census creates a lack of knowledge of the area and the beneficiaries themselves. The identification of areas was based on data from the BioCFplus study (Gauthier, 2018; World Bank, 2014). However, the clash of epistemologies at the first level was translated into very real implications at the second level. In principle, AMAR was guided by local understandings of what constituted the relevant “community” for a forest (i.e., by involving the existing Land Chiefs). But in practice, it seems like this created tension between Land Chiefs, Tribal Chiefs, and other local administration.

Table 6: *Structuring LCDs in Mushie*

	Baboma-Nord	Bampee	Banunu	Total
Number of terroirs	29	19	11	59
Number of LCDs installed	32	21	18	71
Number of agreements signed	32	21	18	71
Number of signed minutes	32	21	18	71
Number of statutes signed	32	21	18	71
Number of bylaws signed	32	21	18	71
Authorization for functioning from decentralized territorial entities (DTE)	32	21	18	71

Source: AMAR Final report on structuring LCDs in Mushie, 2017

Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) was the second step of the institutionalization of local community participation in PIREDD. The FPIC acknowledged that agency at the community level should serve as an important corrective to top-down views of social change and created a strong instrumentalist argument for the value of community participation in governance (Eversole, 2011). FPIC implies that local communities have the power to give or withhold their consent for any project which may affect their customarily owned land, their natural resources, their mode of living or their livelihoods (Kipalu & Mukungu, 2013; CNREDD, 2015). AMAR and WWF considered “FPIC” to be the most crucial step in getting “the community” to agree to participate. FPIC provides AMAR and WWF a “social license to operate” (USAID, 2014) and reduces the potential for conflict and for reputational risk. But in terms of actual practice, the acts (subtler forms of refusal or non-compliance in meetings, field activities, bushfires, etc.) are important signals that the “consent” was not “free” or indeed “informed,” and therefore not legitimate. This aligns with what Scott (2008) refers to as “weapons of the weak” or “the ordinary weapons of relatively powerless groups” such as local communities. These everyday forms of local communities’ resistance refer to “the prosaic but constant struggle between the peasantry and those who seek to extract labor, food, taxes, rents, and interest from

them” (Scott, 2008: 29). However, the lack of information available in a community-friendly format was a major obstacle to the free and prior informed participation of communities in a process directly impacting their lands and livelihoods, while compromising popular support for REDD+, even in cities (Berk & Lungungu, 2018: 58).

In interactions with AMAR, FPIC was signed in communities, perhaps by LCD leadership interested in securing their own positions. The FPIC signings allowed them to serve as the visible face of local community engaging with PIREDD. More than 90% of household survey respondents in both pilot villages who signed the FPIC considered LCDs to be the representatives of the local community, confirming what is stated in article 18 of the LCD statutes (see **Table 2.7**). Inhabitants of Camp Molart did not answer a similar question because their village was not identified as a spatial unit requiring an LCD. However, Berk and Lungungu (2020: 9) reported that

to determine how informed community members are of REDD+, interviewees were asked whether they have heard of REDD+. 60 percent of those surveyed responded that they had. However, when asked to describe what REDD+ signifies for them, most did not know what it was but had merely heard the term before. In total, only 36 percent of people surveyed knew of REDD+ and could vaguely describe what it is, with answers varying from a precise “reduction of emissions from deforestation and degradation of forests” to a “it’s an NGO”. In certain villages (...), community members were told that PIREDD was a government project and since the land is owned by the state, they could not decide whether the project can take place or not.

Berk and Lungungu (2020: 10) also added that “LCD presidents of the villages Bosina, Laddy and Mbala claimed they were given a contract to sign by WWF and told that if they did not take the agreement, other villages would”. This was confirmed by one of my respondents from a civil society monitoring the REDD+ implementation in Mushie: “Local communities provide FPIC without knowing what they consent for. That was when things started to get complicated” (Interview with respondent from LICOCO, Kinshasa, August 2019)

Table 2.7: Which actor represents the community interests in PIREDD (household interview responses, 2019)

	Bosina (N=50)	Lobobi N=56)	Camp Molart (N=51)
LCD steering committee	96%	100%	0
WWF	0	0	0
Senior advisor	0	0	0
Local state authority	0	0	0
Traditional Authority	0	0	0
Village general assembly	0	0	0
Don’t know	4%	0	100%

Source: Data from household questionnaires in Bosina, Lobobi and Camp Molart villages. 1= these categories were predefined in the questionnaire and the respondents were allowed to choose only one option.

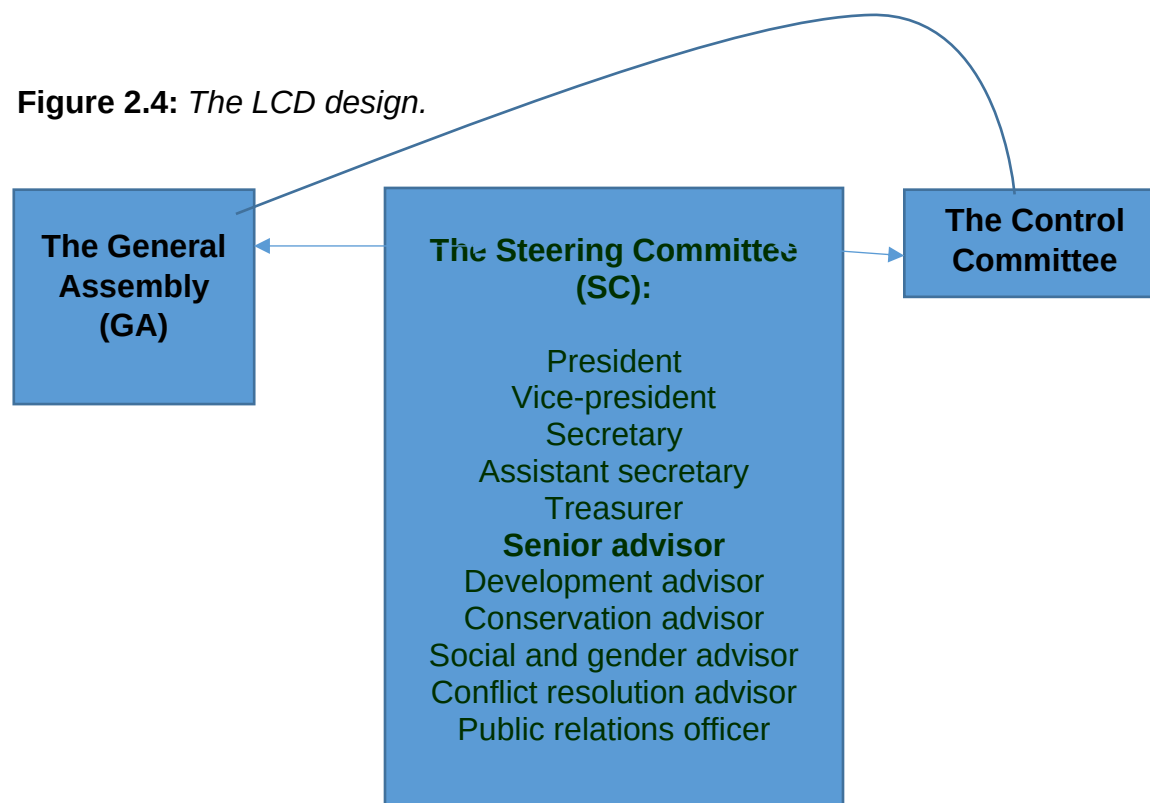
Selecting local communities' members for the LCDs was the third step and consisted of the (s)election of members to the LCD's two governing structures, the Steering Committee (SC) (*comité directeur* or "CD") and the Control Committee (*comité de contrôle*, or "CC") by the General Assembly (GA). The GA's key role is to elect and dismiss the members of the Steering Committee and the Control Committee (Art. 24, LCD Bylaws). The Steering Committee's key role is to manage LCD on daily basis (Art. 33, LCD Bylaws) and the Control Committee's key role is to control the regular financial activities (Art. 38, LCD Bylaws).

The eleven members of the Steering Committee comprise ten elected posts and one automatic post ("Senior Advisor") reserved for the Land Chief or their representative (**Figure 2.4**). The GA comprises all members of the LCD who signed the statutes (Art. 8, LCD Statutes). The members of the GA elect and can be elected to the various positions of the organs of the LCD. According to AMAR's 2016 Final Report on LCD structuring or revitalization:

free, democratic, and transparent elections are means used by the AMAR team to obtain the list of members of the various LCDs with strict compliance with the required quota for female representation (30%). The ethno-tribal balance as well as the competence in the exercise of the distinct functions such as stipulated by the statutes and internal rules for the establishment of the LCD were rigorous (AMAR, 2016: 15).

All members except the Senior Advisor are elected by the GA through direct universal suffrage. Their term of office is three years, renewable once (Art. 17, LCD Statutes). In the words of the WWF-DRC (2018), "Members are elected democratically by peers, as a result of the community General Assembly, after receiving a comprehensive information about the LCD tasks and legal structure".

Figure 2.4: *The LCD design.*



In the interviews and focus groups, participants confirmed that the organization of the elections in Mushie often included the Congolese Secret Service.²⁸ According to the project organizers, this was for security purposes and not deemed problematic. Indeed, AMAR's agent dismissed such concerns, stating,

they [Secret Service members] come like all the participants. And since the activity is public, they cannot be prevented from taking part. If they are in these places of meetings and if they ask. But we are not going with them on a mission. Generally, they are found locally. They play their role as the national intelligence agency: to know why we are meeting and what is the subject discussed. (Kinshasa, September 12, 2019)

In fact, the legitimacy of the new LCD's Steering Committee was at stake, and project organizers even feared violence during the elections of this committee. While respondents could probably not speak freely about the implications, it is certain that the presence of official state actors could influence more than simply a sense of "security." As Berk and Lungungu noted (2020: 10), the pressure to rapidly set up LCDs and elect members "left little space for their role to be properly understood", meaning "communities generally perceive LCDs more as an externally imposed structure rather than reflecting their traditional systems".

This sense of the LCDs being imposed from outside was further reinforced by the slate of candidates presented for potential election. While AMAR and WWF touted the LCDs as structures for local community participation, they also retained control of who should be elected to the two committees. Berk and Lungungu (2020: 10) noted:

Individuals friendly with WWF were usually presented as the potential candidates to elect, rather than allowing communities to nominate their own. The insufficient implication of communities has often resulted in opaque committees that lack legitimacy. In some cases, LCD presidents were elected without their knowledge. In the village Bosina, the LCD president told Bolukiluki observers that he was elected while he was working in the field and upon his return was given a document confirming his appointment.

These observations are at odds with the claim by WWF-DRC that:

Communities are free to organize themselves in Local Development Committees or have another structure ensuring representativeness, transparency, legitimacy, and liability which is in accordance with democratic principles. Local communities and Indigenous people's participation in WWF-RDC's activities is voluntary. (WWF-DRC, 2018)

²⁸ Article 2 of Decree-Law No. 003-2003 of January 11, 2003, establishing and organizing the National Intelligence Agency: "Subject to other missions conferred on it and to be conferred on it by specific texts, the National Intelligence Agency's mission is to ensure internal and external security of state". Available at <http://www.leganet.cd/Legislation/Droit%20Public/Ordre/DL.11.01.2003.htm>

During the focus group discussion, the president of LCD Mushie City agreed with WWF-DRC's comments, stating: "The election was fair and transparent. The problem is more on the collaboration between the project implementers and the LCD's steering committee" (LCD Mushie focus group, Mushie City, August 2019). A total of 67% of respondents in Lobobi and Bosina believed that the election was fair and transparent.

The interactions between AMAR, WWF-DRC, and local communities around the elections of the members of the LCD committees are moments that should have served as locations for production of local communities' power. In some cases, they did serve as moments when local communities pushed back against the project's heavy hand and the arbitrary selection of their representatives within the LCDs. This is why, for a respondent from an NGO,

We need to work with the real representatives of local communities who understand their role in the decision-making of these bodies. Sometimes political influence plays a role. Such wants his brother to be there. We, civil society, are in favour of verifying whether the elected person holds the position. If this is not the case, we make pleadings to try to push the politicians. (Interview with respondent from GTCR Rénové and CTIDD, Kinshasa, August 2019)

The structuring/revitalising process determined the patterns of inclusion or exclusion within the local communities. Local community exists among individuals who share common interests and common identification growing out of shared characteristics (Ascher, 1995; Agrawal & Gibson, 1999). Those perceived as outsiders were not elected. One NGO respondent stated that "LCD is about representing clans and families" (Interview with respondent from GTCR Rénové and CTIDD, Kinshasa, August 2019). A total of 66% of respondents in Lobobi and Bosine agreed or strongly agreed that their LCD leadership has legitimacy to engage them and 64% said that they did not know if the LCD was legitimate to engage them. Article 8 of the LCD's Statutes stipulates that: "All full members enjoy the following rights to elect and be elected to the various positions of the organs of the LCD". The intention was to elect those who accepted PIREDD–Plateaux–Mushie to facilitate REDD+ pilot project management by preventing certain behaviours, or encouraging others. The unique interplay between the AMAR, WWF, Secret Service, local state authority, traditional authority and local communities produced 10 CD members and 3 CC members who were already favourably aligned with the REDD+ pilot projects. The delegates for the negotiations related to the structuring of local communities and the structures of LCDs were not perceived locally as imposed by consultants from Kinshasa. A total of 46.5% of respondents believed that the decision to participate in the project was made by the local communities (village), while 33.8% of respondents believed that it was another entity that made the decision. Only 19.7% of respondents believed that the LCD made the decision.

Statutes and Bylaws were the last step and constituted the statutes and bylaws being signed by the LCD's members. In total, seventy-one statutes and bylaws were signed, or one for each LCD (**Table 2.6**). The translation of local community participation into LCD structures encoded in statutes and bylaws produced stabilization. According to AMAR

and the WWF-DRC's expectations, the statutes and bylaws were important symbols and sources of stabilization of local community participation in REDD+ pilot projects. However, in certain villages such as Maa interviewed by the Bolukiluki team, the community who signed statutes and bylaws later tried to withdraw their consent, even submitting a letter forbidding REDD+ pilot project activities from taking place on their land (Berk & Lungungu, 2020: 9).

2.5 Discussion: The emergence and suppression of local community power in PIREDD-Plateaux in Mushie.

In Mushie's REDD+ pilot project, the local community and various interactions between actors involved in the configuration of LCDs are key elements that produced local community power at three specific moments: 1) the process translating local community participation into LCDs; 2) closure through bylaws, statutes and FPIC agreements; and 3) local community "trouble". These three moments helped to shape the power of the local community in the REDD+ pilot project in Mushie.

2.5.1 The process of translating local community participation into LCDs.

Power is thus exercised by means of system configurations—a kind of encoding of the exercise of power in hardware and software (Ahlborg & Nightingale, 2018). The system configuration of the LCD is useful to understanding the exercise of power by the local community. The LCD embodies the intention of the designer and the local community power encoded in the statutes and bylaws. The structuring of LCD produces scripts (Art.14 to Art. 20, LCD Statutes).

The Traditional Authority (head of the Tribal Chieftdom) is the key actor in this process. It is the Land Chief who made land available for the project:

I made the land available to the PIREDD project at their request. The PIREDD asks me to grant him a few hectares for his project. it was then that I sent my men to the field, accompanied by the men of PIREDD. Obviously, they are also accompanied by an agronomist. The agronomist, as I will say, evaluates the hectares to be granted to the PIREDD project. And then we sign a contract. With them, it is another contract unlike the one I sign with what raises small cattle or big cattle. It is a different contract. The contracts are made at their level, and they come to me to sign them. Because I gave my approval, I signed, and they went on land and had possession of their hectares. And they do what they want to do with it. (Interview with Land Chief Jean Boleme Bokumusili, the Traditional Authority of the Ntote Vaka Bonzale traditional *terroir* in Banunu, August 2019)

Here the Land Chief exerted his power over an open process and provided conditions for the local communities to activate their agencies. As the LCD's Senior Advisor, he is automatically a (permanent) member of the Steering Committee, sharing the spending and financial authority with the LCD's President and Treasurer. He is also responsible for conflict resolution within the LCD. Participants in one focus group framed his role in these terms: "Senior Advisor is 'Ekuke' ['The Gate'] Everything we sign must go through him and after he validates, we now process or implement the activities. We do this because he is the landowner" (Focus group with LCD, Mushie City, August 2019)

Configurations of LCDs change as the Traditional Authority is repositioned in relation to the local community and the context of the Tribal Chiefdom in Mushie. Officially composed of community representatives, LCDs are structured for information, consultation, and decision making at the local level, as defined in PIREDD (RRI, 2018). Structured LCDs change the local community exercise of power in PIREDD–Plateaux–Mushie, with the Senior Advisor essentially controlling the local community’s participation from inside. AMAR encoded distinct roles in LCD’s organs with the most important being Senior Advisor (**Figure 2.4**). For the AMAR agent interviewed, the Senior Advisor is so important because the Land Chief is still the person with decisive power:

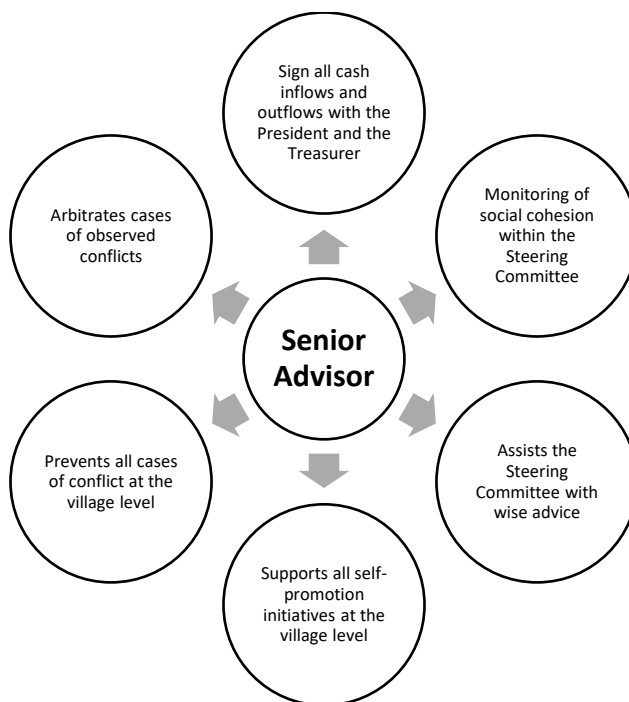
The purpose of the work of the LCD is community development and the management of space, therefore in land. It was felt that it makes perfect sense that whoever hands over the land should be the Chief adviser. The LCDs in the context of PIREDD are set up for a final purpose, which is REDD+. To achieve this purpose, we must work the land and its resources. (Kinshasa, September 12, 2019).

AMAR interactions with the WWF-DRC, Land Chief, Village Heads, and local communities led to repositioning the Traditional Authority in the Steering Committee as Senior Advisor. The members of the LCDs in Bosina, Lobobi and Mushie City unanimously recognized in the focus groups that the Traditional Authority is so powerful because they are at the same time the Land Chief and the Clan Leader. They exercise a sort of custodian role over community land, and decides the allocation of this community land. The first WWF-DRC agent stated that “making [the Chief] Senior Advisor with full control of [the] LCD was the trade-off to help AMAR and WWF-DRC to structure and stabilize [the] LCD” (Mushie City, August 2019). AMAR and WWF-DRC drafted the contract with the Land Chief and assigned to the Senior Advisor the powers outlined in **Figure 2.5**. They did so to pre-empt what they feared might be a refusal by the Land Chief and Clan Leader to participate in the project without having control. If from their vantage point, AMAR and WWF-DRC felt that making the Land Chief the Senior Advisor was a way to co-opt or appease him, the Traditional Authority also claimed these powers as his due, since:

“I gave my approval, I signed, and they went on land and had possession of their hectares (...). Everything they do on these lands is at the Chief’s disposal. Them, they will reforest, plant, do everything but they will leave at the disposal of the Chief. WWF-DRC people and local community labor do this work. It is work that benefits the local population and the Land Chief” (Interview with Chief Boleme Bokumusili, Land Chief and Traditional Authority from the Ntote Vaka Bonzale traditional *terroir* in Banunu, August 2019).

The different interactions between AMAR, WWF-DRC and other actors shaped the local community power in REDD+ piloting projects. The repositioning of the Traditional Authority as the senior advisor epitomized how constitutive power clarifies local community participation in REDD+. The Traditional Authority shaped the local community’s participation in the REDD+ pilot project from inside, and closures through bylaws, statutes and FPIC.

Figure 2.5: The Senior Advisor's role in the LCD



Source: Article 35, LCD bylaws

Figure 2.5 illustrates how assigning the Senior Advisor role to the Traditional Authority positions them to control an LCD and allocation of benefits. Of the six available roles of Senior Advisor, only one was aligned with the role of Land Chief (“Sign all cash inflows and outflows”) because cash flows are related to activities on the lands for which the Land Chief serves as custodian. The other five roles are related to the Chief’s clan or political leadership position. The LCD’s designers (AMAR and WWF-DRC) made certain to leverage the Traditional Authority as both Clan Leader and Land Chief. As Land Chief, he represents the “*Bilima*” (spirits) and is the land protector, so he has a say on the cash inflow and outflow in the LCD on the lands under his responsibility. The Senior Advisor is more powerful when they are also the Land Chief. These six roles assigned by the LCD’s designers, and the lobbying of the Traditional Authority, exemplified the reality of a powerful, unelected Senior Advisor effectively controlling the LCD and its Steering Committee. The LCD Steering Committee managed 5% of direct monetary benefits from PES schemes in agroforestry (see **Table 2.8**) and the Land Chief received up to \$3/ha for PES schemes in agroforestry and 20% of PES schemes in savannah defense activities against fire. The LCD Steering Committee also assigned local communities for both activities (Art. 5, LCD Statutes). Under its Conservation Advisor, the LCD initiated and planned activities and also identified which members would participate (Art. 35.7, LCD Statutes). According to Article 9 of the Statutes, LCD members are obligated to participate in these activities.

The WWF-DRC detailed how these “PES” contracts operate as follows:

How the PES contracts work: The first step is that communities receive ten cents per acacia seedling they produce. Three months after communities have prepared the degraded land with support from the project and planted seedlings, they receive their first payment for the establishment of the plantation (US\$75 per ha); nine months after plantation, they receive a second payment (US\$50 per ha) if the seedlings have been properly maintained; and 27 months after initial plantation and after the dry season, communities receive a third payment (US\$25 per ha) if the area is thriving. Local communities' payments are handled through WWF while the DRC Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development provides funds through the Forest Investment Program Coordination Unit. (WWF-DRC, 2017)

In his role of signing all cash inflows and outflows with the President and Treasurer, the Senior Advisor positioned himself to also control the allocation of the 5% of cash inflows (see **Table 2.8**). According to the President of the LCD for Mushie, the \$3/ha received by the Land Chief came directly from WWF-DRC (Focus group, Mushie City, August 2019).

With his five roles of Senior Advisor leveraging his position as Clan Leader, the Traditional Authority becomes the grievance mechanism himself within the LCD's Steering Committee. Chief Boleme Bokumusili expressed it in this way:

I am here to provide advice first to those who make up the LCD and to the population on the activities they must carry out so that what WWF is doing is moving forward. Telling them to avoid plant burnings and to cooperate well with WWF. So that WWF on its side can say yes, we have the collaboration of the population for our activities because without your collaboration the WWF will have difficulty in progressing in its activities. It is advice like that that I am going to give to my people (Interview with Land Chief and Traditional Authority Boleme Bokumusili of the Ntote Vaka Bonzale traditional *terroir* in Banunu, August 2019).

Sometimes, the Senior Advisor was challenged by the LCD membership with interesting and very visible consequences. This occurred in the villages of Bompensole, Camp Ferrera, Mbala II, Bosiki, Bopaka, Izono and Laddy. In June 2019, when PES payments were delayed, members began burning savannahs and plants to express grievance. The LCDs had no resources to pay their members for their work and as a result the Senior Advisor's efforts to prevent such bushfires were unsuccessful.

In his distinct roles as Senior Advisor, the Traditional Authority overrode WWF-DRC and AMAR and could pushback on the emergence of the local community's power in the Mushie REDD+ pilot project. However, AMAR and WWF-DRC were not opposed to seeing him taking control of the LCD because it remained conducive to achieving their objectives. According to a respondent from a civil society organization:

The Land Chief is cooperating with the REDD+ project very well. By abandoning livestock farming to donate the land to the project, the Land Chief knew that he would benefit from this cooperation with the project team. This is not the case for local communities in several villages. The local communities are suffering from the REDD+ pilot project's implementation. What they are receiving is insignificant. (Interview with respondent from LICOCO, Kinshasa, August 2019).

Table 8: The distribution of direct monetary benefits from REDD+ pilot project activities

	Payment for ecosystem services (PES) schemes in agroforestry	Payment for ecosystem services (PES) schemes in savannah defense activities against fire
Payment calendar	3 payment instalments	Once per year
Price	\$150/ha	\$5/ha
LCD – project of community interest		80%
LCD – Steering Committee	5%	
Land Chief	\$3/ha	20%
Participant household unit	\$95/ha	

2.5.2 Closures through bylaws, statutes and FPIC

The encounters between local community and AMAR could have offered another moment for the emergence of local community power. After rewriting the script to reposition the Traditional Authority, the LCD focused on a process of closure or ‘lock-in’ whereby the LCD would become stabilized (Misa, 1992; Pinch & Bijker, 1984). The process of closure can involve the reproduction or structuring of power relationships, and it is a contingent achievement (Bijker & Law, 1992). For structured or stabilized LCDs, local community power was situated, embodied, and placed in the signings of bylaws, statutes and the FPIC agreement. In all, seventy-one statutes and bylaws were signed and FPIC were signed in each local community (**Table 2.6**). Closure and consensus around a final design can only be explained with reference to the power relationships between groups (Klein & Kleinman, 2002; Pinch & Bijker, 1987). However, in Mushie, these closures were boilerplate moments, not designed for community to express disagreement or negotiate a different arrangement or compromise. In other words, these were not moments in which potential expression of power was actually realized.

The closures were the moments the local communities were supposed to exercise the power to give or withhold their consent for any project that might affect their livelihoods. AMAR secured all the FPIC, and structured LCDs exactly as planned. All the selected villages signed on and an LCD was installed. The closures of LCD structuring were described as the product of consensus and less attention was given to power asymmetry within that consensus, as reported by Berk and Lungungu (2020). Some villages did not have freedom to refuse the closures. REDD+ pilot projects are government projects and since the land is owned by the State, the villagers could not decide whether the project could take place or not. Members of the village Mongama said only the Chief was involved in the establishment of the project (Berk & Lungungu, 2020:9). In other words, the closures were only a ‘formality.’ According to AMAR, they achieved closures, no further design modifications occurred, and each LCD was perceived as stabilized in its final form (AMAR, 2016). However, the interactions between AMAR and local communities enacted an asymmetry of power that led to the closures. These interactions should be conceptualized in terms of control of resources (Klein & Kleinman, 2002; Pinch & Bijker, 1987).

AMAR pressure for closure was focused on increasing awareness of the benefits and project achievements for local communities. AMAR's strategy to secure closures, as explained in their Final Report, especially focused local community attention on Payments for Environmental Services (PES). More than 80% of respondents in the surveys in Lobobi and Bosina considered PES to be the leading reason for participating in PIREDD–Plateaux–Mushie (see **Figure 2.5**).

AMAR secured closures through bylaws, statutes and FPIC because it redefined the leading motivation for local communities to participate via increasing community awareness of PES. This strategy would come to be the source of LCD destabilization and local community trouble for structured LCDs. AMAR pushed the closures in certain directions, but these actions had unexpected consequences. When for more than 5 months after the implementation of agroforestry activities, LCD members were still waiting to be paid, one member of the LCD Steering Committee summarized the local community's feeling: "People feel like they've been fooled" (LCD member, Focus Group, Mushie City, August 2019). Since direct monetary benefits became key factors behind the local community's participation, direct benefit transfers needed to be delivered in a predictable fashion. When payment was delayed and unpredictable, destabilization occurred.

Another mechanism used by AMAR to secure closures was the mobilization of "Secret Services and Local Authority" through the LCD configuration process. Interview respondents and participants in the focus groups noted the presence of Secret Service and local authority. An AMAR respondent mentioned security for the election as a rationale for the Secret Service presence. The need to deter "trouble" from inhabitants who might refuse the closures was an early indication of the local community's participation trouble. AMAR closures left the LCDs in a provisional state characterized by controversies. Even in their Final Report, AMAR suggested "to WWF/PIREDD to apply participatory management with LCD and the entire population before any activity, in order to avoid possible dissatisfaction that may lead to the rejection of project activities" (AMAR, 2016: 21). The closures were therefore not a source of LCD stabilization in REDD+ pilot projects in Mushie. The signings of bylaws, statutes and FPIC led AMAR and WWF-DRC to believe that the exercise of power by local community manifested in LCDs was very stable, legitimate, and successful even if this was not the case. These documents offered a false confidence in the validity and respect accorded to the LCDs by communities. In addition, these "closures" were important indicators (to AMAR / WWF-DRC) of communities moving up the ladder of empowerment (because they have formalized themselves), even if no real power has been handed over to them in respect to the main resource that motivated them: PES. As Berk and Lungungu (2018: 60) also concluded:

the very methodology of results-based payments, provided for in the PIREDDs, does not encourage community ownership and undermines any intrinsic source of motivation, reducing collective action to a Pavlovian reflex: farmers are paid first to make cuttings, and then paid again when they plant, according to a sequence of activities. (...) However, it is not always beneficial to communities: rather than finding meaning in the activity itself to achieve its purpose and thus appropriate the project, a phenomenon of disempowerment and "wage labor" is likely to take place.

This model, central to the REDD+ architecture, is a major concern for its community strategy.

Decentralized territorial entities (DTEs) issued seventy-one authorizations for LCD functioning and WWF signed seventy-one agreements with LCDs to confirm the stable state of LCDs (see **Table 2.6**). Local community power embedded in LCDs evoked responses and counteractions leading to local community “trouble.”

2.5.3 Local community participation “trouble”

A closer look at where local community power emerged in REDD+ pilot projects draws attention to structured LCDs, the means by which power is exercised (such as the veto/decision to join the Mushie REDD+ pilot project, Steering Committee, etc.), and the spaces where power is exercised. LCDs were a new space for AMAR or WWF that allowed them to gain access to local communities, but access came at an excessive cost (namely handing a lot of decision-making power over to the communities, and obliging the project to provide PES to sustain community interest). Structured LCDs, as the result of interactions between different actors participating in configuration of LCDs, sustained possibilities for resistance to and subversion of this new space where local community power was exercised. Local communities (and committee leaders) who were displeased with the project could always “go slow” or totally opt out of the LCD to demonstrate their frustration. In the words of Ahlborg and Nightingale (2018: 394), this was due to: “their inertia being a potent form of exercising power in the face of high-status actors coming with promises of development (Li, 2007; Scott, 1985).” Understanding how local communities’ participation “trouble” LCD scripts may be crucial to understanding the importance of constitutive power (Butler, 1990; Ahlborg & Nightingale, 2018). This trouble was a symptom of the failure to hand power over to the community.

The local community’s participation “trouble” started with patterns of inclusion and exclusion in REDD+ pilot projects within LCD villages as defined during the LCD configuration process. This process divided communities into two categories: insiders who were members of the LCD and outsiders who were not. These two identities were the effects of productive power emerging from the configuration of LCDs. Data from the interviews and focus groups confirmed that the outsiders were perceived both as troublemakers and as outlawed groups to arrest and punish because they were sabotaging the REDD+ pilot project’s activities in Mushie. As one Traditional Authority (Land Chief) stated:

People who start bushfires, who burn the savannahs and destroy the work of WWF are not known. These acts tend to discourage the activities of WWF. If I have a means of transport, it will allow me to move around, and these people will be afraid of it. The fear of the police officer is the beginning of wisdom. Because I am a judicial police officer by training. I am a graduate of the former superior police school... It is not the way of carrying out investigations that can escape me. I can lead the investigations and unearth the perpetrators, bring them to justice so that they are discouraged. It is a way to discourage the bad guys who always tend to destroy what WWF does (Interview with Land Chief and Traditional Authority)

Boleme Bokumusili of the Ntote Vaka Bonzale traditional *terroir* in Banunu, August 2019).

The genealogy of the local community in its relation to the institutional arrangements provides an explanation of why the local community became the first source of LCD destabilization. The LCD configuration ignored the importance of constitutive power in reproducing the subjectivities and troubles produced from the unique interplay between LCDs, insiders, and outsiders. Some LCDs imposed an unrepresentative apparatus, which became a form of structural violence that misrepresented community interests. The community response to that inappropriate structure created destabilization. AMAR acknowledged that at least some of the LCDs were initially structured in problematic ways, and suggested mechanisms to address the issue. One of AMAR's recommendations in its Final Report recognized that:

Following land disputes, the names of certain *terroirs* and their Land Chiefs listed in the previous report differ from those found in the field among local populations. (...) Conflicts between the inhabitants of villages belonging to the same lands have created certain obstacles for the collaboration and cohabitation of these communities in the same LCD. (...) To avoid any conflict that could handicap the activities of the PGAPF/PIREDD project in the territory of Mushie, WWF [and] PIREDD give priority to data collected in the field in conjunction with Land Chiefs. (AMAR, 2016: 20-21)

In addition, the non-fulfilment of promises and activities by certain NGOs that had worked in the territory of Mushie made the local communities reluctant to listen to attempts to further awareness on the PIREDD project by AMAR (AMAR, 2016: 20).

The provision of financial incentives motivated local communities to accept the closures of bylaws, statutes and FPIC, but these financial incentives also became the source of LCD destabilization. The promised payment in three installments encountered a delay of two to three months. According to a second WWF agent, these delays were due to monitoring and verification and the CU-FIP's administrative burden (Interview with WWF-DRC agent, August 2019). For the first payment installments, for example, the LCD's Steering Committee faced the frustration of its members for more month delay than the 3 months agreed. In the focus groups, the local community perspective was that LCDs had moved away from the scripts encoded during their configuration and failed to uphold point five of Article 5 of their Statutes: "Defend the interests and rights of members against third parties". In the focus group discussions with the LCD in Mushie City, a young member tried to explain why it was important for the local community to focus more on other benefits than PES, such as clean air and carbon storage, when an elder member in the committee stood, challenged him, and underlined the importance of PES for the community and the impacts of PES delays on some members of the LCD:

I am not going to eat the sequestered carbon or clean air. I do have one family I convinced to sign the Free Prior Informed Consent Protocol (FPIC) and come to work for the LCD. They are coming everyday to ask me when we are going to be paid because their kids are sick, and they want to go to the hospital. Do you want me to tell them we have clean air now and that is it? (Focus group discussion, Mushie City Steering Committee, September 6, 2019)

The LCD president added: “We are unable to tell our members when they are going to be paid for the activities already completed” (Focus group discussion, Mushie City Steering Committee, August 2019)

PES delays become a source of LCD destabilization mainly because AMAR made PES a key selling point to secure the closures and to structure LCDs. The LCD Steering Committee did not have any control over the PES and were therefore not able to manage the PES crises as they arose. To illustrate, in Mushie, over 80% of LCD members interviewed did not understand their roles in PES management and were surprised to be left out of the PES delays mitigation. AMAR and WWF-DRC had already defined the LCD structures and roles and written them into the Bylaws and Statutes. According to one member of the LCD Steering Committee in the focus group discussions, LCDs did not have the means to enforce point five of Article 5 of their Statutes. The second member of the LCD Steering Committee stated that:

The issue we, as LCD, have now is related to our collaboration with PIREDD, and this is the source of the difficulties we are facing now. PIREDD decides on everything even the activities and the money to be paid for these activities without negotiating with us. The promise of collaboration is not effective because PIREDD decides, and we only execute even if we have a collaboration agreement with them. (Focus group discussion, Mushie City Steering Committee, August 2019)

The local community trouble reveals the interplay of human agency and constitutive pressures. The LCD configuration steps, different actions by AMAR (including translation and closures), and the reactions and responses by local communities and other actors were decisive in shaping the process, but motivated and situated in a field of constitutive power with constant challenges by different actors arguing for the need to adapt project blueprints to contextual conditions and demands. LCDs were not equipped to adjust their blueprint designs and address local community troubles. The approach taken by the WWF and AMAR (luring communities with promises of PES) clearly led to problems when those payments did not meet expectations. No real power to manage or facilitate the PES was given to the LCDs, which meant that they were set up purely to mobilize local labour. This also made it easy for Traditional Authorities to insist upon their ‘special’ roles as coordinators of that labour, which permitted the transfer of favours or benefits to those leaders’ supporters through the LCD.

2.6 Conclusion

The participation of local communities in natural resources governance is dynamic and shaped by multiple tensions: dominance vs. empowerment; local community agency vs. constitutive power; and closure vs. destabilization. To explore these tensions at the entry-point and moment of inclusion of local communities in REDD+ pilot projects, this article referred to the first two of four generic ‘locations of power’ developed by Ahlborg and Nightingale (2018). In order to situate where local community power could or should be produced in REDD+ pilot projects, the present article actively worked with the first and second locations of power to compare the differences in epistemologies and ontologies that led to the actual configuration of LCDs and to probe this configuration as the entry-

point and moment of inclusion of local communities in REDD+ pilot projects. By analyzing the tensions surrounding LCD structuring, the article focused on the multiplicity of interactions between local communities' agency and the different actors involved in configuration of LCDs, to explain where and when local communities exercised their power in REDD+ pilot projects.

Examining local community participation through the lenses of Arnstein's typology of participation (1969) adapted by Samndong (2018), this article captured the REDD+ pilot project's emphasis on delivery of project outputs, coupled with widespread perception by participants in consultation exercises that they could not influence the outcome. However, the intentional choices and different interactions between different actors are crucial to understanding the power of community in REDD+ pilot projects. In this REDD+ pilot project, local community participation can be characterized as tokenism—expressed through actions such as consultation to legitimate previously made decisions, and an emphasis on outward signs like signed bylaws and closure (Arnstein, 1969; Samndong, 2018). For real empowerment, there must be understanding of the effects produced by different interactions to include the local community in the REDD+ pilot project governance. This project aimed to educate and structure local communities with the underlying objective of securing their support in implementing the technical aspects of the REDD+ pilot project in Mushie. In such a framework, AMAR and WWF-DRC assessed “empowerment” of the local community as a simple, linear process of box ticking, showing that communities had organized an LCD and that bylaws, statutes, or FPIC had been agreed to (see **Table 2.6**). This linear conception of local community participation in the REDD+ pilot project focused more on allocation of power to the LCD than the LCD's exercise of local community power or the effects of that power. More importantly, the local community's participation implies questions such as “power for what?” and whether local community power is very much constrained from the outset and distorted by leadership to serve individual rather than collective needs.

To explain how local community agency is simultaneously generative of, produced within and constrained by constitutive power, we probed the multiplicity of interactions at the moment of the LCD's configuration. Referring to Ahlborg and Nightingale's (2018) second 'location of power', this article offers five important insights:

- 1) The first insight is the elucidation, through revealing the double and key role of the Traditional Authority in the LCD, of how the structuring of the LCD and the relations of power co-produced an expanding space for the Traditional Authority to make use of the LCD to serve individual rather than collective needs. While the Traditional Authorities co-opted a special role for themselves within the local communities' structures, the local communities did not secure real managerial or decision-making power for the LCDs over the PES payment process. Local community should not need to climb a ladder of power to escape from dominance and access empowerment. Rather, empowerment and dominance represent a spectrum of the ways in which actors exercise power in specific situations, and with what intentions (Ahlborg & Nightingale, 2018). The only power local communities could exercise in this case was the right to refuse or opt out of the REDD+ pilot project. But as Berk and Lungungu (2020) found, even that power was constrained. The PIREDD project told communities that since the land

belonged to the DRC government, if they refused, another village would simply be chosen to take their place, and therefore their land would be controlled by the other village.

- 2) The second insight is that the participation of local community in natural resource governance such as REDD+ pilot projects is shaped by a multiplicity of interactions, which can stabilize or destabilize the institutional arrangements organizing this participation. However, the effects emerging out of these interactions are often not the expected or desired ones. The inclusion of local communities in REDD+ pilot projects through the LCD was supposed to produce positive results in combatting climate change through the active contribution and participation of local communities. The result however was that the participation of local communities was motivated far more by financial incentives than by interests in combatting climate change. The implementers (AMAR and WWF-DRC) knew that promoting PES would be more effective than environmental benefits for recruiting large numbers of participants (4,581) and many LCDs (71) in the territory of Mushie. The embedding of local community agency in constitutive power has this uncertain outcome because the local community power emerges from a multiplicity of interactions that transcend and circumscribe the local community exercise of power (Ahlborg & Nightingale, 2018). Consequently, participation is at an incredibly low and opportunistic level. Representation and goals beyond receiving or controlling PES were not priorities for local communities, administrative authorities nor traditional authorities. So, the power produced dealt only with these particular benefits (cash flow, labour supply) and not other components.
- 3) Third, the article reveals that the idea of the inclusion of local communities in LCDs as institutional arrangements tends to shift the focus from the configuration process of LCDs to the assigned roles LCDs will play. The REDD+ pilot project sought an instrument that would facilitate achievement of better project outcomes. REDD+ pilot projects perceived structured LCDs as stable and did not leave room for free agents through the institutional arrangements. However, this supposedly “static” LCD, after a successful closure (signed agreements, statutes, bylaws, FPIC, membership lists), was just the beginning of a relationship, not the end. The unresolved tensions around the configuration of LCDs left LCDs in provisional state characterized by different local communities’ troubles. Furthermore, the terms of how that closure was achieved had important implications for what was to come. The fact that no real power over the scheduling and allocation of PES was handed over to the LCDs is clearly problematic. Moreover, the dependency on PES influenced local communities’ closure decisions even though the LCD structures being agreed to would not be the best for enabling PES or other benefits to the communities.
- 4) Fourth, this paper suggests that the type of institutional mechanisms or structures in place for local communities’ participation is less important in determining the magnitude of power exercised by communities than it is for determining the

different roles of intermediaries and chains of actions required for communities to participate in the REDD+ project—i.e., the elements that offer them considerable power to influence communities and shape the bargaining space. A future paper will examine the roles played by intermediaries in more detail.

- 5) Fifth and lastly, this paper illustrates different storylines relative to local communities' participation, indicating a considerable range of definitions and understanding of roles as well as better structures for local communities' mobilization between the REDD+ project implementers and local communities. The epistemologies of project implementers and local communities can be reconciled. The forest governance of Nepal, for example, can offer relevant lessons to REDD+ projects in DRC to reconcile its different storylines on local communities' participation. Future research could examine ways to inform DRC's REDD+ projects by examining how Nepal brings local narratives together with national and global narratives to broaden the knowledge base and consider policy solutions beyond economy-focused narratives.

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Essay 2

Essay 2: Accessing the benefits sharing mechanism of a REDD+ project: Community participation and power brokers in PIREDD–Plateaux, Mushie, Democratic Republic of Congo

Maurice Mukoie Dikaya

School of International Development, University of Ottawa

Abstract

Efforts to comprehend local community participation in REDD+ projects have primarily focused on identifying acquired power, particularly in terms of managerial or decision-making authority. However, these approaches overlook local dynamics of power. This study delves beyond conventional views of community participation in REDD+ projects, highlighting how intermediaries influence the process. Focusing on the participation of local community in the Integrated REDD+ Plateaux Project (PIREDD–Plateaux) in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the thesis draws on Ribot and Peluso's theory of access and Ahlborg and Nightingale's concept of power locations. It examines how local communities engage with the benefits sharing mechanism (BSM) of REDD+ projects, emphasizing access to and entitlement of resources. The study reveals that pivotal moments supposed to produce local community power, such as project implementation and resource distribution, were overshadowed by the dominance of power brokers, notably traditional authorities, particularly in LCD steering committees. Consequently, local communities struggled to mobilize their own power, leading to limited influence over the BSM and delayed financial benefits. The findings underscore the inadequacy of LCD steering committees in representing community interests and shaping access to REDD+ benefits about its bundles of power and its position in the webs of powers.

Keywords: local community participation, benefit-sharing mechanism (BSM), bundles of power, webs of power, brokers, elite capture

3.1 Introduction

Incentives for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks (REDD+) in developing countries have influenced forest use behaviour. These incentives aim to reduce deforestation and forest degradation by changing the relative values of economic costs and benefits from forest use. The most “challenging hurdle” facing REDD+ (Costenbader, 2011) is the question of REDD+ benefit sharing mechanisms (BSMs; Börner & Vosti, 2013; Wong et al., 2017). Benefit sharing is therefore one aspect of REDD+ that receives considerable attention and raises several issues, including the identification of legitimate beneficiaries and the institutional structures needed for financial transfers (Luttrell et al., 2013). It is increasingly recognized that equitable distribution of benefits from projects is vital for REDD+ success (Mwangi & Andersson, 2015).

A three-element assessment framework is also used to explain BSMs in REDD+ projects, using the criteria of effectiveness, efficiency, and equity (Wong et al., 2017). This approach can illustrate clear trade-offs between effectiveness, efficiency, and equity, and can highlight issues of managing transparency, enabling access to information, implementing robust monitoring and evaluation systems, considering local perceptions of equity, and building inclusive decision-making processes (Wong et al., 2017). However, this framework’s emphasis on managerial terms like “effectiveness” and “efficiency” ignores power relations and the different interactions among actors that allow them to gain or secure their access to the REDD+ benefits. The equity element, which does acknowledge and analyze various actors’ interactions, is typically assessed only in static terms, such as the level and distribution across communities of household income sources or their access to forest commons (Davenport et al., 2017; Wong et al., 2017).

To gain insights into the power dynamics at play in BSMs, we must turn to the literature on empirical and theoretical aspects of access dynamics and entitlements in resource governance projects (Peet & Watts, 2004; Ribot & Peluso, 2003; Ahlborg & Nightingale, 2018) and particularly in REDD+ projects (Streck, 2020; Howson & Kindon, 2015). This paper highlighted the need to give more attention to the power relations around local communities’ participation.

The key point is that power relations influence participation. Power influences the choice of participatory processes; but more importantly, at the level of individuals and groups, power is inherent in all relationships. Thus, the perceptions of individuals about the participation, and the outcomes of participatory activities, are largely determined by the actions of the people involved, rather than by the methods or processes used. Power relations have a huge effect on participation; perhaps, overall, participation has a lesser effect on power relations. (Open Research Repository, n.d, p. 231)

The term “access” is at the heart of this literature, which questions how this term is understood and operationalized within property and natural resource studies. “Access” was defined by Ribot and Peluso (2003) as “the ability to benefit from things—including

material objects, persons, institutions, and symbols” (p. 300). This definition of access focuses on who benefits from things and through what processes. It assumes that different people have different ‘bundles of power’ to enable their access. Ribot and Peluso (2003), in line with Foucault, see power as “embodied in and exercised through various mechanisms, processes and social relations – that affect people’s ability to benefit from resources” (p. 300). As Foucault (2003) says:

Power relationships are extremely widespread in human relationships. Now, this means not that political power is everywhere, but that there is in human relationships a whole range of power relations that come into play among individuals, within families, in pedagogical relationships, political life and so on. (p. 27)

The web of power is the dynamic and fluid network that influences and is influenced by the participation of various stakeholders in REDD+ projects. ‘Bundles of power’ therefore relate to a set of relationships that enable different people to gain, control, and maintain access to natural resources. To control refers to the power to mediate the access of others and also the power to exclude. Gaining or maintaining access is mediated via relations with those who have control (Van den Bragt, 2020). These bundles of power crystallize into practices of exclusion and inclusion within routinized rules.

Ribot and Peluso (2003) move from traditional property debates that mainly focus on property rights and legal ownership, towards recognition of a broad set of factors that influence access to natural resources. They differentiate between two mechanisms through which access is gained, controlled, or maintained: the rights-based access mechanism (Ribot & Peluso, 2003; Von Benda-Beckmann & Von Benda-Beckmann, 2006; Sikor & Lund, 2009) and structural and relational access mechanisms. The rights-based access mechanism is divided into legal and illegal forms of access. Legal access applies to property relations and legal pluralism (Von Benda-Beckmann & Von Benda-Beckmann, 2006). Streck (2020) applied a legal lens to understand the various claims and underlying rights to participate in REDD+ transactions and addresses ambiguities that can lead to conflict around REDD+ implementation. Nevertheless, access and entitlement questions should not be limited to tenure or carbon rights and the legal nature of carbon credits. The ability to derive benefits from resource governance projects includes not only the right to benefit from this resource but also the dynamics of access and resource entitlement. “Ribot and Peluso (2003) praise the concept of legal pluralism as this moves the focus from solely legal-property arenas towards arenas of less formal social norms and relations. [They] complement rights-based access with illegal access, a form of direct access whereby the benefits obtained from a natural resource are not socially sanctioned by law or society. Illegal access operates through coercion (using threat or force) and stealth, and in this way influences the relations between people who gain, maintain, or control access to natural resources” (Van den Bragt, 2020, p. 8).

Structural and relational mechanisms of access operate alongside the rights-based mechanism. These mechanisms as outlined by Ribot and Peluso (2003) are influenced by Blaikie’s (1985) concept of “access qualifications”—the capital and social identity that influences who can access natural resources. Ribot and Peluso (2003) extended Blaikie’s notion of qualifications by examining “how technology, capital, markets, knowledge,

authority, social identities, and social relations can shape or influence access” (p. 165). Van den Bragt (2020) used the case of the REDD+ readiness phase in Cross River State (CRS), Nigeria to widen the debate on access for forest-dependent communities under REDD+. He concluded that not only legal but also structural and relational mechanisms played a role in the limited ability of communities in CRS to derive benefits from natural resources under REDD+ (Van den Bragt, 2020).

Although these theories of access develop the structural and relational mechanisms of access relative to power relations, none explicitly address the question of power in resource governance projects (Myers & Hansen, 2020). For Koch (2008), Ribot and Peluso’s (2003) theory of access lacks clarity on the source of power when it asks whether power is a product of negotiation, or something possessed by the individual. To address this weakness, the present paper develops a framework based on Ahlborg and Nightingale’s (2018) analysis of power in political ecology. These authors used the emergence of power relations in a small-scale electrification program to explain the processes whereby actors try to access, control, and derive benefits from the available resource system. Their main point is that it is not enough to think about “power” in its conventional categories (i.e., as a resource, a personal attribute, or relationally), rather, one must pay attention to how power “emerges” through the ways that it is exercised, particularly in respect to the non-human (e.g., in their case, the materiality of electricity generation and distribution). Their framework theorizes power relations, from the micro to macro levels of society, as dynamic and shaped by multiple tensions that span from dominance to empowerment; human agency to constitutive power; and closure to destabilization (Ahlborg & Nightingale, 2018, p. 3-7).

Ahlborg and Nightingale (2018) analyzed a rural electrification project in Tanzania that aimed to provide renewable energy-based electricity services to catalyze social and economic development. They identified four “locations” (or conceptual levels) where power emerges in resource governance project processes (Ahlborg & Nightingale, 2018, p. 11-13). In the first location, knowledges, and ontologies, they focused on how dominant actors shape resource governance projects based on different knowledges and according to certain “logics” around what is true and desired. Their second location is the contingent manifestation of these assemblages in dynamic system configurations. In this location, the configurations are the embodied (in infrastructures) and encoded (in institutions) results of processes of translation, negotiation, and compromise, as well as manifestations of ongoing contestations. Their third location is access and entitlements. In this location, power emerges through the processes whereby actors try to access, control, and derive benefits from the available resource system. Their fourth location is where power emerges in the everyday lives of people. The consequences of how resource access and use become organized manifest at multiple levels, from the individual level to those of the family, group, community, and surrounding society (Ahlborg & Nightingale, 2018).

It is Ahlborg and Nightingale’s (2018) “third location”, access and entitlements, which is of most interest to this paper, in its representation of “the processes whereby actors try to access, control and derive benefits from the available resource system” (p. 392). Such questions have clearly been at the heart of political ecology. Howson and Kindon (2015), for example, focused on agency in the Sungai Lamandau REDD+ project in Central

Kalimantan, Indonesia. Within a study of benefit access strategies, these authors considered the emerging diversity of local REDD+ benefits and the strategies used by local actors to access them. With the provision of financial compensation for carbon storage comes questions concerning the appropriateness of financial mechanisms, the effectiveness of monitoring systems, and ‘good governance’ principles such as transparency, accountability, and legitimacy (Brockhaus et al., 2013).

Access, entitlements, and power relations in REDD+ in Mushie are under-explored. Recent literature has attempted to address the question of whether or how communities can access benefits as defined by the Draft Benefit-Sharing Plan for the Mai Ndombe Emission Reduction Program in the Democratic Republic of Congo (e.g., Berk & Lungungu, 2020; Kengoum et al., 2020; Wong et al., 2020). The present paper helps to explain access and entitlement in REDD+ pilot projects in Mushie using the LCD as an entry point. The aim of this research is to contribute to the understanding of local community power within the REDD+ benefits sharing mechanism by exploring the process of gaining access to REDD+ benefits. In the aforementioned Indonesian case, local actors’ access to any benefit was dependent on their agency and ability to negotiate access in their interactions with other actors (Howson & Kindon, 2015). In the present study of the REDD+ pilot in Mushie, the multiplicity of interactions at the Mushie level created a space for certain actors in the local community to maneuver and overcome access barriers as well as to control others’ access. With a focus on the agency of local communities, this paper centres the role of social relationships (not just institutional arrangements) to explore the bundles of power local communities mobilized to gain, control, and maintain access to benefits from the REDD+ pilot project in Mushie. It explores the many ways in which local communities’ power was wielded, yielded, and negotiated as well as constrained and coopted. The process of restructuring LCDs was developed as a strategy to enhance local communities’ ability to benefit from the project. However, a closer look at the set-up of LCDs illuminates the effects of LCD restructuring on the ability of local communities to derive benefits from REDD+ pilot projects.

This paper is organized in five sections. Following the introduction, section 2 outlines scholarly debates on access and entitlements in resource governance projects, the influence of institutions on the maneuvering space to overcome access barriers and control the access of others, and the interplay between the agency of the local communities, constitutive power and the process of gaining access to REDD+ benefits. Section 3 provides a brief description of the research methods and broader context of PIREDD–Plateaux. Section 4 presents this paper’s findings on the LCD, access, and entitlements in PIREDD–Plateaux. Section 5 concludes with discussion of the broader relevance of the findings.

3.2 Access, entitlements, and local community participation: An analytical framework

3.2.1 The local communities’ participation as ability to benefit from REDD+

Many researchers interested in local communities’ participation in resource governance projects emphasize the question of inclusiveness. For them, the participation of local communities is defined as the ability of ordinary people to manage conservation and

development initiatives and to influence, implement and control activities that are essential to their wellbeing (Chambers, 1997; Sen, 1999; Agarwal, 2001; Samndong, 2018). **Table 3.1** summarizes four main theoretical approaches to understanding the dynamics of participation in such projects.

Entitlement analysis is used to explain participation in terms of access to property, rights, and ownership. This analysis attempts to answer the question of what people can do with their rights (Sen, 1981; Williams, 2013; Weigelt, 2014). By focusing solely on the enhancement of local communities' managerial capabilities, many researchers pay little attention to the wider range of social relationships such as institutional arrangements, gender relations, etc., that can constrain or enable local communities' ability to benefit from resources. A broader range of structural and relational mechanisms exist, including but not limited to property rights, that determine how such access is gained, maintained or controlled (Myers & Hansen, 2020).

The sustainable livelihoods approach (SLA) explains local community participation from the perspective of vulnerabilities and their contexts, which are central elements in the SLA literature. However, SLA also pays little attention to the question of power dynamics in local community participation (Myers & Hansen, 2020). A third approach to local community participation is the "power of exclusion" framework, which focuses on the ways in which people are prevented from benefiting from resources or relationships. In this framework, participation is a broader concept than exclusion because no matter how well exclusion is enforced, there is no guarantee of benefits for any actor (Myers & Hansen, 2020). As stated by Baban and Gorman (2015):

exclusion, is thus a necessary precondition for deriving sustained benefit from the land. But it is not a sufficient condition. There is for example, little to be gained from an empty field, at least in the immediate moment, no matter how well one might exclude others from it. (p. 2)

Table 3.1: Theories of access

Theoretical framework	Authors	Description
Entitlements/ environmental entitlements	Amartya Sen (1981); Leach, Mearns, & Scoones (1999)	Environmental entitlements as an "alternative sets of utilities derived from environmental goods and services over which social actors have legitimate effective command and which are instrumental in achieving well-being" (Leach, Mearns, & Scoones, 1997: 233)
Sustainable livelihood approach (SLA)	Chambers & Conway (1992); Scoones (2015)	SLA encompasses five components: (i) livelihood resources/capital (the asset pentagon); which are mediated by (ii) institutions and organizations; that subsequently shape (iii) livelihood strategies; and ultimately generate (iv) livelihood outcomes; all playing out in

		(v) a specific context of conditions and trends (the vulnerability context)
Powers of exclusion	Hall, Hirsch, & Li (2011)	Exclusion is defined as “the ways in which people are prevented from benefiting from things” (Myers and Hansen, 2020: 6). The powers of exclusion framework focuses on the changing ways that people are excluded from land. It emphasizes that inclusion has a double edge because some forms of exclusion of some actors are a necessary precondition for other actors deriving sustained benefits. The three main types of exclusions are: “i) the ways in which already existing access to land is maintained by the exclusion of other potential users; ii) the ways in which people who have access lose it; and iii) the ways that people who lack access are prevented from getting it”(Myers and Hansen, 2020: 6).
Theory of access	Ribot & Peluso (2003, p. 154)	Theory of access focuses on access as an “ability, rather than rights as in property theory, this formulation brings attention to a wider range of social relationships that can constrain or enable people to benefit from resources without focusing on property relations alone” (Myers and Hansen, 2020: 2)

In this paper, the participation of local communities has been analyzed using the theory of access developed by Ribot and Peluso (2003). This theory extends upon the other models using an actor-oriented power perspective. That is, actors possess agency and in several ways exercise or harness power to achieve particular outcomes (benefits). In this undertaking, local communities’ participation is also the ability to benefit from REDD+, mediated by structural and relational access mechanisms (Ribot & Peluso, 2003). At the centre of their theory, Ribot and Peluso (2003) place differential relations among actors, and the ‘things’ they want to benefit from and control (Myers & Hansen, 2020). Access emerges within power structures and has to do with the abilities of different actors to benefit from various ‘things’.

However, Ribot and Peluso (2003) use a broad interpretation and understanding of power, encompassing structural, actor-oriented, and post-structuralist perspectives. It is

exactly this broad conceptualization of power that provides the theory of access with its flexibility to fit a range of applications in theory and in practice. The merits of Ribot and Peluso's framework are primarily its conceptual shift away from a prime focus on legal rights, and their valuable efforts to point out the varied and multiple mechanisms by which people gain access, as well as the underlying power relations that shape these mechanisms (Koch, 2018). What is missing from the theory of access is a more explicit positioning and discussion of these power perspectives, as also noted by critics (Myers & Hansen, 2020). By placing the theory of access in the third location of power developed by Ahlborg and Nightingale (2018), it is adapted to more explicitly address the question of power related to local communities' participation.

Table 3.2: Local communities' participation as ability to benefit from REDD+

Access	Description
Gaining access	The ability to establish their own access to resources
Controlling access	The ability to mediate others' access
Maintaining access	The ability to expend resources or powers to keep a particular sort of resource access open

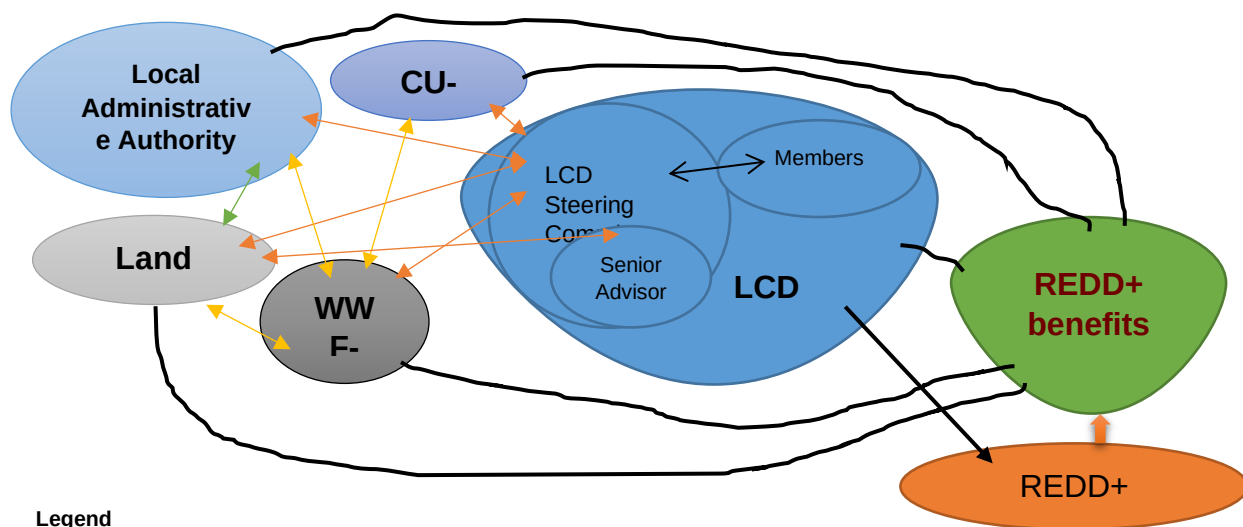
Source: Adapted theory of access (Ribot & Peluso, 2003)

Based on Ribot and Peluso's (2003) adapted theory of access, the participation of local communities can be defined as the ability of local communities to gain, control, and maintain access to resources (**Table 3.2**). This formulation of local communities' participation includes a wider range of social relationships (such as institutional arrangements, property, gender relations, etc.) that constrain or enable local communities' benefits from resources. The key concept of local community participation based on the theory of access (Ribot & Peluso, 2003) is the importance of these relational constellations that enable or constrain the ability of local communities to derive benefits from REDD+.

The emergence of local communities' power in the REDD+ pilot project also depends on different interactions around the project's activities (see **Figure 3.1**). Processes around access and entitlements become a location where the encounter between project and local context shapes the local communities' power. Local communities are constrained and enabled by their positions in webs of power and the existing resource distribution around REDD+ pilot projects. Given the way that access and use of REDD+ pilot project benefits require mobilization of bundles of powers, local communities are not generally well placed to benefit from REDD+ pilot projects. Ahlborg and Nightingale (2018) identified four locations of power in their study of a rural electrification project in Tanzania, to serve "as generic methodological entry points to study how power relations and resource governance projects become co-constituted" (p. 390). While all four locations of power are pertinent to the present study, this paper situates the ability of the local community to benefit from the REDD+ pilot project in the third location, 'access and entitlements'. The third location comprises a set of "processes whereby actors try to access, control and derive benefits from the available resource system," a crucial location for exploring "the interplay between human agency and constitutive power" (Ahlborg & Nightingale, 2018, p. 392). In the REDD+ pilot project in Mushie, the aim of this paper is

to understand how the local community (constrained and enabled within social hierarchies and existing distribution of resources) is positioned to benefit from the pilot project's activities within the webs of power that configure access to benefits from them. Analysis of local community participation requires careful attention to the dynamics of different relationships to access. These relations reveal patterns of resource distribution, sites of struggle over power and authority, and ways that the notions of webs of power and bundles of power produce different power brokers or intermediaries that shape local community participation in the REDD+ pilot project. Therefore, the multiplicities of interactions around REDD+ benefits produce constitutive pressures that shape the local community's ability to gain, maintain and control access to REDD+ benefits (see Figure 1).

Figure 3.1: The multiplicities of interactions around REDD+ benefits



Legend
CU-FIP: Coordination Unit of Forest Investment Program
WWF-DRC: World Wildlife Fund – Democratic Republic of Congo
LCD: Local Committee for Development

3.2.1.1 Benefits from REDD+ and local communities

REDD+ puts an economic value on reduced greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. This should create incentives to reduce deforestation and degradation rates if the economic benefits can be realized.

Irrespective of the source and form of REDD+ finance, or the domestic institution responsible for receiving and managing it, once financing is received it must be transformed into “benefits” that create appropriate incentives and rewards for domestic stakeholders and rights holders (USAID, 2012, p. 6).

One of the key principles underlying debates about REDD+ is its use of international financial transfers between developed and tropical developing countries to incentivize the implementation of policies which reduce emissions from these activities. Benefit sharing has been highlighted as a key aspect of all of these processes (Peskett, 2011). From the perspective of the affected communities, it can potentially be an opportunity for empowerment in decision making processes that affect them. As USAID (2012) stated:

The extent to which Indigenous Peoples and forest-dependent communities will be able to participate in, and benefit from, REDD+ schemes is a central topic of debate and concern among policy makers and stakeholders at all levels. It is widely recognized that the objectives of REDD+ cannot be achieved without the active participation of local communities, who are the primary managers and users of a significant portion of the world’s remaining forests. However, across the globe, Indigenous Peoples and forest-dependent communities have a long history of being marginalized in decision-making processes that impact forests. (...) The success of REDD+ depends on its ability to deliver emission reductions by overcoming these historical challenges. In particular, REDD+ programs should ensure the participation of forest-dependent communities, and deliver benefits that incentivize communities to protect forests while also helping to lift them out of poverty. (p. 1)

Thus, to enhance stakeholder participation in the design and implementation of REDD+ projects, it is important to understand what roles different stakeholders play in benefit sharing, who the stakeholders involved are, and what benefits are shared among them (Peskett, 2011). “The extent to which access to benefits is conditional upon performance will depend upon the design of the benefit distribution mechanism, including the type of benefit being delivered and the type of performance that is expected” (USAID, 2012, p. 6).

Local communities are involved in different activities contributing to emission reduction through REDD+ projects. The implementation of these activities is associated with actions leading to reduced deforestation, reduced emissions, and generation of net gains (see **Table 3.3**). There are two main types of benefits to be shared: monetary and non-monetary benefits. Under the non-monetary scheme, actors receive benefits in the form of community development assistance, directed to collective benefits such as road

maintenance and new bridges. Under the monetary scheme, the community receives revenues from new forest-related activities, and direct cash transfers as compensation for conservation or ecosystem service provision. In this paper's study site in Mushie, the REDD+ pilot project developed the benefit-sharing mechanisms (BSM) framework to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. Direct cash transfers were generated by activities essential to conserving the forests and wildlife, thereby ostensibly tackling deforestation and degradation while building sustainable livelihoods including activities related to agroforestry and savannah fire defense. Monetary benefits in the Mushie REDD+ pilot project were delivered as payments to individuals through new organizations called local committees for development (LCD). Individual members of the LCDs participated actively in REDD+ pilot project activities generating monetary benefits.

Table 3.3: Types of benefits in REDD+ project

Types of benefits		Description
Monetary	Direct benefits	Benefits arising from REDD+ implementation which can be quantified and valued in financial terms: all payments, shares, incentives, and subsidies related to REDD+ activities. For example, receiving a payment or share from selling carbon credits, paid employment in REDD+ related activities, and incentives or subsidies from donors or governments.
	Indirect benefits	Benefits comprising improved governance which can be quantified and valued in financial terms: all increased income and/or decreased costs of forest use activities that occur solely because of REDD+ implementation
Non-monetary	Direct benefits	All social benefits for stakeholders that are difficult to express in monetary values, such as increased skill, knowledge and capacity of local community, clarity on forest/land tenure, strengthened local community rights and participation.
	Indirect benefits	All intangible ecosystem-based benefits, such as water availability and recreation opportunities

Source: Luttrell et al., 2013

REDD+ has four categories of benefits: direct and indirect monetary benefits, and direct and indirect non-monetary benefits (see **Table 3.3**). Direct monetary benefits are the most commonly estimated benefits in REDD+ projects, however indirect monetary benefits and non-monetary benefits may be equally important to understanding the overall benefits of REDD+ projects (Rakatama et al., 2017). Most definitions of benefits in the REDD+ literature refer only to monetary benefits provided for emission reductions and carbon stock enhancements (Streck, 2009; Lindhjem et al., 2010; Peskett, 2011). However, the implementation of REDD+ activities at the national and local levels can give rise to a wide range of benefits in addition to direct monetary benefits (Koch, 2018).

The sharing of these net gains is shaped by the webs of powers and the ability of local communities to gain, control, and maintain access. The multiplicity of interactions between local community and other actors profoundly affects the design of benefit and

cost sharing mechanisms. In her research in West Africa, Berry (1993) states: “since access to resources [depends], in part, on the ability to negotiate successfully, people tended to invest in the means of negotiation as well as the means of production per se” (p. 15).

3.2.1.2 REDD+ BSM and intermediaries

As REDD+ is based on conditional rewards for reducing carbon emissions, it requires a system to designate who gets rewarded, why, under what conditions, in what proportions and for how long. Such systems are known as benefit-sharing mechanisms (BSM), a broad term that encompasses all institutional means, structures, and instruments for distributing finance and other net benefits from REDD+ programs (Peskett, 2010; Luttrell et al., 2013; Koch, 2018). The BSMs associated with REDD+ programs also focus on the functions that various institutions comprising a benefit sharing mechanism must perform, rather than on a single institutional entity. Moreover, they focus on the functions that directly affect or interact with local communities (USAID, 2012).

A REDD+ BSM has two essential dimensions: the vertical (sharing across levels, such as between national and local level stakeholders) and the horizontal (within levels, such as between and within communities, households, and other local stakeholders; Luttrell et al., 2013). Vertical sharing of REDD+ benefits occurs between national levels and non-governmental stakeholders, which channel the resources through regional governments and intermediaries to the local level. Horizontal sharing of REDD+ benefits occurs between and within communities, households and other local level stakeholders (Luttrell et al., 2013; IUCN, 2009). This paper examines the horizontal sharing of REDD+ benefits to understand how local communities access and use the new benefits and whether this produces positive results in combatting forest loss or degradation. The scale of shared benefits has obvious implications for the economic opportunities of participants in REDD+. However, the variation in the scale of benefits between different actors can also lead to implications in terms of conflicts between actors with different interests (Peskett, 2010). The horizontal distribution of net benefits and costs from the implementation of REDD+ among different actors does not depend only on the rules for how financial benefits will be allocated but also on the positioning of different actors within the network of relationships at the local level. Thus, one key actor in the REDD+ BSM is the power broker or intermediary.

An intermediary is a mediator or negotiator who acts as a link between different parties, usually providing some added value to a transaction that may not be achieved through direct trading (Porras & Ntantumbo, 2015, p. 8). Intermediaries are seen as important actors in facilitating payments for environmental services (PES). “Their roles comprise service and information providers, mediators, arbitrators, equalizers, representatives, watchdogs, developers of standards and bridge builders” (Pham et al., 2010, p. 64). The use of intermediaries or power brokers helps narrow the gap in understanding and communication between the actors that propel much of the design of a REDD+ initiative and the stakeholder groups—often the local communities—driving much of its on-the-ground success. Intermediaries are critical to bridging gaps in understanding and communication in the REDD+ benefit-sharing mechanisms between local communities and REDD+ projects. In the BSM, intermediaries negotiate on behalf of the community, complete the required administrative procedures to obtain REDD+ benefits and provide

the technical knowledge and access to finance (USAID, 2012; Porras & Nhantumbo, 2015; WWF, 2021).

Describing the lessons learned from case studies in five countries (Mexico, Tanzania, Indonesia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Nepal) USAID highlights experiences of various institutional mechanisms that have relevance for distributing REDD+ benefits and noted that:

The success of REDD+ depends in large part on the ability of institutional mechanisms to distribute benefits in a way that incentivizes resource users and managers to reduce deforestation and forest degradation at a scale that generates net emission reductions over time. The chain of actions required to reach this objective will likely be long and complex, involving a large number of actors that are the agents of deforestation or have the authority and capacity to regulate those agents. (USAID, 2012, p. 6-7)

According to these five USAID cases (see **Table 3.4**), the magnitude of benefits that local communities will receive under REDD+ programs could be determined by many factors including types of community forest tenure regime and benefit sharing arrangements. However, the ability of communities to exert influence over their share of REDD+ benefits will depend, in part, on the power and authority they possess over the land and forest resources that are generating the emission reductions (USAID, 2012; WWF, 2021).

Table 3.4: Forest tenure regimes and benefit sharing mechanisms.

USAID case study	Community forest tenure regimes and benefit sharing arrangements	Local community power
Comisión Nacional Forestal (National Forestry Commission of Mexico [CONAFOR]) ProArbol system	Community with secure and unambiguous ownership rights	• More bargaining power • Higher share of the total value generated from natural resource management (whether by law or through negotiations with project developers)
Enduimet Wildlife Management Area (WMA) in Tanzania	• Rights are shared between communities and the state • Benefit sharing arrangements are generally defined by national law.	• Limited share of revenues received by communities • Restricted by regulations as to how these revenues can be spent
Ibi-Batéké Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) project in DRC	• Communities lacking statutory rights • Access to benefits tends to be based on negotiations with the statutory rights	• The community is the less powerful actor in the negotiating relationship. • Benefit sharing arrangements are negotiated with the community on a voluntary basis

	holder(s) rather than law.	
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Forest tenure regimes are likely to be linked to the amount of power communities can exert over the design of REDD+ benefit sharing arrangements. The benefit sharing rules governing these arrangements will define the types of benefits communities can receive (e.g., cash versus in-kind), the modalities for delivering benefits, and the ways in which communities are allowed to use or invest the benefits. Notably, these rules are likely to be developed at a sub-national or project level by local government, project developers, or other “intermediaries” between communities and the larger REDD+ system (USAID, 2012).

The ‘lessons learned’ from USAID cases suggested that when communities have clear statutory or traditional claims to the land or resources at stake in a natural resource management project, external support by intermediaries is often necessary or useful to ensure that communities are familiar with their rights and have the skills to negotiate agreements. However, the negotiating party is usually the community and not the intermediary. “In Mexico, for example, all organizations interviewed by USAID (CONAFOR, Servicios Ambientales Oaxaca, Pronatura) clearly stated that they do not get involved, in any way, in how communities use the allotted money (USAID, 2012: 10). In the case of Mexico, local communities retained greater decision-making power over how benefits were allocated and used within the community.

The lessons learned also suggested that communities lacking recognized property rights tend to rely more on support from intermediaries who tend to play a vital role in enabling community participation. In this case, communities tend to have more limited power to decide what types of benefits they can get or how they can be used.

In principle, intermediaries should exist to support communities to access benefits and not make decisions for them over how benefits are allocated and used. Indeed, intermediaries often frame their role in these terms. However, in practice intermediaries have more technical skills than communities and more connections with other actors along the chain (e.g., government agencies, donors, private sector). This arrangement gives them considerable power to influence communities and shape the bargaining space. This power balance is important to recognize because the interests of intermediaries can be substantively different from the interests of communities. (USAID, 2012, p. 11)

3.2.2 Power relations and access control: The “bundles” and “webs” of powers that configure resource access

3.2.2.1 REDD+ BSMs and intermediaries as aggregators or brokers for local community participation

The mapping of relationships relative to access helps to clarify the crucial issue of who does or does not get to use what, in what ways, and when. This mapping focuses on

natural resources as the ‘things’ in question, embodied in and exercised through various mechanisms, processes, and social relations that affect people’s ability to benefit from resources. These powers constitute the material, cultural and political-economic strands within the “bundles” and “webs” of powers that configure resource access (Ribot & Peluso, 2003; Ghani, 1995). Thus “bundles of power” relate to a set of relationships enabling different people to gain, control, and maintain access to natural resources (Ribot & Peluso, 2003). In Mushie, the bundle of powers was a set of relationships through which local communities and their institutions (LCDs) realized benefits from REDD+ pilot projects (see **Figure 3.1**).

All efforts of local community to gain, maintain, or control access are, at their base, struggles in the domain of social relations. The relationships of those who control and those who seek to gain or maintain access are enacted through cooperation, competition, conflict, and negotiation. Thus, a local community’s bundle of powers is innately relational. One gains or maintains one’s access to resources via relations with those who control them. The relation between control and maintenance of access provides a new way of analyzing multi-tiered social hierarchies, as highlighted in Milgroom and Ribot (2020). These authors explain that the need to maintain one’s access to resources through others who control them reveals hierarchies as well as webs of powers, or what they call “fluid multi-layered social hierarchies” (Peluso & Ribot, 2020; Ribot & Peluso, 2003). This relational resource use situates local community power within the webs of powers that configure resource access. As Ribot & Peluso (2003) explain:

Different people and institutions hold and can draw on different “bundles of powers” located and constituted within “webs of powers” made up of these strands. People and institutions are positioned differently in relation to resources at various historical moments and geographical scales. (p. 154)

3.2.2.2 Brokering in REDD+ pilot projects.

The local community’s positioning within this network of relationships strongly affects their ability to gain, control and maintain access to benefits from REDD+ pilot projects. Intermediaries are often nongovernmental organizations or companies (with a focus on conservation or development) but can also be local government agencies or other entities (see **Table 3.5**). The intermediaries act as aggregators or power brokers for local communities (Bertzky et al., 2021). It is important to understand the mediating role of intermediaries in configuring local communities’ access to natural resources (Koch, 2008). For example, in the REDD+ pilot project in Mushie, LCDs were established as local governance structures to represent villages, organize activities at the field level and function as dedicated intermediaries between local communities and WWF. LCDs were established and recognized by legal document²⁹ even though traditional authorities already existed as intermediaries between communities and natural resources or between communities and higher levels of administration (NGOs, state, etc.). The main

²⁹ The Organic Law no. 08/016 of 7 October 2008 on the composition, organization and functioning of the decentralized territorial entities and their relations with the state and the provinces [*Loi organique n° 08/016 du 7 octobre 2008 portant composition, organisation et fonctionnement des Entités Territoriales Décentralisées et leurs rapports avec l'Etat et les Provinces*]. Hereinafter “Law on decentralized territorial entities”

roles of an LCD include communicating with project implementers, submitting, and treating grievances, and receiving and distributing benefits (Berk & Lungungu, 2020). LCDs were pivotal community structures in the REDD+ pilot project in Mushie (see **Figure 3.1**). Within the LCD, there are many bodies, including a steering committee to manage the LCD and the membership at large, which is mainly dedicated to REDD+ pilot project activities.

REDD+ is heavily loaded with a wide range of expectations on outcomes beyond carbon emission reductions—expectations that undergird the diversity of rationales concerning who should benefit from REDD+. Luttrell et al. (2013) identified six benefit-sharing rationales, each of which represents a different justification for the allocation of benefits: legal rights, emission reductions, stewardship, cost compensation, facilitation and a ‘pro-poor’ rationale. This typology of rationales is useful to understanding different intermediaries’ positioning in the webs of power and their interests in the BSM (see **Table 3.5**). In the REDD+ pilot project in Mushie, intermediaries used two rationales at the local level: facilitation (government via administrative authority, traditional authority and LCD steering committee) and emission reductions (government via the Ministry of the Environment, Nature Conservation and Tourism [MECNT] Coordination Unit of Forest Investment Program (CU-FIP) and Worldwide Fund for Nature in the DRC [WWF-DRC]). Intermediaries of the emissions reduction rationale focus on the goal of curbing carbon emissions and the notion that benefits should serve as an incentive toward this goal. CU-FIP, as the structure disbursing the PES, and WWF-DRC, as the implementer of the REDD+ pilot project, provided a direct link between REDD+ payments and effective forest conservation activities. Intermediaries of the facilitation rationale (administrative and traditional authorities) focus on effective implementation of REDD+ pilot project activities and incentives. They are more explicitly looking at the level of “rent” that will accrue to them.

These intermediaries or power brokers enjoy numerous benefits from their position in the webs of power (see **Figure 3.1**). The participation of the local community in the REDD+ pilot project opens a space where other actors occupying a broker position can exploit the participation of the local communities to their own advantages. The power brokers help create ties between local communities and the REDD+ pilot project for specific aspects of the project to sustain local communities’ associated activities (see **Table 3.5**).

However, it is important to recognize that the intermediaries’ stronger capacities and connections can lead to a power imbalance vis-à-vis the represented communities, which is even more problematic when the interests of intermediaries are substantively different from the interests of communities (Bertzky et al., 2021, p. 16).

For example, when certain members of LCDs were frustrated to the point of sabotaging planted areas, the traditional authority was less concerned with the consequences of this sabotage than with the inequity of their own empowerment vis-à-vis other authorities within the project (i.e., provision of a vehicle): “I decided not to go where the sabotage occurred because I don’t have means of transportation like the administrative authority” (Interview with Chief Boleme Bokumusili, land Chief and Traditional Authority of the Ntote Vaka Bonzale traditional *terroir* in Banunu, August 2019)

Table 3.5: The power brokers.

Power broker	Position in the webs of power	Power broker rationales	Bundles of power	Ties between local communities and REDD+ pilot project
Government - Ministry of the Environment, Nature Conservation and Tourism (MECNT) - Coordination Unit of Forest Investment Program (CU-FIP)	Through the financial payment of local community REDD+ pilot project activities	Emission reduction rationale	Payments to local communities (collective payment bonds) Arrangements and modalities of distribution of payments to local communities Amounts and frequency of payments to local communities	Validating REDD+ pilot project activities (KoboCollect) Establishing calendar and modalities of payments to local communities Allocating funds to the payments of local communities
Government - administrative authority	Through Land Affairs Officer	Facilitation rationale	Land Registers	Demarcating lands for REDD+ pilot project activities of local communities Documenting and reporting land conflicts related to REDD+ pilot project activities
	Through rural development inspector and home affairs services	Facilitation rationale	Authorization for LCD functioning Registration deeds Identification form LCD bylaws and statutes legalization	Increasing local community awareness about local development opportunities from the project Tracking project's local development objectives Channelling the local communities'

				claims to project management.
	Through environmental inspector and agriculture services	Facilitation rationale	Technical assistance to perform REDD+ pilot project activities such as savannah fire defense. Monitoring of REDD+ pilot project activities	Supporting local communities' project-level activities Increasing local community's effective engagement in project-level activities
Government - National Intelligence Agency	Through Secret Service Agents	Legal rights rationale / security rationale	Security for REDD+ pilot project implementation	Monitoring of LCD structuring REDD+ pilot project security risk mitigation
Traditional authority	Through the Land Chief	Facilitation rationale	Land for project-level activities	Making land available for project-level activities
	Through the Senior Advisor	Facilitation rationale	Shared spending and financial authority with LCD President and Treasurer Conflict resolution	Providing advice to LCD steering committee Resolving conflict related project-level activities within the local communities
Worldwide Fund for Nature in the DRC (WWF-DRC)	Through project implementation as Delegate Project Manager	Emission reductions rationale	Planning of REDD+ pilot project activities Arrangements and modalities of distribution of payments to local communities	Validating REDD+ pilot project activities (Measurement, Reporting and Verification - MRV) Validating the PES distribution criteria Working as payment agent

				Providing logistics for REDD+ pilot project activities (e.g., plants and seeds)
LCD steering committee	Through implementation of REDD+ pilot project activities and distribution of payments to local communities	Facilitation rationale	Listing participants in REDD+ pilot project activities Reporting on REDD+ pilot project activities Distribution of payments to local communities (the key of repartition)	Establishing list of participants in REDD+ pilot project activities Establishing the PES distribution criteria Organizing REDD+ pilot project activities Mobilizing LCD members for REDD+ pilot project activities

This paper locates local community power within the constellations of relations that enable or constrain local communities to derive benefits from REDD+. The aim is to illustrate how local communities' power depends on the webs of power and bundles of power in which it is embedded (see **Figure 3.1**).

3.3 Methods

3.3.1 Geographical context

The REDD+ pilot project known as PIREDD/Plateaux was a precursor of REDD+ in the Plateaux district, one of two districts in the province of Mai-Ndombe, Democratic Republic of Congo. PIREDD–Plateaux was the first phase of the Mai Ndombe REDD+ programme and was considered the most advanced REDD+ initiative in DRC to date (Howson & Kindon, 2015). Initiated in 2016, it was implemented by the Worldwide Fund for Nature in the Democratic Republic of Congo (WWF-DRC) and managed by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development of the DRC for the Forest Investment Program (FIP) with financial support from the World Bank. The project ended in December 2019 and a new phase was scheduled to start with a new implementer (i.e., not WWF-DRC). The objective of the project was to promote sustainable forest management in the former Plateaux District and the Kinshasa Basin, while improving the living conditions of rural populations and testing innovative mechanisms for forest management in the intervention area (WWF, 2018).

Crossing the western part of the Mai-Ndombe province, the Plateaux District was selected for its diverse ecosystems including agricultural and savannah land. The Plateaux District

stretching north to south forms a Ramsar biodiversity hotspot with strong potential to combat climate change through REDD+ (Gauthier, 2018; Berk & Lungungu, 2020). However, “with a deforestation rate of 0.44 percent for the period of 2000-2014 (as a percentage of the existing carbon stock), the Plateaux District was also considered to be one of the major hotspots of deforestation” (World Bank, 2014:3). The direct drivers of deforestation in the Plateaux District were shifting slash-and-burn agriculture, charcoal production, industrial logging, artisanal logging, and agricultural enterprise. The indirect drivers were lack of land use planning, demographic growth, infrastructure and urbanization, and governance (Gauthier, 2018).

The PIREDD–Plateaux project covers the territories of Kwamouth, Mushie, Bolobo and Yumbi. The district is home to ten main ethnic groups: the Teke (Batéké du Nord), Banunu Bobangi and Batende in the territory of Bolobo; Teke-sud in Kwamouth; Boma, Nunu and Mpee in Mushie; and Tienes (or Tendes) and Nunus in Yumbi. The composition of the local community groups in the Plateaux District is heterogeneous and there has been serious inter-communal conflict between ethnic groups, particularly in Yumbi. This highly contentious and volatile situation is a source of conflicts within local communities. The institutional arrangements were perceived as a way of getting community members involved in the REDD+ process, reducing conflictual interactions, and promoting better resource management. However, the inter- and intra-ethnic conflicts presented challenges in creating or restructuring LCDs (AMAR, 2017).

LCDs were created in accordance with the Congolese law, referring to the Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development implementing legislation (WWF-DRC, 2018). WWF-DRC, recruited as a local implementing agency in 2016, subcontracted four organizations, each responsible for a territory, to accompany the technical services and give structure to the LCDs. The local NGO Action Massive Rurale (AMAR) was recruited to structure LCDs in Mushie, Tombokolo was recruited for Bolobo, the local NGO Groupe d'Initiatives pour l'Agroforesterie en Afrique (GI Agro) for Kwamouth, and local NGO Centre d'Initiative et d'Appui Participatif à l'Agriculture Familiale et l'Environnement Durable (CIAPAFED) for Yumbi. The LCD restructuring process in Mushie was at the level of tribal chiefdom known as a *groupement*. In July 2016, AMAR signed an engagement to restructure LCDs in Mushie. Mushie is subdivided into three tribal chiefdoms: Baboma-Nord, Bampee and Banunu (see **Table 3.6**). Within each tribal chiefdom, the LCDs were installed at the main village of that “traditional terroir³⁰.” The tribal chiefdom is the lowest level of state administration and is defined as a territory with homogenous traditional community organized by custom, headed by a tribal chief and recognized by the provincial governor (GDRC, 2006; Samndong, 2018). The “traditional terroir” is an area that local people regard as theirs by custom and is often a grouping of more than one village (see **Table 3.6**). The intention was to have a more homogenous composition of local community for

³⁰ Customary terroir or village land is the rural area managed by a community which claims to exercise exploitation and occupation rights within the defined socio-economic and cultural framework. Republique Democratique Du Congo Ministere D’etat, Ministere Guide methodologique pour la realisation du zonage participatif des territoriales dans le cadre de PIREDD et sur base des demarches locales des planifications existantes. https://swm-programme.info/documents/20142/1234670/COD_MI_LP_20210531.pdf/7490d153-2dd1-b572-6409-bb6863f41a56?version=1.1&t=1662383893330&

the institutional arrangements and to reduce the conflictual interactions within the local community being restructured.

This explains why certain areas have benefited from more LCDs than others due to the distance separating the villages from their regional capital and the lack of cohabitation between the villages. It should be noted that (...) other areas inhabited along the main road and presenting a large surface area have been identified. (AMAR, 2016, p. 5)

Organizing the local community at the main village was the foundation of local community participation in REDD+ pilot projects. The distance between other villages and the main village and conflicts among the villages were obstacles to local community participation. Therefore, some traditional terroirs had more than one restructured LCD (AMAR, 2017; Gauthier, 2018).

Table 3.6: Three tribal chiefdoms

	Baboma-Nord		Bampee	Banunu
	Baboma-Nord	Mushie City		
Population	37 371	57 155	19 833	10 380
Traditional terroirs	29		19	11
Main activities	80%: Subsistence farming 20%: Fishing, livestock, and hunting		75%: Fishing 20%: Subsistence farming 5%: Livestock	50%: Fishing 40%: Subsistence farming 10%: Livestock

Source: Development Plan 2009-2014 Mushie Territory

3.3.2 Research methods

This research is based on fieldwork conducted during several visits from July to August 2019, with follow-up visits December 2019 to January 2020. Data were obtained through a total of 159 household questionnaires across three villages, fifteen semi-structured interviews and three focus group discussions with three LCD board committees.

Three village sites were selected for the present research, based on site accessibility, security concerns and the presence of LCDs. Two of these villages were PIREDD–Plateaux project sites with newly structured LCDs (Lobobi in the Ntote Vaka Bonzale traditional terroir in Baboma-Nord and Bosina in the Kembuma traditional terroir in Banunu). Camp Molart in the Ntote Vaka Bonzale traditional terroir in Baboma-Nord is the third village selected but did not have an LCD and did not participate in the PIREDD–Plateaux pilot project. Lists of households obtained from the LCDs' leadership showed 130 households in Bosina and 630 in Lobobi. In Camp Molart, the list obtained from the village leadership showed 120 households. Surveys were distributed to 159 households

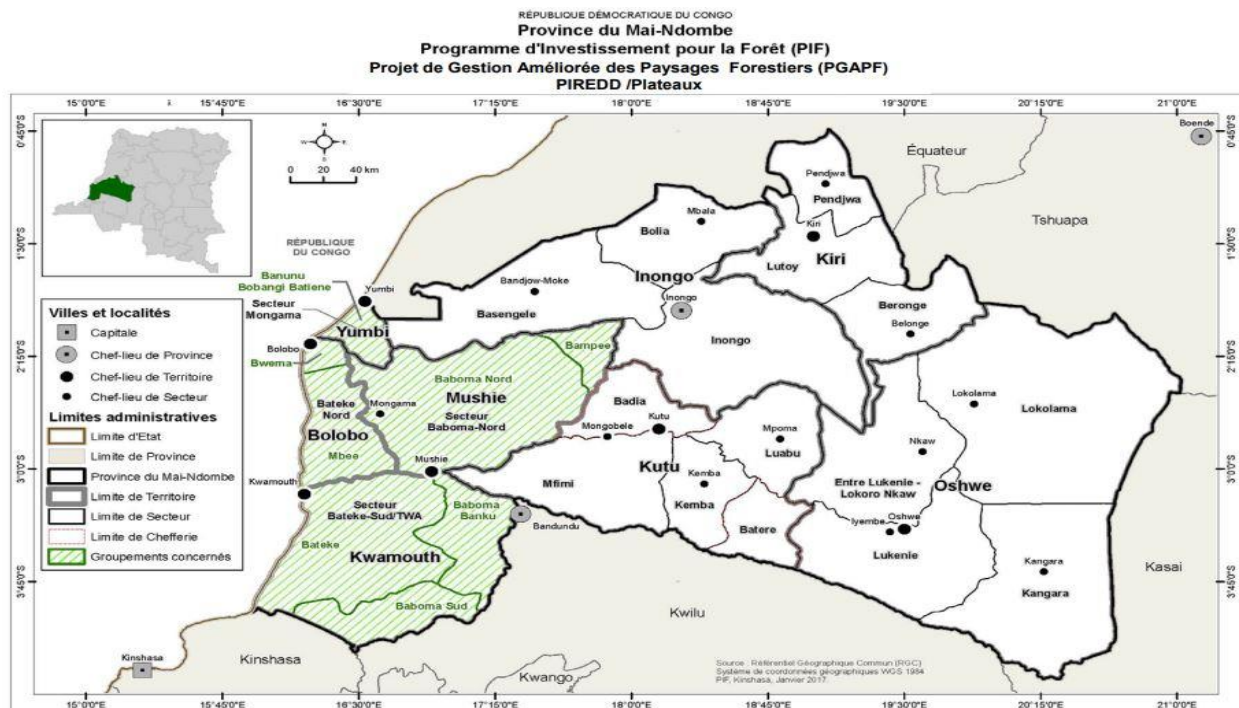
who agreed to take part and were involved in the REDD+ pilot project in the three selected villages (Lobobi [n=58], Bosina [n=50] and Camp Molart [n=51]). Although Camp Molart village went through the LCD restructuring process, the village did not secure the establishment of a restructured LCD because the PIREDD–Plateaux project preferred to install the LCDs in neighbouring villages. The questionnaire collected data from the three selected villages on their perceptions of the benefits of local communities' participation in REDD+ pilot projects, their understandings of the LCDs' relationships with other actors in the pilot project relative to the benefits, and their knowledge about REDD+ in general and the REDD+ pilot project in Mushie. Purposive and stratified random sampling were used to select survey respondents. The intention was to ensure that 90% of the survey sample participated in LCD structuring activities and the remainder were non-participants. Random selection was performed within these groups based on the aforementioned lists of households for each village. Stratification was performed to ensure good representation of the sample and good coverage of those involved in LCD structuring activities.

In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted in French and in Lingala with fifteen key informants representing government agencies at the national level, traditional authorities and local administrative authorities at the provincial level, environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOS), local NGOs, civil societies, donors, development agencies and executive members of village associations in the selected village sites. The in-depth interviews covered several aspects of benefits and of local communities' participation, reflecting the perspectives of different actors involved in local community participation and the benefit sharing mechanism of the REDD+ pilot project in DRC. The intention was to gather information on the local community's exercise of power and its effects on REDD+ pilot project governance, particularly in terms of access to project benefits.

Three focus group discussions were organized with the LCDs' steering committees in Lobobi, Bosina and Mushie City to capture their insights about their exercise of power in the governance of REDD+ pilot projects. The three focus groups discussed interactions between LCDs, and other different actors involved in LCD restructuring, as well as concerns and issues raised regarding their roles as local community representatives and interlocutors between local communities and REDD+ pilot project implementers.

Data were also collected through analysis of project documentation, LCD restructuring documentation including the "collective payment voucher", the "service voucher", the contract for payment for ecosystem services (PES) schemes in agroforestry and the contract for PES schemes in savannah fire defense activities, the LCDs' statutes and bylaws, specific project documentation for PIREDD–Plateaux and other documents related to LCDs such as the restructuring final report produced by AMAR.

Map 3.1: PIREDD–Plateaux



3.4 Findings and discussion: Local community power in moments of benefit sharing

Key moments where local communities' power emerges are around the implementation of PIREDD–Plateaux project activities and the distribution of project resources, through the interplay of local community agency and constitutive pressures. The communities' frustrations came to a head in August 2019. Activities had been implemented, but for many months, payments (PES) were delayed without clear explanation from the LCD steering committees or WWF staff. In desperation, LCD members blamed the steering committees for the delays even if they were powerless. The steering committees' irresponsiveness alongside its serious lack of information about the PES calendar fueled frustrations among LCD members who had performed various project activities and expected to be paid. In a focus group with the Mushie City LCD's steering committee, participants recalled receiving complaints about PES delays and being unable to give satisfactory answers to the members who had participated in REDD+ pilot project activities. As Berk and Lungungu (2020) noted,

[as] the Local Implementing Agency for PIREDD Plateaux, WWF is responsible for organizing local audits of the mechanism; however, many of the agents responsible for monitoring grievances and treating complaints are also tasked with

implementing project activities, posing a conflict of interest. (p. 13)

The webs of powers configuring access to REDD+ benefits become the location where the encounter between the Mushie REDD+ pilot project and the local communities produced an elite capture of benefits. The strategic action of different power brokers to overcome access barriers and control access of local communities influenced the space for local communities to maneuver and produced tensions among the power brokers (see **Figure 3.1**). “Resource governance projects often have unintended consequences and messy outcomes that are due to the way intentional action combines in unexpected ways with constitutive pressures that are outside the control of project implementers” (Ahlborg & Nightingale, 2018, p. 392). Around REDD+ pilot project activities and benefit sharing in PIREDD–Plateaux, interactions between local communities and different power brokers and the tensions between these power brokers produced the local community power. The next section examines these interactions and tensions in detail to explain the power of local communities in this REDD+ pilot project.

3.4.1 LCDs and REDD+ benefits in PIREDD–Plateaux

3.4.1.1 *Resources from REDD+ pilot project activities*

Local communities’ power can only be understood in relational moments where the multiplicity of interactions between local communities and different power brokers around activities and resources expand and constrain space for local communities’ abilities to benefit from the project. The REDD+ pilot project’s activities and distribution of resources from these activities were the situated moments where local communities’ power could have been produced in Mushie.

Participants in the LCD steering committee focus groups reflected on two types of activities—agroforestry and savannah fire defense—that were sources of direct benefits (e.g., PES for agroforestry activities), and also on the indirect benefits (e.g., roads) for local communities of the REDD+ pilot project in Mushie (see **Table 3.7**). These activities targeted the land use practices of local communities through a combination of reforestation and protection of savannah areas. For reforestation, communities were given acacia, orange, oil palm, and cola seedlings to plant. For savannahs, communities planned to abstain from cultivating certain areas in the hope that these areas will regrow into forest. Areas for reforestation and protection were set out in natural resource management plans (Berk & Lungungu, 2020). In these two types of activities, specific situations, moments, and spaces in encounters between power brokers and local communities were supposed to produce local communities’ power around the net gain from the project. However, power was only really accorded to the WWF and steering committee members, while LCD members were constricted to a labour supplier role.

Across both pilot villages (Bosina and Lobobi), most survey respondents (95.3%, n=109) identified agriculture as their main source of income, while a few respondents (4.5%, n=109) mentioned wages as their main source of income. The dominance of agricultural livelihoods is evident: 50% of respondents (n=109) identified agriculture as their principal activity, while the other 50% indicated that agriculture shared a role with other activities. Moreover, when asked their motivation to participate in the REDD+ pilot project, 81% of the survey respondents (n=106) confirmed that the PES was their reason for participating

in the project, while 12% mentioned a concern for climate change and 7% mentioned both. The local communities' participation was driven by the need to be in a better position to gain, maintain, and control access to direct monetary benefits from the projects. However, they perceived themselves as labour suppliers because their interactions with different power brokers opened only this space for them.

Table 3.7: Production and enactment of power related to project activities.

Project activity	LCD members	LCD steering committee	WWF
Activities related to agroforestry	Labour supply	Monitoring	Verification, validation, and authorization of payments
Activities related to savannah fire defense	Labour supply	Monitoring	Verification, validation, and authorization of payments

Source: Contract for PES schemes in savannah defense activities; Contract for PES schemes in agroforestry, Lobobi

3.4.1.2 Current distribution of resources from REDD+ pilot project activities

One key informant, the Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation and Tourism (MECNT) respondent participating in the REDD+ BSM negotiation made it clear: “It is [an] ongoing process, we are not done. The only information available [is] on [the] FONAREDD website.” The problem is that when the Mushie REDD+ pilot ended in December 2019, the REDD benefit-sharing plan was still in negotiation and therefore was not available “on the website”. An advanced draft of the BSM was available on the website, however, the process of drafting the BSP had been opaque and excluded local and national stakeholders from the outset (Berk & Lungungu, 2020). To evaluate the local community's ability to access the monetary benefits from the pilot project, the key documents describing the current distribution of resources from REDD+ pilot project activities were the “collective payment voucher”, the “service voucher”, the contract for PES schemes in agroforestry and the contract for PES schemes in savannah fire defense activities (see **Table 3.8**). The absence of a definitive version of the BSP was the root of uncertainty regarding how communities could access benefits. Almost all participants in the focus groups were not aware of how benefits would be shared nor of the prices decided. In addition, by August 2019 the villages visited by the research team still had not received the full amount of the results-based payments promised to them even though that phase of the project was due to close in December 2019.

Article 2 of the contract for PES schemes in agroforestry stipulated:

For the accomplishment of the tasks which are assigned under this Contract, it will be paid to households through the LCD a total amount of \$150 USD (one hundred and fifty US dollars) for 1 hectare planted, maintained and protected, of which 5% [is] for the operating costs of the LCD and 95% [is] for the households concerned (2017: 2).

The Land Chiefs were paid by WWF. One WWF respondent indicated that after the LCD members completed the agroforest activities, \$3/ha was given to the Land Chief by WWF-DRC. WWF also agreed to provide the necessary resources, such as tree saplings, to undertake these activities. Most of the villages received the tree saplings, which they planted on the borders of the savannahs to outline which areas were meant to be protected and left to regrow into forests (Berk & Lungungu, 2020). More than 90% of focus group participants were not aware how the distribution of benefits was decided.

Article 6 of the contract for PES schemes in savannah fire defense activities stipulated: “In order to compensate the LCD for the defense of savannas, the CU-FIP commits to paying the LCD the sum of five (5) dollars per hectare of protected savannah, per year, in the absence of fires and illicit activities”. The distribution of direct monetary benefits from the PES schemes in savannah fire defense activities was not explicitly indicated in the contract. One WWF respondent indicated that 80% of this money was dedicated to community interest projects (mainly the rehabilitation of roads) and 20% went to the Land Chief. WWF signed a contract with the Office de Route to improve roads with difficult access. Each LCD in turn signed a contract with WWF-DRC in the name of their village to maintain roads over a certain distance and to recruit local workers to carry out this work (Berk & Lungungu, 2020). Notably, more than 90% of participants in the focus group discussions thought that the decision to direct funding to roads was determined by WWF-DRC.

Table 3.8: The distribution of direct monetary benefits from REDD+ pilot project activities

	Payment for ecosystem services (PES) schemes in agroforestry	PES schemes in savannah fire defense activities
Payment calendar	3 payment instalments	Once per year
Price	USD \$150/ha	USD \$5/ha
LCD – project of community interest		80% (directed towards road improvements)
LCD – steering committee	5% representing USD \$7.5 per ha	
Land Chief	USD \$3/ha	20%
Participant household unit	95%/ha	

Source: Contract for PES schemes in savannah defense activities; Contract for PES schemes in agroforestry in Lobobi

The administrative authority and this authority’s technical service assistants reported receiving indirect monetary benefits to facilitate the implementation of REDD+ pilot project activities in Mushie territory. The “service voucher” and different memorandums of understanding between the PIREDD–Plateaux project in Mushie and the five technical services (rural development, internal affairs, agriculture, land registers and environment) described these indirect monetary benefits as motivation when carrying out an order assignment (according to the rules in force at PIREDD–Plateaux in Mushie), and logistical support for travel when carrying out order missions (a motorcycle, fuel, and office furniture).

3.4.2 Facilitator power brokers and local communities

There are two parallel authority structures in place at the community level (traditional and administrative), both of whom were essential actors for the implementation of the REDD+ pilot project in Mushie. The traditional authority (the land chief) is automatically the LCD's senior advisor according to the statutes and bylaws of the three LCDs reviewed by the research team (in Lobobi, Bosina and Mushie City), and also plays the role of effective facilitator of implementation. In these sites, the traditional authority was also both a clan leader (political leader) and a land chief (called "muelle" in the Baboma tribal chiefdom). As political leader and land chief, power and land rights often remain with them and as land chief, they serve as a sort of custodian of community land. They provide the land for implementation of the project and are included as senior advisor in the structure representing local communities. In Mushie, the facilitation of the traditional authority is key in the participation of local communities, as one traditional authority stated:

As land chief, I allocated the lands under my ancestral authority (Bilima spirit) for [the] REDD+ pilot project's activities and signed a contract with PIREDD-Plateaux project for this purpose. (...) As [the] LCD's senior advisor, I make sure that the activities are well done by the local communities and that the local communities do not sabotage the REDD+ pilot project's activities Interview with Chief Boleme Bokumusili, land Chief and Traditional Authority of the Ntote Vaka Bonzale traditional terroir in Banunu, August 2019).

As explained in the USAID (2012) report, local communities lacking recognized property rights also tend to rely more on support from intermediaries. In Mushie, the property rights belong to the Land Chief and the local community relied on him to negotiate with the REDD+ pilot project, much like the case of the Ibi-Bateke project in DRC.

The administrative authority is also another facilitator of REDD+ pilot project implementation. In Mushie, the territory administrator and his assistants from the five services (rural development, internal affairs, agriculture, land registers and environment) were involved in the implementation as indicated in the "service voucher" and the different memorandums of understanding between PIREDD-Plateaux in Mushie and each technical service (see **Table 3.5**). These brokers facilitating the implementation of REDD+ pilot project activities received incentives for effective implementation. The administrative authority and his assistants from each service received motorcycles and fuel for this facilitation role:

The project has provided us with the motorcycles, fuels and office furniture such as computers. (...) If the project leaves it is pitiful. (Interview with Administrative Authority Mushie, August 2019)

Chief Boleme Bokumusili even mentioned that the incentives he received had a significant impact on his life:

The incentives I received help me to pay for my daughter university's fees and for the funeral of my young brother. Without these incentives, I will not have a decent life and a lot of us will not be able to send our children to schools or universities (Interview with Chief Boleme Bokumusili, land Chief and

Traditional Authority of the Ntote Vaka Bonzale traditional terroir in Banunu, August 2019).

The challenge is to ensure that those facilitating the implementation of REDD+ receive sufficient incentives to achieve effective implementation, while at the same time guarding against so-called “REDD+ rent”.³¹ The REDD+ rent (motorcycles, fuel, office furniture) for the administrative authority comes from the use of its services to secure REDD+ pilot activities. When asked why he needed this rent to provide the services he normally provided to the communities, the administrative authority recognized that:

We rarely receive national or provincial transfers. Also, there are not many economic activities to generate revenues for the territory like Mushie. For us, what we receive from REDD+ [is] very important for our ability to provide services to the community.

For the traditional authority, the rent comes from his position as Land Chief. In his context, REDD+ rent is primarily a land rent. He also received USD \$3/ha for agroforestry activities and 20% of the PES for savannah fire defense activities (see **Table 3.8**).

It is important to understand that the REDD+ rent paid to the facilitator power brokers had a huge influence on the local communities' implementation of REDD+ pilot project activities and access to its benefits. REDD+ rent instilled a dependence of the facilitator power brokers on the local communities' ability to implement REDD+ pilot project activities. Without the local communities' implementation of these activities, their REDD+ rent would disappear. Access to REDD+ rent is gained and maintained through the local communities' implementation of REDD+ pilot project activities. Given that REDD+ rent access requires the local communities' implementation of REDD+ pilot project activities, local communities are potentially in a better position to control access to project benefits and to prevent so-called elite capture of the project. In Maa, another village in the Plateaux District, the local community leveraged their position by attempting to withdraw their consent, submitting a letter forbidding the activities from taking place on their land (Berk & Lungungu, 2020). Some local community members were aware of this local community power and used it when there were PES delays to sabotage REDD+ pilot project activities. In the interview with the traditional authority, he referred to intentional burning of savannahs (bushfires) in the villages of Bompensole and Camp Ferrera, to destroy the project results (Interview with Chief Boleme Bokumusili, land Chief and Traditional Authority of the Ntote Vaka Bonzale traditional terroir in Banunu, August 2019). These actions were intended to demonstrate their discontent for not receiving payments for two years and having no resources to pay the people for their work (Berk & Lungungu, 2020). Administrative and traditional authorities confirmed what they called “incidents related to sabotage of REDD+ pilot project activities” and the pressure they were putting on local communities to avoid those acts of sabotage. Thus, the interactions between facilitator

³¹ REDD+ rent: “The fraction of profits above what would be strictly necessary for the capital to remain invested in a given economic activity”. In the REDD+ context, this rent is the value of carbon credits beyond what is needed to cover all costs to curb deforestation (Karsenty et al., 2014). For Peskett (2011), REDD+ rent represents the difference between the cost of implementing REDD+ (opportunity cost plus the funding needed to implement policies) and the average global carbon price at which emissions reductions credits from REDD+ could be sold (i.e., the rent is the profit that could be made from REDD+).

power brokers and local communities shaped access to the REDD+ benefits. Both traditional and administrative authorities used their positions to secure implementation of different activities by constraining LCD steering committees or LCD members. Destabilization occurred when some LCD members ignored this pressure and exercised their power to gain or control access to different benefits. Most of the time, however, LCD members exercised their power by sabotaging the implementation of activities.

3.4.3 Power broker conflicts and local communities

Beyond the facilitator power brokers, there are different power brokers with different rationales for the allocation of benefits from the local communities' implementation of REDD+ pilot project activities. These different justifications and strategic actions to control others' access to benefits have an influence on the maneuvering space of the different power brokers. The process of gaining access to REDD+ benefits and the lack of a finalized version of the BSM created tensions between the different power brokers. These tensions destabilized the local communities' implementation of REDD+ pilot project activities due to pressures to effectively implement project activities and prevent sabotage before accessing the benefits.

Figure 3.1 allows a mapping of the dynamic processes and relationships of access to resources from REDD+ pilot activities. Focusing on the REDD+ pilot project activities as the “things” in question, a range of powers—embodied in and exercised through various social relations—affected the ability of local communities to benefit from this project. **Table 3.7** explains “who does (and who does not) get to use what, in what ways, and when (that is, in what circumstances)” (Neale, 1998, p. 48). Local communities are central to these webs of power because they are the ones implementing the activities and potentially have the bundles of power to configure access to project benefits. Local communities are the only stakeholders along with WWF-DRC that have relationships with all stakeholders in these webs of power. With CU-FIP, their relationship is related to the PES; with WWF-DRC it is related to activities; with the administrative authority and his assistants it is related to the expertise and enforcement of the commitment to implement activities, and with the traditional authority it is more complex because the traditional authority is also part of the local communities. Other stakeholders also have bundles of power to gain, control and maintain access to benefits. WWF-DRC, as the REDD+ pilot project implementer, also has a set of relationships with all stakeholders. The traditional authority has a set of relationships including WWF-DRC, local communities, and administrative authorities. Administrative authorities' set of relationships comprises WWF-DRC, local communities, and the traditional authority. However, these sets of relationships emerge from cooperation and conflict over benefits within particular moments.

The first tension observed in this case was between the traditional authorities and administrative authorities. This tension was actioned by questions about the level of REDD+ rent each of them deserved. For the administrative authority, the REDD+ rent he and his service assistants received were not considered sufficient to provide full and effective support of REDD+ pilot project activities and prevent acts of sabotage. The traditional authority felt that his level of REDD+ rent should be higher, like the administrative authority:

I do not have a motorcycle. I am supervising the local communities' implementation of REDD+ pilot project's activities by my own means. The administrator of the territory has means of transportation provided by the project even he is not supervising activities or intervening to stop the sabotages of activities. When I asked why I do not have motorcycle, WWF–Mushie told me that it was decided in Kinshasa. So, last time, I decided to do nothing because I was not able to go where the sabotage occurred and he did not do anything. If you compare us, I am the one who deserves the vehicle and fuel.”

For both authorities, the mobilization of local communities is related to the level of REDD+ rent they received. From their perspective, increasing their REDD+ rent will increase the number of participants and reduce the number of sabotage incidents. The traditional authority wanted a car or a motorcycle to facilitate his movements, while the administrative authority requested more fuel and more financial assistance to facilitate his work. Therefore, tensions between the administrative authority at the local territory level and the traditional authority around the level of net gain they must secure from the local communities' participation became specific moments where local community agency and constitutive pressures coproduced local community power. The acts of sabotage favoured the traditional authority over the administrative authority perceived both by the local communities and project implementers as unable to fully secure the REDD+ pilot project activities. The traditional authority acknowledged this:

What I regret is the fact that I do not have the means of transportation to go to the field and investigate these acts of sabotage. The administrative authority and his different services have the means of transportation provided by the REDD+ pilot project, but he is not going to the field. When villagers call me to intervene, for this time I told them that I do not have the means of transportation. (Interview with Land Chief of Ntote Vaka Bonzale, August 2019)

As the head of the Mushie City LCD recognized in the focus group, local communities see their position in the webs of power as labour force suppliers, and depend on the WWF to validate their activities and CU-FIP to receive their PES. The local communities limited their ability to control access to benefits by focusing on implementation of project activities and not leveraging this implementation of activities to control the access to the benefits (see **Figure 3.1**). At the same time, the LCD members used Scott's (1985: 289-303) “creative non-compliance” as an expression of “weapons of the weak”. For Scott, resistance begins where compliance stops. One respondent from the Mushie environmental inspector confirmed the non-compliance of LCD members and sabotage of REDD+ pilot project activities, noting that: “We support them with the activities, but when we are not there, they stop implementing these activities. When we ask them why they stopped implementing these activities, they mention the PES delays as the reason for the sabotage” (Interview with environmental inspector and agriculture services, August 2019). Similar practices were also documented by Berk and Lungungu (2020):

The communities' frustration came to a head in June 2019. For two years, several communities left the savannahs untouched. Finally, after suffering

from food scarcity due to restrictions placed on women's livelihoods, changing their practices to accommodate a project imposed on them, and still not receiving the promised payments, communities burned their savannahs in protest. (p. 12)

Beyond acts of sabotage or other forms of opting out, the local communities were remarkably effective at either forcing PES to be paid to them when it was delayed, or forcing traditional authorities to engage ranchers rather than the REDD+ pilot project for using their land:

Five LCD presidents told [us] that they had not received payments for two years and had no resources to pay the people for their work. (...) Meanwhile, in a sign of their desperation, the villages of Mbala, Mukoro, and Bosiki made deals with the neighbouring SOGENAC³² cattle ranch to allow cows to graze on their burned savannahs in exchange for a cow or two. (...) One chief repeated that he preferred to ally with the ranchers over WWF because at least the ranchers respected their agreements (Berk & Lungungu, 2020, p. 12-13).

Further tension between the LCD steering committee and WWF-DRC arose from arrangements and modalities of payment distribution to local communities. Local communities relied on intermediaries to complete the required administrative procedures to obtain the transfer of payments. After LCD restructuring, the LCD steering committee played a key role in enabling the participation of local communities because its brokering was the only way to ensure the local community had a voice. From that point of view, each LCD steering committee relied on WWF-DRC, but WWF-DRC did not have control over the payment calendar or its modalities. For one member of the LCD steering committee:

Our relations with WWF are unidirectional. They only want to tell us what to do. When we have claims or requests from the local communities and want their inputs or orientations, there are no answers. This is putting us in bad position vis-à-vis the local communities. We are unable to tell our members when they are going to be paid for the activities already completed.

Tensions between the LCD steering committee and WWF due to PES delays revealed moments where local communities lost control of access to project benefits. Even when activities were completed and verified, they lost control of other steps to the benefits generated. Local communities' power should encompass the ability to control different steps leading to benefit access. In the Mushie REDD+ pilot project, the scheduling of benefit flows was defined by the contract between the LCDs and WWF-DRC (see **Table 3.9**). In 2019, the payment of the three installments encountered an initial delay of two to three months. According to WWF agents, the delays were due to the challenges of monitoring and verification and the CU-FIP's administrative burden. For the payment of

³² SOGENAC (Société des grands élevages de Ndama en Afrique centrale in English Ndama Large Farms Society in Central Africa) is a private cattle ranching company operating in Mai-Ndombe province in Democratic Republic of Congo

the first instalments, for example, the LCD steering committee had to deal with the frustration of its members for at least 2 more months than the 3 months scheduled. For 5 months, LCDs did not have control of the PES (see **Table 3.9**). WWF controlled verification and CU-FIP controlled the payment calendar. One head of the LCD steering committee stated: “They [WWF] do not give us the information we need to calm our members about the delays. We feel powerless and used only for labour”. It is thus quite important to consider when benefits will be distributed in REDD+ pilot projects. “Alongside complementary programming, predictability and timing are important in terms of graduation. Cash transfers must be delivered predictably as this enables poor households to plan and make the best use of their resources. When transfers do not arrive when expected, households often have to take credit and lose a proportion of their transfer in debt payment when it eventually arrives” (Slater, 2009: 3).

Table 3.9: PES distribution after completion of agroforestry activities -LCD Lobobi³³

Activities	Monitoring, verification, and PES schedule	USD/ha	Area (ha)	Total PES (USD)
Preliminary work (picketing, etc.), planting seedlings, protection of plantations with fire breaks	Payment of first instalment 3 months after setting up plantation Delays: average of 2 to 3 months after the 3 months requested	75	19	1425
Refilling and maintenance of plantation, firebreak maintenance	Payment of second instalment 9 months after setting up plantation. Delays: average of 2 to 3 months after the 3 months requested	50		950
Refilling and maintenance of plantation, firebreak maintenance	Payment of third instalment 27 months after setting up plantation. Delays: average of 2 to 3 months after the 3 months requested	25		475
Total amount (USD)		\$2850		
Amount for the households (USD)		\$2707.50		

³³ CONTRACT No. 120 /IDA/PGAPF/WWF/PSE/2017A PAYMENT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
ACTIVITY: AGROFORESTRY LCD LOBOBI

Amount for LCD (5%) (USD)	\$142.50
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Source: Contract for PES schemes in agroforestry in Lobobi

The research team had access to a certified report for agroforestry activities completed by the Lobibi LCD's members. After a 2-to-3-month delay on each installment, Lobobi's LCD steering committee received payment for the 19ha completed by its members in three installments (USD \$1425, \$950 and \$475). These amounts were divided among all households who participated in the activities related to these 19 ha. Lobobi's LCD steering committee also received its 5% for the 19 ha.

The Coordination Unit of Forest Investment Program (CU-FIP) controls the PES and other payments as well as the calendar. Tensions between CU-FIP and WWF-DRC arose from the unsuccessful negotiation of phase 2 of the REDD+ pilot project in Mushie and PES management. As no agreement was reached to renew or extend the project with WWF-DRC, the pilot project ended in December 2019. A new phase of the REDD+ pilot project began in October 2022. In the meantime, for several years the LCDs have been left alone with the local communities without any support from the project. The local community and its steering committee were not involved and did not have "say" in the decision to end the piloting project. LCDs were only informed that the project is ending because no agreement was reached between CU-FIP and WWF-DRC. The field research reported in this paper was conducted in the project's 'lame duck' period of 2019. CU-FIP was working on the continuation of the project without WWF-DRC, and WWF-DRC was working on the success story they were planning to share and were less involved. This atmosphere provoked panic in the local communities because they felt like they were not going to be paid before the end of project with WWF-DRC for activities they had already completed. In August 2021, the head of the Mushie LCD indicated to the research team that the project still owed the LCD around \$6,000 USD from the first activities they implemented for the project. One participant in the focus group summarized this mix of ire and panic: "People feel like they have been fooled. We are asking for us [the LCD steering committee] to be paid before WWF-DRC leaves." Local communities do not choose other power brokers, they must learn to deal with them. The project implementers brought most of power brokers to leverage their knowledge, capacity, networks, and their positions in the village.

3.4.4 The failed brokering of the LCD steering committees

As a power broker, the LCD steering committees in Bosina, Lobobi and Mushie City failed to facilitate relations between the REDD+ pilot project and the local communities. The LCD steering committees were restructured and set up to facilitate the participation of local communities, but the steering committees had no power or influence with WWF or CU-FIP in what a focus group respondent described as a "one-way" relationship. No matter how the LCDs were restructured, their role in terms of the BSM was limited to a labour force in this one-way relationship with WWF and CU-FIP. WWF-DRC is responsible for verification of project activities and CU-FIP for payment. Instead of ensuring that the local communities received their PES, the LCD steering committees only made certain that the activities were completed. In this way, power is relational and

produced through actions that generate contradictory effects for differently situated actors (Ahlborg & Nightingale, 2018).

If a facilitating power broker wants to position himself in the webs of power around benefits, they need to use their ‘bundles of power’ (see **Figure 3.1**). The LCD steering committee was not able to leverage the key role its members played in the implementation of various activities to control access to the benefits. Others, like the traditional and administrative authorities, were able to leverage their bundles of power and position in the webs of power to gain and control access to the benefits or constrain local communities to carry on the implementation even if it was not in their interest to do so. Moreover, the LCDs have little autonomy or financial capacity to manage activities. Every decision on how and when to distribute resources appears to have been unilaterally made by WWC-DRC (Berk & Lungungu, 2020). Therefore, the LCD steering committees were in a bad position to maneuver and control access to benefits. The traditional and administrative authority had already captured the (few) benefits on offer, and had maneuvered around the LCD steering committee to mobilize LCD members as needed.

The LCD steering committee’s small maneuvering space around benefits and lack of control over the PES calendar led to disempowerment of local communities. At the same time, the implementation of REDD+ pilot project activities by LCD members had created a potentially advantageous position for local communities. The participation of local communities through LCDs has had contradictory effects. The BSM is the location where the encounter of different power brokers produces the control of benefit access by the traditional and administrative authorities and the loss of control by the local communities. When for more than 5 months after the implementation of agroforestry activities, LCD members were still waiting to be paid and the LCD steering committees were still seeking information on the PES calendar and delays, the administrative authorities received fuel and the traditional authority received, on his request, an advance on his benefits of \$3/ha for agroforestry activities completed by LCD members. The traditional authority was not harmed by the PES delays: “When my brother died, I asked WWF-DRC to give me an advance. They gave [it to me] and I used it for my brother’s funeral” (Interview with Chief Boleme Bokumusili, land Chief and Traditional Authority of the Ntote Vaka Bonzale traditional terroir in Banunu, August 2019). The way that benefits are shared over time has important implications for local communities engaging in REDD+ and the sustainability of schemes (Fischer, 2007; Peskett et al., 2008).

3.5 Conclusion

Recent efforts to understand local communities’ participation in REDD+ projects have focused on the degree to which local communities did or did not gain or exert power, especially managerial or decision-making power. These linear and static perspectives on local community participation miss opportunities to capture the key moments where local

community power emerges or is distorted in REDD+ projects. The institutional arrangements to structure local community participation and benefit sharing are two key moments where local community power is produced.

However, the traditional and administrative authorities were able to coopt the LCD steering committee and exploit the REDD+ BSM in ways that the LCD steering committee on its own could not, since the traditional and administrative authorities have property rights on the land where the REDD+ pilot project was implemented. LCD members were reduced to a labour provision role, with their only power being one of strategic non-compliance, or sabotage, to limit the flow of PES rent to the authorities.

To conclude, the analysis in this article offers at least three important insights:

First, the fact that the lands where the REDD+ pilot project was implemented are under ancestral authority (Bilima spirit), meaning the land chief has property rights, gave these traditional authorities a significant advantage over local communities' power to decide what type of benefit they would receive. Indeed, local communities were largely reduced to labour provision roles, or passive recipients of PES schemes, relying on the land chief as a broker with other project actors.

Second, in this article and through analyzing the different interactions around the REDD+ BSM, the various brokers played distinct roles along the chain of actions required for communities to participate in REDD+ pilot projects. This gives brokers considerable power to influence communities and shape the REDD+ BSM bargaining space. This power balance is important to recognize because the interests of brokers can be substantively different from the interests of local communities.

Third, this article has revealed that although the implementation of REDD+ pilot project activities by LCD members can create an advantageous position for local communities, the LCD steering committee had a small maneuvering space around benefits sharing and the PES calendar, as compared to the traditional authorities and administrative authorities. This led to disempowerment of local communities.

WWF-DRC used a PES contract for PIREDD–Plateaux, however, the benefit-sharing mechanism under negotiation can bring another dynamic among various power brokers. More research is needed to understand how this dynamic shapes access to REDD+ benefits. Moreover, LCDs can also learn from the REDD+ project in the Ejidos in Mexico (Hernandez-Gongora, 2020).

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Essay 3

Local community participation as an important puzzle in REDD+ pilot projects: How do lessons from Mushie advance knowledge?

Maurice Mukoie Dikaya

School of International Development, University of Ottawa

Abstract

This article investigates the implementation of REDD+ in the Plateaux district in Mai-Ndombe province of the DRC, focusing on the main lessons from efforts to encourage the participation of local communities. The REDD+ safeguards under the Cancun Agreement mandate a significant role for “full and effective” participation, since local communities are impacted directly both by degrading forests and by any efforts to improve or protect them. In Mushie, DRC, local community participation in the REDD+ pilot projects was primarily based on the idea that local communities were the main agents of forest change and that their behaviour could be modified through the provision of economic incentives and appropriate technical support. A review of experiences in other pilot projects found different configurations and rationales for local participation, which offer five key lessons that can inform the next phases of REDD+ projects. Collectively, these insights indicate that achieving the comprehensive and effective participation outlined in Decision 1/CP.16, referred to as the Cancun Agreement, can be advanced by considering local power dynamics and other factors beyond economic incentives. These factors shape the engagement of local communities and the implementation of existing REDD+ stakeholder engagement policies in a manner consistent with the principles of good forest governance.

Keywords: local community participation, empowerment, lessons learned, REDD+, DRC

4.1 Introduction

Local community participation has become a core tenet of environmental governance and particularly crucial in assessing forest governance processes. The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) was one of the first to join the pilot project phase of the REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation) initiative, and it offers important lessons about how to organize the participation of local communities. However, to reflect on local community participation in REDD+ pilot projects, it is important to understand its history and context. There are three dominant models for natural resource governance: fortress conservation, co-management conservation and neoliberal conservation (Vaccaro et al., 2013: 255-259). While these three models can largely be seen as the products of different historical-political moments of the past century, they clearly co-exist simultaneously in the minds and practices of relevant stakeholders and have been put in place or replaced in given contexts as a function of the competing stewardship priorities of government officials, NGOs or local communities (Zanotti, 2011). The three models are, naturally, archetypal categories that include considerable historical, geographical and institutional diversity. The historical account of conservation is contingent on the context, just as the prevailing political structures and ideologies influencing public policy and scientific production exhibit significant variability (Adams & Hutton, 2007). These three main phases represent radically different approaches to local community participation.

Under the fortress conservation model, the modes of environmental decision-making were under the control of state bureaucracies. Much of the literature backed the exclusionary modes of environmental governance and the state management of natural resources. The development of the idea of “collective public good” was a fundamental legitimating argument for state intervention. Local actors in proximity to these resources were not represented in environmental policy (Forsyth, 2003; Bixler, 2015). As Vaccaro et al. stated, “Fortress conservation is characterized by an exclusionary approach: it has often resulted in evictions of local inhabitants. It also focuses part of its managerial efforts on protecting and defending its borders from outsiders” (2013: 256). In the DRC, participation is a big challenge in a country where the State has always excluded actors such as civil society organizations (CSOs) from policy making (Mpoyi et al., 2013).

The failure of this centralized approach to meet local needs enlivens the debate about the role of local communities in environmental governance and the alternatives to top-down management of natural resources. Generally, practitioners and scholars alike expect the inclusion of nonstate actors in governmental decision-making to contribute to the quality and implementation of decisions as well as to their legitimacy (Wesselink et al., 2011). “The inefficiencies of the fortress model have pushed the conservationist movement (and its public and private bureaucracy) to rethink the paradigm, due to continued local resistance and accusations of environmental injustice” (Vaccaro et al., 2013: 257). To

address these issues, there were calls for forest management to be decentralized and based on local values and practices (Bullock & Hanna, 2012; Nyange, 2014).

Decentralization refers to transferring forest ownership, rights and management responsibilities to local communities (Ribot, 2002; Bullock & Hanna, 2012; Angelstam et al., 2019), as in the case of community forests. This co-management conservation model not only represents a shift in environmental governance to include a wider number of partners but also clarifies resource access rights by developing or enunciating a set of rules that are accepted by all participants. The new environmental governance paradigm based on local community participation was endorsed by the international environmental community at the Rio Conference in 1992 and gained legitimacy as a style of managing the environment when it was unveiled as one of the key principles of sustainable development (Bixler, 2015). Indeed, the idea of community participation as a mechanism for tackling complex problems is now reflected at a global level in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2016). Therefore, when the Cancunⁱ safeguards were adopted, one safeguard was included to promote and support the participation of local communities in REDD+ projects (paragraphs 70 and 72 of UNFCCC Decision 1/CP.16). This shift from government to governance, as the State “steps back” and seeks the involvement of communities in a range of areas, potentially offers opportunities for local communities to exercise their powers (Rolfe, 2017).

In the DRC, participation in REDD+ is indeed organized, at least discursively, to ensure that both governmental and non-governmental actors are involved. The Prime Minister’s Decree No. 09/40 of November 26, 2009, on REDD+ in the DRC identified the implementing structures required. Three other texts put the local communities at the core of forest governance:

- Article 22 of the 2002 Forest Law recognizes the traditional possession of forests by local communities and the local communities’ possibility of securing forest concessions.
- The Prime Minister’s Decree No. 14/018 of August 2, 2014, defining a system for allocating forest concessions to local communities.
- Ministerial Order 025, which lays down specific provisions relating to the management and operations of local communities’ forest concessions.

The assumption is that effective natural resource governance is related to having adequate institutions and administrative frameworks to coordinate the various organizations involved (UNEP, 2018ⁱ). The expectation is that if stakeholder participation becomes institutionalized, it will create organizational cultures that can facilitate processes through which goals are negotiated and outcomes are achieved. The stakeholders participate through institutions that represent diverse groups of stakeholders and their views (Reed, 2008), and it is through institutions that humans attempt to exercise control of natural resources and environmental regimes (Young, 2008). The long-term

success of participatory processes may depend on institutionally embedding stakeholder participation (Reed, 2008).

There is a diversity of stakeholders, but the local community participation of forest-dependent communities is the cornerstone of this article. Article 1, Point 17 of the DRC Forest Code, reiterated by Article 2, Point 3 of Decree No. 14/018, defines a “local community” as a population traditionally organized on the basis of custom, united by clan or parental solidarity ties on which its internal cohesion is based and which is attached to a given territory (Mpoyi et al., 2020). Forests and village commons are important sources of supplementary livelihoods and necessities for rural households in many parts of the world, including the DRC (Agarwal, 2001). The participation of local communities in activities to tackle deforestation or forest degradation reduces social and environmental risks, such as exclusion from their traditional lands, and provides legitimacy to these activities. However, critics such as Myers et al. (2018) note that “local community participation” is often added to governance systems that are already focused on technical rather than political solutions. The resulting governance systems are therefore messy compromises that do not necessarily do justice to representing local people’s concerns. Proponents of the initial attempts at REDD+ acknowledged that these “pilot” phases could only offer a technical lens on problems, leading to solutions that focused on procedures, such as benefit distribution (Myers et al., 2018), but that political solutions might come in later phases.

Finally, in the neoliberal conservation model (Vaccaro et al., 2013: 258), local community participation is based on a transactional approach, trading sound environmental behaviour from local communities for payments for environmental services (PES). The neoliberal conservation approach emphasizes the importance of adequate resources to support economic sustainability and long-term ecological viability of each conservation policy. REDD+ is epitomized by these market-based or neoliberal conservation strategies and their potential effects on communities that depend on natural resources. The community-level PES provided through REDD+ pilot projects simplifies or “black boxes” local communities, so that they become single homogeneous entities, capable of entering into contracts and responding as “rational” economic decision-makers.

In the DRC, this was achieved through local committees for development (LCDs), which were framed as institutions that both make and engage local communities. LCDs are also the main conduit for the DRC’s National Payment for Environmental Services, which is the main REDD+ benefit-sharing mechanism. However, critics such as Vatn (2009) and Fletcher and Breitling (2012) note that both the LCDs and the PES mechanism have actually constrained and shaped community participation in such a way that possibilities for local agency and dissent have been almost extinguished. “While payments may strengthen community relations and simplify action for environmental care, they may also introduce a purely instrumental logic and in some cases worsen the environmental status by crowding out environmental virtues” (Vatn, 2009: 1245).

This article seeks to contribute new insights to our understanding of local community participation in REDD+ pilot projects, which covers a broad spectrum of forms, lacks conceptual clarity and has raised serious concerns in local contexts during the implementation from theory to practice (Hobley, 1996; Bixler et al., 2015). The contribution of this article comes from an empirical case study of REDD+ pilot projects in Mushie territory in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The article focuses on the lessons learned from the implementation of the REDD+ social safeguards for the full and effective participation of local people in REDD+ and local power dynamics in Mushie.

Drawing from different lines of evidence about local community participation and analyzing different approaches used to shape this participation, it was observed that REDD+ pilot projects in Mushie are using a combination of co-management approaches and neoliberal approaches to organize local community participation in the projects.

The assumption behind encouraging local community participation in co-management approaches was to recognize the role of local communities in forest governance, to provide sustainable management for the forest and to mitigate the negative impacts of REDD+ pilot projects on local communities. In the field, however, local community participation can be used as a way for the REDD+ pilot project to pre-ensure and “sell” REDD+ as a “successful” intervention that empowers local communities. The participation may remain stuck in tokenism, as observed by Samndong (2018). Local community participation thus becomes an end, sidestepping the legitimizing and efficacy arguments it was originally meant to epitomize.

The assumption behind the neoliberal conservation approaches is that payments for environmental services could be used as opportunities to trade the local communities’ sound behaviour in forest governance for money. This transactional attempt to shape local communities’ behaviour can backfire and they may opt out of the ecological aspects, making PES the cornerstone of their participation. This can lead to a contrast between the rhetoric from the implementer, which sees the local community participation structure as evidence of co-management of the REDD+ pilot project, and the local community, which may perceive the REDD+ pilot project through a neoliberal conservation lens as only concerned with the PES.

The rationales behind these two models can shift the exercise of power by local communities away from the REDD+ pilot project’s objectives (reducing greenhouse gases emission and enhancing carbon sinks). In this case, REDD+, conceived as a neoliberal project seeking to monetize ecosystem services, can be said to have co-opted the participatory language of early conservation models by only paying it token lip service. As McDermott et al. noted,

In order for policies and institutions to be improved, it is critical to understand current policies and their implications. Furthermore, to measure the net global impact of policy change in one region, it is critical to monitor any corresponding changes across other regions and across both public and private governance

spheres. Most global-scale comparative research on forest policy to date has focused on broad “macro-level” goals and objectives found in national forest programs (Howlett & Rayner 2006; 30), and international forestry deliberations (Dimitrov 2005; Humphreys 2006). This scholarship has been important in describing, and advancing explanations for, the varying emphases on economic, environmental, and social goals governing domestic and global forest policy development. However, the “micro level” requirements of policies aimed at promoting responsible forest management have been largely neglected in this policy research. (2009: 217-218)

This paper examines the lessons from the REDD+ pilot project in Mushie and other REDD+ initiatives in relation to local community participation, with regard to the exchange of money for (good) behaviour in forest governance. The paper is divided into six sections. Following the introduction, section 2 defines the framework for the study of local community participation in natural resource governance. Section 3 provides the geographical context of community participation in forest governance in the REDD+ pilot project and introduces the case study. Section 4 presents some of the lessons learned in the implementation of REDD+ pilot projects in relation to the participation of local communities and examines key insights in light of other REDD+ initiatives. Then it examines what the findings mean for the design and implementation of future REDD+ projects if they are to empower local communities. The research contributes to the empirical understanding of factors facilitating local communities’ participation in REDD+ projects and the extent to which local community participation can be fully effective. Lessons learned and implications examined may be relevant to other initiatives that seek to include local communities and provide REDD+ benefits and other types of results-based financing.

4.2 Forest governance and local community participation

Like many trendy terms, governance has taken on diverse interpretations depending on the context. It is a fluid concept shaped by various individuals and entities. Governance encapsulates how a community structures its cohabitation, addresses diverse perspectives and interests rooted in ethical standards and principles, and oversees resource allocation. These ideas manifest in frameworks, laws, institutions and circumstances. In the realm of natural resources, governance extends to determining who holds authority over decisions concerning natural resources and their users, the processes by which decisions are made and the individuals or entities responsible for executing and implementing these decisions (United Nations Environment Programme, 2018). Forest governance can be defined as the “processes and institutions through which authority and decision-making about forests are exercised and implemented, and through which rules and regulations regarding forests are articulated, negotiated, and enforced” (Angelsen et al., 2009).

Forest governance in the context of REDD+ refers to the mechanisms, structures, processes and institutions involved in the management, conservation and sustainable use of forests within the framework of REDD+ initiatives. It encompasses the legal, policy and institutional frameworks at local, national and international levels that govern how forests are managed, who has decision-making authority over forest resources and how benefits derived from forests are distributed among different stakeholders. Forest governance in the context of REDD+ aims to address issues such as deforestation, forest degradation and the rights and participation of local communities and Indigenous peoples in forest management. It involves ensuring transparent and accountable decision-making processes, promoting the equitable distribution of benefits and addressing drivers of deforestation and forest degradation. Overall, forest governance within the REDD+ framework seeks to create an enabling environment for the effective implementation of REDD+ activities, including measures to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, enhance forest carbon stocks and promote sustainable forest management while safeguarding the rights and livelihoods of forest-dependent communities.

Forest governance and the participation of relevant stakeholders in the context of REDD+ are considered in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its decisionⁱⁱ 1/CP.16, also known as the Cancun Agreement:

Requests developing country Parties...to address, inter alia, the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, land tenure issues, forest governance issues, gender considerations...**ensuring the full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, inter alia Indigenous peoples and local communities.**

Within the Cancun framework, the implementation of local community participation is defined as translating documented policy Decision 1/CP.16 into practice through on-the-ground activities to achieve the desired implementation outcomes. At the UNFCCC 2010 Conference of the Parties in Cancun, seven safeguard principles for the implementation of REDD+ were adopted, including two that address Indigenous peoples and local communities (IPs and LCs, often lumped together as “IPLCs”). Defined as “a set of principles, rules and procedures put in place to achieve social and environmental goals” (Roe et al., 2013), these safeguards have been conceptualized and articulated in ways ranging from barriers against the most harmful impacts of REDD+ (“do no harm”) to mechanisms to catalyze improved well-being and livelihoods for IPLCs and their territories (“do better”) (Sarmiento et al., 2021; Lonu et al., 2022).

The concept of local community participation has been part of natural resource governance for a long time and now local community participation is almost mandatory for any natural resource management project (Agrawal, 2001; Buchy & Hoverman, 2000).

That said, the nature and levels of participation in natural resource governance are often measured in terms of the power and roles that the different stakeholders have in the decision-making process (Buchy & Hoverman, 2000). Natural resource governance is concerned with how power and responsibility are used to make decisions that influence

how people (including local communities) access, participate in and benefit from natural resources (Nunan, 2018). Two major trends that have characterized natural resource governance since the 1990s are the increased emphasis on community participation and the uptake of certification schemes that have brought the private sector and market-type instruments into governance arrangements (Degnet et al., 2022: 2).

Samndong argues that ensuring meaningful participation, as defined by the REDD+ social safeguard guidelines, might be difficult to achieve if social inequalities and local power relations are not acknowledged and addressed in the implementation of REDD+ (Samndong, 2018: 1). Since governance structures and performance are influenced by the “allocation and exercise of authority” (Barnes, 2014: 3), power plays a role in determining which actors participate in decision-making processes, which decisions are made and the resulting impacts on natural resources and various groups of people. Power dynamics within natural resource governance can be observed in formal power-sharing agreements among different actors and levels of governance, as well as in interpersonal relationships. Elite individuals within a community, often possessing greater wealth, influence and social status, may exploit community-based structures to safeguard or advance their own interests (Child & Barnes, 2010; Muyengwa et al., 2014; Nuna, 2018). Additionally, expressions of social power shape the way actors engage with one another and influence subsequent outcomes (Pansardi, 2012). The nature of power distribution and power relations is interconnected and subject to change over both time and space (Raik et al., 2008; Nuna, 2018). This thesis is focused on power and the exercise of power by local communities in REDD+ pilot projects. It also looks at power relations in REDD+ pilot projects with an emphasis on local communities.

The thesis applied the concept of policy implementation (Leventon & Antypas, 2012) to develop a lesson-learning framework for the analysis of local community participation in forest governance in the context of REDD+. Policy implementation involves the translation of policy objectives into practical actions and outcomes. According to Pressman and Wildavsky (1973: 3), policy implementation is defined as “the process by which policies are carried out or realized in everyday organizational and individual behavior.” Lessons learned from policy implementation highlight the complexities and challenges involved in putting policies into practice. As described by Bardach, policy implementation often reveals “the frustratingly slow progress, the unanticipated obstacles, the high cost of securing compliance, the unintended consequences, and the limited reach of public action” (2012: 4).

Leventon and Antypas (2012) offer insights into lessons learned from policy implementation, emphasizing the importance of understanding the context-specific factors that influence policy outcomes. They highlight the need for flexibility and adaptability in implementation processes, as well as the significance of stakeholder engagement and collaboration. Additionally, they underscore the role of monitoring and evaluation in assessing the effectiveness of policy interventions and adjusting as needed to achieve desired outcomes.

In the context of REDD+ pilot projects, lessons learned from policy implementation highlight the importance of addressing key challenges to effectively achieve project goals. Even though there is an increasing level of analysis of forest governance in the context of REDD+ projects, knowledge and early lessons in REDD+ countries, there is still limited knowledge about how to achieve REDD+ project objectives and how best to include local communities. In their review of recent research on REDD+ implementation, Kanowski et al. (2011) highlight the importance of two distinct strands. On one hand, there is research on good forest governance and its interaction with the emerging climate governance regime. This strand is built around principles such as understanding accountability, inclusion and transparency. However, they noted that knowledge of how these principles can be best translated into improved forest conservation and management outcomes remains poor due to the complexity of forest governance contexts, arrangements and outcomes. On other hand, there is research that focuses on the development of the analytical frameworks that are needed to facilitate comparative environmental policy analysis and their use to inform forest and climate governance (Kanowski et al., 2011: 113). Overall, lessons learned from policy implementation in REDD+ pilot projects underscore the importance of comprehensive and inclusive approaches that address social, environmental and governance challenges to achieve sustainable forest management and climate change mitigation goals.

Opening the “black box” of REDD+ pilot projects

To date, much of the global-scale comparative research on environmental forest policy has concentrated on “macro-level” policy goals and objectives. While this approach is valuable for identifying broad trends, it often neglects the specific policy settings that establish standards for on-the-ground environmental performance (Kanowski et al., 2009).

Our analytical framework aims to unpack the “black box” of forest governance, specifically the local community participation practices that dictate REDD+ pilot governance on the ground. The framework includes two separate approaches for assessing the lessons and the challenges related to local participation in REDD+ projects: the identification of key lessons and challenges learned from REDD+ pilot projects and the comparison of the application of Cancun safeguards produced under different forms of forest governance.

With regard to the first approach, the insights from REDD+ piloting to conserve and sustainably manage forests, specifically the outcomes of the local communities’ participation, offer important guidance for the participation of local communities in REDD+ projects. Several aspects of local community participation are particularly relevant; this article discusses five of these aspects below. The article draws some lessons learned from the first generation of REDD+ activities in Mushie and provides insights to improve the participation of local communities.

With regard to the second approach, local community participation in REDD+ projects in the DRC should be informed by the experience of REDD+ pilot projects elsewhere and

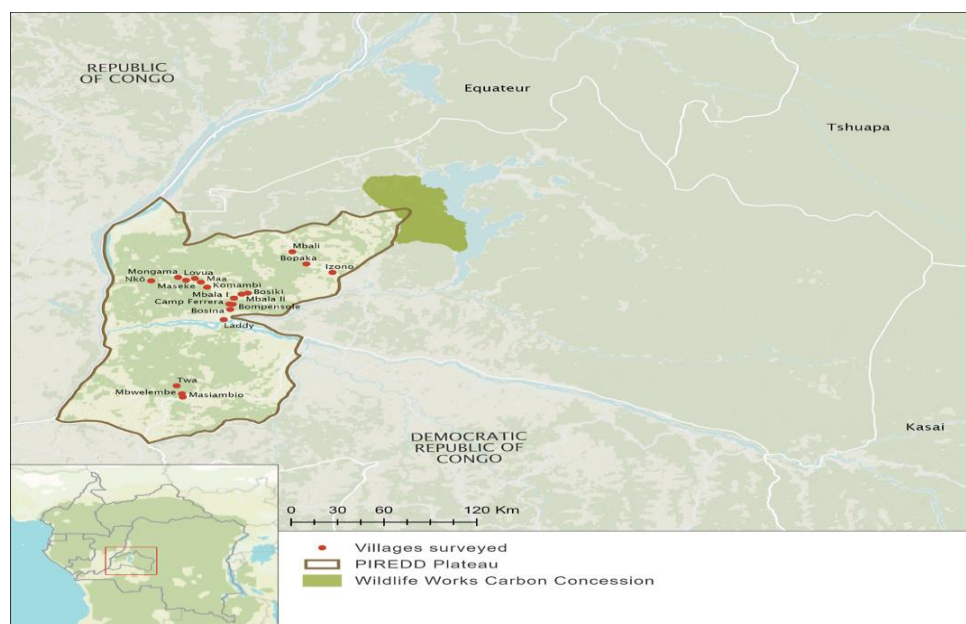
by decades of initiatives around the world, which have sought – with different results – to include local communities in curtailing forest loss and degradation. Once we have identified the challenges and lessons in Mushie, we proceed with a comparison with other REDD+ initiatives around the world to inform REDD+ projects and evaluate the possibility of adapting other context responses to the challenges related to local community participation.

4.3 Mushie REDD+ pilot project case study

Integrated REDD+ Plateaux Project known as the PIREDD/Plateaux (**Map 4.1**) in one of the two original districts of Mai-Ndombe:

Plateaux is the location of the first phase of the Mai-Ndombe REDD+ program and is considered the most advanced REDD+ initiative in the DRC. The PIREDD/Plateaux covers the territories of Kwamouth, Mushie, Bolobo and Yumbi. It was initiated in 2016, implemented by the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF-DRC) and managed by the DRC's Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development under the Forest Investment Program (FIP) with financial supports from the World Bank. In 2014, during the preparatory stage of the REDD+ process in the DRC, the World Bank provided the government with \$5.2 million to implement REDD+ safeguards. In 2016, the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) approved \$US13.1 million for the PIREDD/Plateaux REDD+ project. The objective of the project is to promote sustainable forest management in the former Plateaux district and the Kinshasa Basin, while improving the living conditions of rural populations and testing innovative mechanisms for forest management in the intervention area (WWF, 2018).

Map 4.1: REDD+ pilot project area



Occupying the western part of Mai-Ndombe province, the Plateaux district was selected because it has diverse ecosystems including agricultural and savannah land. The Plateaux district in the southern and northern parts of the province forms a Ramsar biodiversity hot spot and has strong potential to combat climate change through REDD+ (Gauthier, 2018; Berk & Lungungu, 2020). However, with a deforestation rate of 0.44% over the period from 2000 to 2014 (as a percentage of the existing carbon stock), the Plateaux district is also considered to be a major hot spot of deforestation (Valiergue, 2014). The direct drivers of deforestation in the Plateaux district are slash-and-burn agriculture, carbonization of energy wood, industrial logging, artisanal logging and agricultural enterprise. The indirect drivers are lack of land-use planning, demographic growth, infrastructure, urbanization and governance (Gauthier, 2018).

Since 2014, the FIP has invested more than \$US14 million in the PIREDD/Plateaux project in the west of the province, with WWF as the local implementing agency. The program aims to strengthen the capacity of local government and communities to implement REDD+ activities, to improve farming techniques and pilot results-based payments and to develop local infrastructure projects. In 2017, the World Bank received an additional \$US30 million from the Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI) to supplement activities in the PIREDD/Plateaux and extend them to the remaining areas of the province that fall under PIREDD Mai-Ndombe (Valiergue, 2018; Berk & Lungungu, 2020).

The thesis also used comparator REDD+ projects (**Table 4.1**). The selected comparator REDD+ projects serve as benchmarks for evaluating the effectiveness and impact of specific REDD+ initiatives, such as the participation of local communities in REDD+ governance. These projects provide valuable insights into alternative approaches, strategies and outcomes, allowing for comparative analysis and learning across different contexts. By comparing the participation of local communities in the design, implementation and outcomes of various REDD+ projects, we can identify best practices, lessons learned and areas for improvement. This comparative analysis helps inform the development of future REDD+ interventions and contributes to the ongoing refinement of REDD+ policies and strategies to address deforestation, forest degradation and climate change mitigation more effectively.

Table 4.1: Various comparator REDD+ projects (adapted from USAID, 2012: 2-4)

Case study		Local community relations with the land	Local community power
Mexico	Carbon PES in Oaxaca	Communities with secure and unambiguous ownership rights.	The community has more bargaining power and receives (whether by law or through negotiations with project developers) a higher share of
	Comisión Nacional Forestal (National		

	Forestry Commission of Mexico [CONAFOR]'s ProArbol system	The law recognizes communal land ownership	the total value generated from natural resource management.
Tanzania	Enduimet Wildlife Management Area (WMA)	Rights are shared between communities and the State.	The benefit-sharing arrangements are generally defined by national laws that tend to limit the share of revenues received by communities.
	Suledo Forest		
Democratic Republic of Congo	Ibi-Batéké project	Communities lacking statutory rights may still be able to access benefits, particularly if their traditional or de facto use of the forest is widely recognized in practice.	The access to benefits tends to be based on negotiations with the statutory rights holder(s) rather than the law, and typically the community is the less powerful actor in the negotiating relationship.
	Social agreements between communities and logging companies	The government owns the land and only limited access or use rights are granted to communities.	

Democratic Republic of Congo	REDD+ pilot project in Mushie	The land chief, as the representative of the “Bilima” (spirits) and the ancestral land protector, has responsibility for the lands under stewardship.	The access to benefits tends to be based on negotiations with the land chief rather than the law, and typically the community is the less powerful actor in the negotiating relationships and relies on intermediaries.
Nepal	REDD+ pilot project implemented in two watersheds of Nepal (Ludikhola and Charnawati)	Local communities in these watersheds have traditionally relied on forests and natural resources for their livelihoods, often governed by traditional land tenure arrangements that recognize communal ownership and usufruct rights. However, these tenure systems may be informal and subject to challenges such as unclear boundaries, overlapping claims and	Local communities are actively engaged in forest conservation efforts, decision-making processes related to land use and forest management and benefit-sharing from carbon sequestration activities.

		limited recognition by formal legal frameworks.	
Indonesia	The community forestry groups of Sumberjaya	In the community forestry groups of Sumberjaya, local communities have a complex relationship with land tenure that is shaped by traditional customs, cultural norms and government regulations. These communities often hold traditional land tenure arrangements that recognize collective ownership and use rights over forest resources.	In Sumberjaya, community forestry groups navigate these complexities through collaborative governance mechanisms that integrate traditional practices with formal land tenure systems. This involves negotiating with government authorities to secure legal recognition of their traditional rights while also adhering to national laws and regulations. Through these efforts, local communities in Sumberjaya strive to assert their rights to land and forest resources while maintaining harmonious relationships with government agencies and other stakeholders.

		However, these traditional systems may be subject to formal land tenure policies and regulations imposed by the government, leading to overlapping or conflicting tenure regimes.	
Brazil	Program for the Socio-Environmental Development of Rural Family Production (Proambiente)		

Kenya	Kasigau Corridor REDD+ project	Local communities in the project area hold traditional land tenure rights, which are recognized under Kenyan law.	However, these rights are often informal and lack legal recognition, leaving communities vulnerable to land grabbing and displacement.
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4.4 Key lessons learned from phase I of REDD+ in the DRC

The involvement and benefits accrued by local communities in REDD+ pilot projects are pivotal for the success of the REDD+ initiative in the DRC. Without the active participation of local communities, who are ideally positioned to serve as the primary stewards and beneficiaries of a huge portion of the world's remaining forests, the objectives of REDD+ cannot be realized. To effectively implement and expand REDD+ pilot projects, drawing lessons from the experiences of the Mushie REDD+ pilot project and comparing them with insights from other REDD+ contexts can offer valuable guidance for the next phase of REDD+ projects in the DRC. This section outlines the five major insights gleaned from the REDD+ pilot project in Mushie.

4.4.1 The one-size-fits-all approach to local community participation

In the REDD+ pilot project in Mushie, local community involvement was organized through Local Committees for Development (LCDs), which coordinated labour for agroforestry initiatives and collective efforts such as "Savannah fire defence" (AMAR, 2017; Samndong, 2018). These were, however, essentially globally designed, off-the-shelf models for activities that were proposed by the implementing organizations, with no scope for local community input (AMAR, 2017). This failure to adapt interventions to local knowledge and conditions appears to retain the criticized top-down approach, which gives only a limited, instrumental role to local community participation.

The REDD+ pilot projects were intended to demonstrate that meaningful participation in the design and rollout of interventions is indeed a way to achieve more equitable and lasting results. The Cancun safeguards – which include respect for the knowledge of local communities, effective participation in REDD+ design and implementation and promotion of social co-benefits – demonstrate at least a rhetorical international policy consensus around the need to protect and strengthen local rights and livelihoods as part of climate action (UNFCCC, 2011). To ensure that the safeguards are enforceable, countries have been anchoring them to their existing governance frameworks. Ensuring the consistency of REDD+ projects' implementation of the Cancun safeguards has an impact on the design and role of the local community's participation in the REDD+ project.

The REDD+ pilot project implementers in Mushie developed the local community participation roadmap based on several UNFCCC decisions.³⁴ The local communities at the village level were supposed to take part in the design and implementation of the REDD+ pilot project in order to tailor their participation to their specific needs, avoiding the common error of taking a one-size-fits-all approach. This reasoning is aligned with the safeguard in Decision 1/CP.16 on the knowledge and rights of Indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs). It is also aligned with the safeguard d that focuses on “the full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, in particular indigenous peoples and local communities” (according to UNFCCC Decision 1/CP.16, Annex I, paragraph 2). Considering these safeguards, local communities “need to be considered as agents of change rather than the recipients of initiatives or programmes. It is important to keep in mind that challenges related to diversity and inclusion are complex and context-specific and that ‘one size fits all’ solutions are inadequate” (Chazarin et al., 2022).

However, the initial hurdle arose when the implementers of the REDD+ pilot project in Mushie established local community participation through LCDs. These frameworks formalized local involvement by applying identical statutes and regulations to all LCDs, entirely disregarding local dynamics and distinctions, such as the authority and roles of traditional leaders or other local influencers (Dikaya, 2024b). In this model, local inhabitants of selected villages play no role in shaping the design of the LCD or its mandate and are limited to electing members to the LCD as representatives and signing the commitment to free, prior and informed consent (FPIC). Unsurprisingly, all the LCDs look the same. There is also an important disconnect at the epistemological level between the way the rationale to participate in the project was understood by the local communities and the rhetoric about local community participation on the part of the implementers. The implementers had a very instrumentalist view of these local communities, which were seen purely as labour and a source of legitimacy for the REDD+ pilot project endeavour (Samndong, 2018). As Samndong notes, “project goals, budget, timeframes, local partnerships and activities were externally decided without input from local people. The communities have little or no control over the project; their participation does not go

³⁴ Decision 4/CP.15 (2009) in Copenhagen, Decision 1/CP.16 (2010) in Cancun, Decision 12/CP.17 (2011) in Durban, and Decision 15/CP.19 (2013) in Warsaw.

beyond labour supply and attending meetings for per diems to help alleviate their financial needs” (2018: 402).

In August 2019, a beekeepers’ express workshop epitomized how the REDD+ pilot project missed opportunities to really enable local communities to improve their own lives. Under this pilot project, local community activities related to agroforestry involved the planting of acacia trees (*Acacia auriculiformis* and *A. mangium*). However, after planting the acacia, many people started questioning the use of these trees. These concerns did not have a formal channel to reach the project leadership, which meant that the response from the REDD+ pilot project in Mushie came only six months before the end of the project in the Plateaux district. They decided to hire a beekeeper to deliver a three-day workshop to three members selected by each LCD. Even this rather token exercise had no follow-up because the REDD+ pilot project ended six months after the workshop, long before any hives or subsequent honey production could be assessed. The failure to anticipate any real involvement of local communities in choosing the tree species, designing the planting strategies or planning the non-timber uses of the protected forests is glaring. The WWF version of events from late 2018 during the visit of the national WWF-DRC director painted the acacia plantations in a very favourable light: “Another encouraging fact is the success of the acacia plantations; some LCDs request to be allocated more lands for more plantations” (WWF-DRC, n.d.).

The challenge of implementing a global standard like REDD+ in local contexts is, of course, not unique to Mushie or the DRC. In their review of a REDD+ pilot project in Kasigau, Kenya, Atela et al. (2015) observed similar problems of failure to involve local communities in the design stages. Despite high expectations and familiarity with the failings of adjacent integrated conservation and development projects, local community members reported frustration that the REDD+ project was like a package “dropped from heaven” (p. 338). The value the local community put on forests and forest resources did not match those that the pilot project attached to “carbon.” However, unlike in Mushie, the project team in Kasigau was motivated to learn from the community members’ negative experiences with other resource management projects. The Kasigau project used a landscape level approach to ensure that communal and individual benefits were integrated, and poor households (who relied on communal forests put under REDD+ management) were guaranteed revenues from the carbon credit scheme (p. 336). However, much as these locally tailored efforts were viewed favourably by the local community, they put the project at odds with existing, State-run conservation and development structures and may also have meant less attention was paid to conforming to the REDD+ carbon conservation objectives than to local livelihood benefits (p. 337).

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to ensuring consistency with the safeguards, so every project will likely need to be tailored to the local context. This thesis examines implementation lessons that REDD+ can draw from local community participation in REDD+ pilot projects and other conservation initiatives. The key lesson is that REDD+

projects need to adapt their global community participation designs to the local setting, not only at the implementation level, but also at the design level.

4.4.2 Land at stake in local participation in REDD+ projects

The Cancun safeguards emphasize respect for, and the full and effective participation of, “Indigenous” peoples and “local” communities, two terms that highlight the importance of land and territory in the successful delivery of REDD+ outcomes. While REDD+ projects generate new expectations among stakeholders (including local communities) through the creation of new carbon rights, these rights are overlaid on already-complex statutory or traditional rights to land or natural resources associated with the land (USAID, 2012: 8).

In the DRC, many critics have noted the complexity of the legal framework that determines communities’ rights, where traditional tenure regimes co-exist with an outdated statutory framework that attempted (in a 1973 law) to protect individual rights to land but did not enshrine community rights to territory (RRI, 2018: 8). While the State theoretically has legal claim to all land within the national boundaries, in practice, the State-recognized traditional land chiefs, with their traditional connection to both the land and the “Bilima” (spirits), are effectively considered to be the local land-owning authority. In the Mushie REDD+ pilot project, these land chiefs were almost always also the senior advisors of the LCDs established or restructured to implement the project. The local power relations ensured that the land chiefs asserted control over the selection of LCD members and had considerable influence over the design and implementation of the REDD+ activities and the selection of the land. Therefore, local community participation was reduced to labour provision, with all connection to the project relying on intermediaries such as the LCD and the traditional authority. Similar problems were seen in the Kasigau pilot project in Kenya, which also initially used community elites such as chiefs to gain community acceptance of the externally designed activities. These chiefs then became the only legitimate entry points, shaping the nature and content of the initiatives, to the dissatisfaction of most community members (Atela et al., 2015).

Analysis by USAID (2012) of the institutional mechanisms for distributing revenues and other benefits in five REDD+ pilot project countries concluded that the land is one of the key factors shaping the participation of local communities in REDD+ projects, and particularly their share of REDD+ benefits. Power and authority over land and forest resources are determinants in the implementation of REDD+ projects (**Table 4.1**).

The USAID study (2012) identified three types of local community relationships with the land and the local community power that stems from these relationships. First, local communities with clear, secure and unambiguous ownership of land (as in Mexico) had considerable power to influence the REDD+ pilot project implementation and to shape the bargaining space. In the second type, land ownership is shared between communities and the State (as in Tanzania). In this participation, local community power is limited by

the law and intricately linked with the strength and breadth of rights to the land and forests. In the third type, local communities lacked clear land ownership or faced competing and contested forms of access to land. This lack of secure access to land leaves the local community as a less powerful actor that has to act through intermediaries (as in Mushie) to influence the design and implementation of REDD+ projects. The key message from the pilot phase of the REDD+ project in Mushie is that the full and effective participation of local communities is a function of their (in)ability to access land.

4.4.3 The power balance between intermediaries and local communities

To enable local participation, participatory initiatives recognize existing or create new local-level institutions to implement targeted activities (Ribot, 2007). A key goal of participatory approaches is to empower and benefit local people (Cernea, 1985; Chambers, 1983). The question is whether the empowered local communities can manage the forest by themselves or whether they should use an external service provider. Full and effective participation implies expanding opportunities as well as the capacity to be involved in decision-making. In principle, there should be intermediaries to support communities in their participation in REDD+ projects. The “intermediaries have more technical skills than communities and more connections with other actors along the chain (e.g., government agencies, donors, private sector). This arrangement gives them considerable power to influence communities and shape the bargaining space. This power balance is important to recognize because the interests of intermediaries can be substantively different from the interests of communities” (USAID, 2012: 11).

However, local power relations tend to place intermediaries in a dominant position relative to local communities, allowing them to be involved in decision-making and capture a larger share of benefits. This result was illustrated in the REDD+ pilot project in Mushie.

The reasoning behind creating an additional layer of intermediaries is that local communities need time to acquire technical capacity and create functional institutional structures in order to fully participate in REDD+ pilot projects. Typically, there is also an expectation that, thanks to the intermediaries, local communities will become autonomous after a few years of experience, as illustrated in the case of the Suledo Forest in Tanzania and the community forestry groups of Sumberjaya in Indonesia.

Caution is also required in assuming that better external support would be sufficient to address the weaknesses in PFM [Participatory Forest Management]. SULEDO VLFR received donor support from the mid-1990s until at least 2012, yet failings are still apparent. Therefore, simply increasing support to local communities implementing the PFM might not be enough to achieve devolution if the policies themselves are not well designed, for example if the institutions imposed by PFM are too complex, or if the spatial scale over which PFM institutions operate is too large (larger than preexisting village level institutions).

Complexity and distance between decision-makers and those affected increase the barriers to participation, and dilutes the reward. (...) Village government leaders appear to be relatively powerless to hold PFM leaders accountable in practice. Without idealising village government, it may be that the creation of entirely new structures has created opportunities for elite capture that might have been mitigated if existing structures, which might be better understood by residents, had been given greater power in the PFM process. (Magessa, 2020: 11)

Because of the incorporation of the intermediaries in the institutional structure of local community participation, the local communities in Mushie have no clear window of opportunity to be autonomous from them. The institutionalization of the intermediaries' roles solidifies their place in the chain of actions required for communities to participate in REDD+ projects. For example, as long as the traditional authorities are also the senior advisors of their community's LCD, the power balance will remain skewed in their favour.

4.4.4 Enhancement of local participation in forest governance through REDD+ payments

It is of considerable interest to explore the incentives offered to local communities to encourage them to participate in forest governance and management. The two main objectives of community forestry – namely, improving the livelihoods of the rural users and sustainable forest management – are less likely to be achieved without greater user participation in the governance and management of community-based resources. Failure to achieve the effective participation of all segments of the local user community results in costs in terms of forest resource degradation and the compromising of medium and long-term sustainable development (Adhikari et al., 2012: 1). To enhance local participation in forest governance, many policy tools have been used. The devolution of incentives such as PES from the REDD+ pilot project was an important policy tool to secure local community participation in Mushie from 2016 to 2019. Local community respondents identified PES as the main reason for their participation in the REDD+ pilot project in Mushie.

In contrast, in other REDD+ pilot projects, the magnitude of the local communities' participation could be determined by many factors. For example, in their study of the REDD+ pilot project implemented in two watersheds in Nepal (Ludikhola and Charnawati), Shrestha and Shrestha (2017) found that socioeconomic factors, such as education, family size and agricultural land holdings, and biophysical factors, such as proximity of the respondent's household to the affiliated community forest, were more likely to determine participation in community forest management than economic incentives provided by the REDD+ pilot project (p. 68). This was an interesting finding, because while the project had targeted "women, poor and other marginalized groups," the authors concluded that "a single benefit provision alone, such as economic incentive,

is not sufficient to improve participation in community forest governance and management” (p. 70). Work by Maskey et al. (2006: 271-272) confirmed that gender, landholding, age and ethnicity were related to the level of participation in forest management, and that greater participation (i.e., by individuals and households that were already more advantaged) would translate into greater receipt of benefits, whether monetary or otherwise. The challenge of motivating the participation of marginalized groups has long been a focus for community forestry in Nepal, and other authors have suggested that such marginalized subgroups will not participate in resource management unless they are guaranteed access to resources and benefits and their legal property rights to forests and forest products are enforced using long-term leases or permanent rights (Adhikari et al., 2014: 6). The lessons from Nepal are that socioeconomic and biophysical characteristics, which structure the relationship with forests and forest products, are more important in determining levels of community participation than simply the financial incentives from PES that REDD+ projects may provide.

While the REDD+ pilot in Mushie used the economic incentive of PES to motivate communities to (re)structure LCDs and join the project, participation in forest governance and management was monopolized by the project leadership, either the NGO AMAR or LCD senior advisors (land chiefs). This indicates that local power relations and agricultural land holdings were more determinant than PES *per se* in shaping the participation of local communities. Indeed, control over the PES payment calendar was more important than the PES amounts in shaping the interest of LCDs and their leaders in participating in the REDD+ pilot project. The decision by REDD+ pilot project implementers to make payments to local communities the key argument for securing their participation and their neglect of other factors such as local power relations clearly created a very narrow base of support within the local communities and increased the risk that local communities would opt out when there was an issue with the PES delivery.

For WWF-DRC, “this ambitious project is part of an effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through payments for environmental services (PES) to local communities to encourage them stop with slash-and-burn agriculture in the forest and switch to sustainable agriculture. An approach that significantly reduces pressure on forests” (WWF-DRC, n.d.). The “PES conceit”³⁵ here stemmed from the fact that PES was presented as the solution to get local communities to participate, but the same PES is now the root of the communities’ weak interest in the ecological objectives of the REDD+ pilot project. When there were delays in PES distribution, local communities started to burn the plants, regardless of the ecological consequences, to express their anger against the poor benefit-sharing mechanism and the uncertainty concerning their source of income.

³⁵ This term was drawn from Fletcher, R., & Büscher, B. (2017). The PES conceit: Revisiting the relationship between payments for environmental services and neoliberal conservation. *Ecological Economics*, 132, 224-231. The aim is to highlight the contradictory effect of PES as means to secure the participation of IPCLs and local communities.

4.4.5 The story about local community participation and carbon benefits

Payment to avoid deforestation is one of the most important policy instruments related to REDD+ participation. There is a need for ways to ensure adequate community participation without compromising emission reduction goals. A starting point would be to address community participation and emission reductions as trade-offs. The participation of local communities in REDD+ pilot projects is associated with the dispositional capacity, enhanced by the implementing organizations, to address forest governance issues and the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation. It is also important to note that local community participation is contingent on both non-carbon and carbon benefits. These goals must be achieved through the full and effective participation of local communities. However, an introductory process that is focused on making PES the selling point for the local community's participation in the REDD+ pilot project results in local community participation without strong ecological concern.

The reason for securing the local community's participation is to prevent the conversion of the natural forest and conserve biodiversity. By making PES its selling argument to secure FPIC, implementers have structured LCDs to participate in REDD+ pilot projects without inculcating an ecological concern. In the absence of that ecological perspective, local community participation is built purely on a benefit-sharing rationale. The REDD+ pilot project in Mushie is heavily loaded with expectations on outcomes beyond carbon emission reductions (AMAR, 2017), expectations that led local community opportunities to focus on gaining, controlling and maintaining access to the resources from the pilot project.

Moreover, there is not enough data to provide a clear understanding of how local community participation contributes to emissions reduction and forest sequestration in Mushie. Mai-Ndombe's Environment Department confirms that it is working to collect evidence on emissions reduction, carbon sequestration and carbon-sink enhancement in Mushie. "REDD+ may provide an opportunity to conserve biodiversity, but studies on biodiversity outcomes are scarce (...). There is far too little carbon outcome measurement to understand REDD+ effectiveness (...). There are not enough studies focused on biodiversity outcomes to draw any firm conclusions. Though REDD+ has clearly been in trouble in recent years, it has served as an important testing ground for multiple approaches to addressing the problem of deforestation and forest degradation" (Duchelle et al., 2018: 138). Panfil and Harvey (2016) highlight how REDD+ projects' self-reported impacts on biodiversity are limited to indirect measures.

WWF-DRC shared some data on the link between local community activities and the sequestration of greenhouse gases in Mushie. Data from the REDD+ pilot project showed that local community participation helped to achieve some results in the practice of sustainable agriculture, reforestation and land conservation (WWF-DRC, n.d.). According to WWF-DRC, the reforestation and land protection carried out by local communities constitute direct sequestration of greenhouse gases. Local communities focused on

plantations of *Acacia auriculiformis*, *Acacia mangium* and the hybridization of these two species for wood-energy production. This self-reported change in forest carbon/land use outcomes highlights the potential ecological outcomes of local community participation in REDD+ pilot projects. However, there were no independent studies to confirm the carbon effectiveness of the local communities' participation in REDD+ pilot projects.

Bolukiluki observers' "preliminary analysis using Hansen et al. forest loss data shows there is no discernible difference in the rate or extent of forest loss since the PIREDD/Plateaux was established in 2015. The relative annual forest loss inside PIREDD/Plateaux is higher than the rest of Mai-Ndombe province and there are no signs of decreasing. PIREDD activities in the province have not decreased forest loss inside the Plateaux" (Berk & Lungungu, 2020: 14).

In terms of local community participation, WWF-DRC data confirms that the REDD+ pilot project in Mushie used local communities as an instrument to improve efficiency and effectiveness. This allegedly helped the project to achieve better social and technical outcomes at a reduced cost. While participation can be a process of empowering and facilitating social change, the effectiveness model of participation is what motivates the REDD+ project in Mushie (Samndong, 2018). While the Paris Climate Agreement recognizes the importance of the mechanism to Reduce Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation and enhance carbon stocks (REDD+) and the Cancun safeguards recognize the role of local communities in achieving the project's carbon outcomes, on the ground there is little attention to the carbon (versus non-carbon) outcomes of local community participation in the project.

At the Kasigau Corridor REDD+ project in Kenya, only a few members of the local community could clearly link their participation to emission reduction outcomes. This was linked to a poor understanding of emission reduction goals under REDD+ at the local level. Community members may align experiences more with their livelihood expectations and interests, which they understand better than global emission reduction targets. In 2000, rural unions, environmental NGOs and community groups in Brazil's Amazon region jointly conceived a Program for the Socio-Environmental Development of Rural Family Production (Proambiente). The Proambiente PES scheme for small farmers in Amazonia performance was also undermined by PES because of limited funding and reduced implementation capacity.

After just 4 years in operation and having achieved modest success, Proambiente has demonstrated pitfalls that threaten to frustrate the realization of this potential. (...) these include funding bottlenecks, limited implementation capacity, poor cross-sector coordination and possible political bias in planning. Very limited payments have been made to farmers on the basis of equally limited evidence of environmental service contributions. There has been almost no effective monitoring, quantification or certification of such services, nor systematic impact evaluation. Rather, it has worked on the basis

of trust and a general, somewhat impressionistic, appreciation of the overall beneficial nature of participants' activities. As such, Proambiente has been labelled as a "PES-like" scheme that, in common with many other similar programmes, does not fulfil all the strict criteria involved in a formal PES exercise but which nevertheless has similar goals. (Hall, 2008: 1928)

It is risky to make a considerable part of REDD+ success conditional on PES performance because it may "crowd out" conservation attitudes in the medium term, encouraging local communities to threaten deforestation unless they are continuously compensated.

REDD+ projects often find themselves pulled between two forces: "community expectations" and "emission reduction expectations," both with equal significance for activities and success. To avoid situations where local communities promote their interests over global mitigation goals, solutions must address the trade-offs between community participation and emission reduction.

4.5 Conclusions

The participation of local communities in REDD+ projects continues to be a subject of considerable uncertainty and debate. The experience of the REDD+ pilot phase in Mushie and the results of various REDD+ pilot projects around the world offer important guidance for the participation of local communities. The most salient lessons are:

REDD+ projects need to adapt their global local community participation designs to the local setting, not only at the implementation level but also at the design level. A REDD+ project designed with local people, and based on their perceptions of equity, will likely be better adapted to local realities and have greater legitimacy (Wong et al., 2017). Local communities at the village level should take part in the design and implementation of the REDD+ pilot project to ensure their participation is tailored to their specific needs, avoiding the common error of taking a one-size-fits-all approach to local community participation.

- In the REDD+ pilot project in Mushie, inhabitants of selected villages had minimal roles in the design and implementation phases, with local community participation limited to signing FPICs and electing members of the LCD.
- In the Kasigau Corridor REDD+ project in Kenya, at the design level, the REDD+ project maintained the commonly critiqued top-down approach by excluding community input in its globally linked design. At the implementation level, the REDD+ project promoted better local community representation in project decisions and benefit-sharing, likely due to the REDD+ implementers' attention to safeguards.

Land is one of the key factors shaping the participation of local communities in REDD+ projects, particularly in the share of REDD+ benefits.

- In the REDD+ pilot project in Mushie, the local community under a land chief is a less powerful actor in the design and implementation of the REDD+ project. The key message from the pilot phase of the REDD+ project in Mushie is that the full and effective participation of local communities is a function of their (in)ability to access land.
- In Mexico, local communities have more bargaining power and receive a higher share of the non-carbon benefits generated from their natural resources.
- In Tanzania, local communities share land rights with the State. Access to benefits tends to be based on negotiations with the statutory rights holder(s) rather than the law, and typically the community is the less powerful actor in the negotiating relationship.

The reasoning behind creating an additional layer of intermediaries is that local communities need time to acquire technical capacity and create functional institutional structures in order to fully participate in REDD+ pilot projects. Typically, there is also an expectation that, thanks to the intermediaries, local communities will become autonomous after a few years of experience.

- In the REDD+ pilot project in Mushie, because of the incorporation of the intermediaries in the institutional structure of local community participation, the local communities have no clear window of opportunity to be autonomous from them. The institutionalization of the intermediaries' roles solidifies their place in the chain of actions required for communities to participate in REDD+ projects.
- In Tanzania, the lessons drawn from the experience of local communities included the emergence of an extensively developed system of administration among the grassroots and the capacity for local community institutions to absorb the philosophy of "learning by doing."

Incentives can enhance local community participation in REDD+ pilot projects, but they are not the only factors for doing so. Economic incentives alone cannot sustain motivation and must be paired with stronger, systemic interventions to empower marginalized and excluded groups to participate in forest governance or REDD+ activities.

- In the REDD+ pilot project in Mushie, the agricultural land holdings and local power relations were more determinant than PES in shaping the participation of local communities. Control over the PES payment calendar was more important than PES itself. The provision of economic incentives alone is not sufficient to improve local community participation in forest governance and management.
- In Nepal, the level of participation in forest management activities was determined by multiple socioeconomic and biophysical factors, such as education, land holding and proximity to the forest resource. More advantaged (higher income) households derived greater benefits from their (greater) participation in the forest management program.
- In Nepal, another study found that the participation of marginalized subgroups in forest management and governance could be improved by enforcing their legal

property rights to forests and forest products using long-term leases and permanent rights.

Local community participation is contingent on both non-carbon and carbon benefits. A starting point would be to address community participation and emission reductions as trade-offs.

- The REDD+ pilot project in Mushie is heavily loaded with expectations for outcomes beyond carbon emission reductions (i.e., PES), expectations that led local community opportunities to focus on gaining, controlling and maintaining access to the resources from the pilot project. Moreover, there is not enough data to provide a clear understanding on how local community participation contributes to emission reduction and forest sequestration in Mushie.
- In Brazil's Proambiente PES scheme, the REDD+ project "crowded out" conservation attitudes, inducing forest users to threaten deforestation unless they were continuously rewarded.

4.6 References

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Conclusion

5.1 Summary of papers

The main objective of the thesis was to increase understanding of the complexities and power dynamics of local community participation in forest governance and management. The thesis used political ecology frameworks and methods to analyze the implementation of the REDD+ pilot project in Mushie in the DRC. The research questions were informed by contemporary academic and policy debates, such as those related to the empowerment of local communities in forest governance through institutional arrangements and benefit-sharing mechanisms and the empirical understanding of factors facilitating local community participation in forest governance. At the same time, the research questions were motivated by a normative concern (i.e., how to ensure full and effective participation of local communities in REDD+ projects) and a more pragmatic concern of understanding the local dynamics and impacts of community participation in the DRC context, with particular attention to the pilot project in Mai-Ndombe province.

In addition, the research approach was shaped not only by what was considered appropriate based on an understanding of the phenomena to be studied, but by what was feasible in the field. The fact that the research team did not have access to the first research site identified at the beginning of the study led the team to focus more on the set of relationships shaping the local community's participation in the REDD+ pilot project in the territory of Mushie in Mai-Ndombe province. Encountering challenges in accessing research sites due to conflicts within local communities necessitated a further shift in the research focus and methodology. It became imperative to adapt and identify alternative research sites that offered similar contexts or phenomena of interest while ensuring the safety and ethical considerations of all involved parties. This change in the research required revisiting the research objectives and hypotheses to align with the new context, as well as adjusting data collection methods and timelines accordingly. Moreover, it offered an opportunity to explore and understand the complexities of community dynamics and conflicts, thereby enriching the research findings and contributing to a more nuanced understanding of the research topic. Despite the challenges posed by these changes, they led to valuable insights and contributed to the resilience and adaptability of the research process.

This thesis consists of three research essays that address the results of the research questions described in the introductory chapter. This concluding chapter will provide a comprehensive summary of each research paper, before proceeding to the overarching lessons and implications. For the sake of consistency, concepts already introduced in previous sections are mentioned as concisely as possible.

5.1.1 Contested visions of community participation for carbon management: Evidence from the PIREDD/Plateaux project in Mushie, Democratic Republic of Congo

The first essay looked at the empowerment of local communities in REDD+ pilot projects through the institutional arrangements that created Local Committees for Development (LCDs) and the interactions around this new space of inclusion for local communities in the project. The essay focused on the initial stages of the REDD+ pilot project in Mushie, to examine the various actions taken by the implementers to include local communities, as stated in the Cancun Agreement and the Anchorage Declaration of Indigenous Peoples on Climate Change. The main objective of the essay was to understand the emergence of local community power in REDD+ pilot projects through interactions, which were reduced to a bare transactional minimum by the local leadership, around the configuration of the local community's participation. The essay examined the interactions and the lack of interactions between local community agency and different actors involved in the configuration of LCDs to understand where and when the local community exercised its power.

Local community participation is an essential element of the REDD+ social safeguard guidelines. The essay focused more on the institutions representing the "local community" than on the "local community" itself, to capture the vision of the local community as the centrepiece of conservation and resource management. The local community's characteristics affect the interactions of different actors with regard to conservation, and these interactions shape and are shaped by the institutions. LCDs were created to ensure "full and effective participation" of local communities in REDD+ pilot projects. REDD+ pilot projects recognized that working with LCDs is a way to ensure arrangements for collective choice that actively involve many community members impacted by REDD+ projects.

Using the case of the REDD+ pilot project in Mushie, DRC, this essay built on Ahlborg and Nightingale's (2018) four locations of power framework (for resource governance projects) to examine the participation of the local community in the project through the LCDs that were structured by the REDD+ pilot project. In this essay, the first and second locations helped to show the way the local communities' power emerged in the REDD+ pilot project. In the first location of power in Ahlborg and Nightingale's framework, the views and assumptions underlying the project interventions relate to how to organize local community participation. Dominant actors shape resource governance projects based on different knowledges and according to certain "logics" around what is true and desired. (Ahlborg & Nightingale, 2017: 12). The local community participation was shaped in fundamental ways by the implementing NGO (AMAR). In the second location, the configuration of the LCD as an institution provided insights on the local community's power through the LCD script and related interactions. Two key components of these configurations are the actors and their networks and the institutions mobilized and established to govern the use of the resources. In Mushie's REDD+ pilot project, the local community and various interactions between actors involved in the configuration of the

LCDs were key factors that produced local community power at three specific moments: 1) the process of translating local community participation into the LCD, 2) lock-in through bylaws, statutes and FPIC agreements, stabilizing the participation of the local community and 3) local community “trouble.” These three moments capture the assemblage and repositioning of the local community in the REDD+ pilot project in Mushie. They illustrate the interactions and tensions between human agency and constitutive power in the configuration of the LCDs.

Although REDD+ pilot projects state their desire to empower local communities and make them proactive through participatory activities, the essay identifies only a token or symbolic transfer of power. The discrepancy between the implementers’ vision of local community participation and the local communities’ perception of their roles in the REDD+ pilot project was a symptom of a deep information gap between the implementers and the local communities. Local community agency is especially important in shaping REDD+ pilot projects, but to a large degree, local communities act in response to constitutive pressures such as expectations and assumptions based in AMAR and WWF-DRC discourses. The essay suggests that the dual and key roles of traditional authorities in LCDs shape the structuring of the LCD and enable traditional authorities to secure special roles for themselves in LCDs. The relations of power co-produce expanding room for traditional authority to be in a better position to make use of the LCD. The essay also suggests that the participation of local communities in REDD+ projects situated and embodied in institutional arrangements produces contradictory effects. PES was promoted as the main motivator to get communities to sign up for REDD+ pilot project LCDs, but no power over the PES process was given to the LCDs.

5.1.2 Accessing the benefit-sharing mechanism of a REDD+ project: Community participation and powerbrokers in PIREDD/Plateaux, Mushie, Democratic Republic of Congo

The second essay looked at the empowerment of local communities through the benefit-sharing mechanism (BSM) and the interactions around the BSM. Current efforts to understand local community participation have focused on the level of power the local community gains from the REDD+ project. The focus has been particularly on the local community’s managerial power or its role in decision-making. These linear and static perspectives on local community participation missed opportunities to capture the key moments where local community power emerges in REDD+ projects. The benefit-sharing process is one of these moments where local community power was supposed to be produced. The paper explores the local community’s participation in a REDD+ project beyond the managerial power and workforce suppliers’ perspectives. The main objective was to understand local community power within the BSM by exploring the webs of power and bundles of power that configure access to the benefits flowing from REDD+ pilot project activities.

REDD+ put an economic value on reduced GHG emissions from deforestation and degradation. This created incentives to reduce deforestation and degradation rates if economic benefits can be realized. One of the key principles underlying debates about REDD+ was about using international financial transfers between developed and tropical developing countries to incentivize the implementation of policies that reduce emissions from these activities. Benefit-sharing has been highlighted as a key aspect of all these processes (Peskest, 2011). From the perspective of affected communities, it can provide an opportunity to potentially be empowered in decision-making processes that affect them.

Building on Ribot and Peluso's theory of access (2003) and the literature on powerbrokers and intermediaries, the essay investigates the local community's participation as its ability to benefit from REDD+. The potential benefits that can be derived from resource governance projects include not only the right to benefit from this resource but also access dynamics and resource entitlement. The essay locates local community power within the constellations of relationships that enable or constrain local communities to derive benefits from REDD+. The aim was to illustrate how the local community's power depends on the web of power and bundles of power in which it is embedded.

The essay argues that the implementation of REDD+ pilot project activities and the distribution of resources from these activities are key moments at which the local community's power was supposed to be produced. However, the local community found itself unable to wield its power effectively to influence the BSM or to receive the financial benefits that initially motivated their involvement. Their ability to exercise power was frequently restricted or manipulated by other actors. In instances where payments for environmental services (PES) were delayed, traditional authorities received payments "in advance," while local community members faced delays of over five months. These findings indicate that LCD steering committees, designed to advocate for local communities, did not effectively negotiate access to REDD+ benefits even if they held a better position within the webs of power around BSM.

5.1.3 The local community participation in REDD+ pilot project in Mushie: Key lessons learned from the initial phase

This article delves into the implementation of REDD+ in the Plateaux district of the Mai-Ndombe province in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), with a specific focus on extracting key insights from the participation of local communities. Given the fact that local communities are impacted by REDD+ pilot projects, their participation should hold significant weight in both the design and execution phases. Central to this participation is the notion that the behaviour of local communities can be influenced through the provision of economic incentives and appropriate technical support.

This article investigates the insights concerning the participation of local communities gleaned from the REDD+ pilot project in Mushie and other REDD+ initiatives, viewing their participation as a transactional exchange of behaviour in forest governance for monetary compensation. The participation of local communities in REDD+ projects in the DRC should be grounded in the collective wisdom garnered from the experiences of REDD+ pilot projects and decades of global initiatives aimed at involving local communities in forest conservation efforts, yielding varying degrees of success. Both REDD+ pilot initiatives and the diverse array of efforts dedicated to conserving and sustainably managing forests, along with recent findings from forest policy research, offer invaluable insights for guiding local community participation in REDD+ projects. This article explores five pertinent aspects of local community participation and synthesizes lessons derived from the initial phase of REDD+ endeavours in Mushie, juxtaposed with other REDD+ initiatives. It also offers recommendations to enhance the engagement of local communities.

Through empirical analysis, this article identifies five pivotal lessons that can offer guidance for subsequent phases of REDD+ initiatives. These lessons collectively underscore the potential for advancing towards comprehensive and meaningful community participation, as envisioned by Decision 1/CP.16, commonly referred to as the Cancun Agreement. The analysis reveals several significant lessons: the need to adapt REDD+ designs to local contexts to enhance legitimacy; the crucial role of land tenure in shaping community participation and benefit distribution; the impact of intermediaries on community autonomy, with institutionalization hindering autonomy in Mushie and Tanzania; the nuanced relationship between incentives and participation, with socioeconomic factors outweighing economic incentives in determining participation levels; and the importance of balancing non-carbon and carbon benefits to meet community expectations while achieving emission reduction goals. Ultimately, the multifaceted nature of community participation in REDD+ projects underscores the need to incorporate these lessons to promote effective engagement, sustainability and the attainment of broader conservation and development objectives in future initiatives.

5.2 Main findings related to research questions

Essay 1 focuses on local community empowerment in forest governance and in the process of establishing REDD+ piloting. To explain how local community agency is simultaneously generative of, produced within and constrained by constitutive power, we probed the interactions or the lack of interactions at the moment of the LCD's configuration. Referring to Ahlborg and Nightingale's (2018) second "location of power," this article offers five important insights:

- The key insight lies in uncovering the dual and pivotal role played by the traditional authority within the LCD, shedding light on how the configuration of the LCD and

power dynamics mutually generated an expanding sphere for the traditional authority to leverage the LCD for individual rather than collective interests. Because of traditional authorities seizing a distinct position within local community structures, actual managerial or decision-making authority over the PES process within the LCDs remained elusive for the local communities. Escaping dominance and attaining empowerment should not entail navigating a ladder of power. Instead, empowerment and dominance represent a continuum reflecting how actors wield power in specific contexts and with particular intentions (Ahlborg & Nightingale, 2018). In this scenario, the sole power accessible to local communities was the ability to decline participation or withdraw from the REDD+ pilot project. However, as Berk and Lungungu (2020) discovered, even this power was circumscribed. The PIREDD project informed communities that since the land was under the jurisdiction of the DRC government, refusal would result in another village being selected to replace them, thereby subjecting their land to control by the alternative village.

- The second key observation pertains to how the involvement of local communities in natural resource governance initiatives like REDD+ pilot projects is influenced by interactions that can either reinforce or disrupt the institutional frameworks governing their involvement. The outcomes stemming from these interactions often diverge from the anticipated or desired ones. The inclusion of local communities in REDD+ pilot projects via LCDs was expected to yield positive outcomes in the fight against climate change by fostering active engagement and contribution from local residents. However, the actual outcome revealed that local community participation was primarily driven by financial incentives rather than a genuine commitment to combating climate change. The implementers (AMAR and WWF-DRC) recognized that promoting Payments for Environmental Services (PES) would be more effective than emphasizing environmental benefits in recruiting a large number of participants (4,581) across many LCDs (71) in the Mushie region. Adding local community agency into the fabric of power dynamics yields uncertain results because the power of the local community emerges from a complex web of interactions that both transcend and limit the exercise of local community power (Ahlborg & Nightingale, 2018). Consequently, participation occurs at a minimal and opportunistic level. Neither local communities, administrative authorities nor traditional leaders prioritize participation and objectives beyond the receipt or control of PES. Thus, the resulting power dynamics are focused solely on these specific benefits (monetary gains, labour supply), rather than broader considerations.
- Third, the article underscores that including local communities in LCDs as institutional frameworks tends to divert attention from the process of configuring these LCDs for the roles they are designated to fulfil. The REDD+ pilot project aimed to introduce a mechanism that would enhance project outcomes. It perceived structured LCDs as a means of ensuring stability and did not

accommodate the presence of independent actors within the institutional setup. However, the formal establishment of this ostensibly “static” LCD, marked by signed agreements, statutes, bylaws, free prior and informed consent (FPIC) and membership lists, was merely the beginning of a relationship, rather than its end. Unresolved tensions surrounding the formation of the LCDs left them in a provisional state fraught with challenges from various local communities. Furthermore, the way this formalization was achieved held significant implications for future developments. The absence of genuine authority over the scheduling and distribution of PES to the LCDs poses a clear challenge. Additionally, the reliance on PES influenced the decisions related to the lock-in stabilizing the participation of local communities, despite the agreed-upon LCD structures not necessarily being conducive to maximizing PES or other benefits for the communities.

- Fourth, this paper posits that the significance of institutional mechanisms or structures for local community participation lies less in determining the extent of power wielded by communities and more in delineating the various roles of intermediaries and the sequences of actions necessary for communities to engage in the REDD+ project – in essence, the components that afford intermediaries substantial influence over communities and shape the scope of negotiation.
- Fifth and finally, this paper presents diverse narratives concerning local community participation, highlighting a significant spectrum of definitions and interpretations of roles, as well as improved frameworks for mobilizing local communities, as perceived by both REDD+ project implementers and local communities. There is an opportunity to align the epistemologies of the project implementers and those of the local communities.

Essay 2 focuses on the role of powerbrokers in forest governance through the benefit-sharing mechanism. The essay builds on Ribot and Peluso’s theory of access (2003) and the literature on powerbrokers and intermediaries to investigate the role they play in facilitating or limiting the local community’s participation in and ability to benefit from REDD+.

The essay found that the local communities’ participation was driven by the need to be in a better position to gain, maintain and control access to direct monetary benefits from the projects. However, from the perspective of the brokers and their actions, local communities are reduced to simple labour. The local communities’ interactions with various powerbrokers opened only this space for them. The essay also found that LCD steering committees were poorly placed to manoeuvre and control access to the benefits. The traditional and administrative authority had already captured the (few) benefits on offer and circumvented the LCD steering committee to mobilize the LCD members when needed. The LCD members were reduced to the role of providing labour, and their only power was one of strategic non-compliance or sabotage to limit the flow of PES to the authorities. Finally, the essay found that the powerbrokers, especially the traditional

authorities with their ability to capture the new LCD steering committee structure, are the ones who see “power emerge” in key moments, unlike the local communities. The analysis presented in this article yields at least three significant insights:

- First, the use of lands governed by ancestral authority (Bilima spirits) for the implementation of the REDD+ pilot project conferred a notable advantage to the traditional authorities, as the land chief holds property rights under the traditional land tenure regime. This circumstance significantly overshadowed the power of local communities in determining the type of benefits they would receive. Consequently, local communities were largely relegated to roles of providing labour or passively receiving benefits from PES schemes, relying on the land chief to function as an intermediary with the other project stakeholders.
- Second, through an examination of the diverse interactions surrounding the REDD+ benefit-sharing mechanism, this article reveals the varying roles played by different intermediaries along the chain of actions necessary for communities to engage in REDD+ pilot projects. These roles grant the intermediaries substantial power to influence communities and shape the bargaining space within the REDD+ BSM. Recognizing this power balance is crucial, as the interests of the intermediaries may significantly differ from those of the local communities.
- Third, the article reveals that while the participation of LCD members in implementing REDD+ pilot project activities could potentially position local communities favourably, the LCD steering committee had limited manoeuvring room concerning benefit-sharing and the scheduling of PES, in contrast to the traditional and administrative authorities. This disparity resulted in the disempowerment of local communities. The use of a PES contract by WWF-DRC for the PIREDD–Plateaux project introduces another layer of negotiation within the benefit-sharing mechanism, involving various powerbrokers.

Based on the insights gleaned, Essay 3’s focus is directed towards extracting key lessons from how REDD+ pilot projects had addressed or learned from the challenge of encouraging local community participation in governance and implementation. Drawing from the experiences of the pilot phase in Mushie and the outcomes of various REDD+ initiatives in other countries, valuable guidance emerges regarding the participation dynamics of local communities. The most noteworthy lessons can be set out as follows:

- The adaptation of REDD+ designs to local contexts: It became evident that REDD+ projects need to better tailor their global local community participation designs to the specificities of the local setting, at both the implementation and design levels. Projects designed with the input of local communities, based on their perceptions of equity, tend to be better adapted to local realities and hold greater legitimacy. However, there are instances where local input is limited, such as in DRC’s Mushie and Kenya’s Kasigau Corridor projects, leading to concerns regarding top-down intervention and the exclusion of community voices.

- The significance of land: Access to land emerged as a crucial factor shaping the participation of local communities in REDD+ projects, particularly concerning the distribution of benefits. In Mushie, for example, the presence of a land chief reduced the power of local communities in project design and implementation, highlighting the importance of addressing land issues to facilitate effective participation.
- The role of intermediaries: The inclusion of intermediaries in the institutional structure of local community participation introduces an additional layer that impedes community autonomy. While intermediaries are meant to facilitate capacity-building and institutional development, there is often an expectation that local communities will eventually become autonomous. However, in Mushie and Tanzania, the institutionalization of intermediary roles entrenched their involvement, hindering community autonomy.
- Understanding incentives and participation: While incentives can enhance local community participation in REDD+ projects, their impact is influenced by various socioeconomic factors. In Mushie, for instance, PES was promoted by the project leaders to recruit communities, but in the end, local power dynamics and agricultural land holdings were more determinant in shaping the degree of participation. Evidence from Nepal indicated that economic incentives alone may not suffice to improve participation, and marginalized or excluded groups needed significant additional supports, such as guaranteed access to resources and legal protection of their rights, before they were truly able to participate in forest governance or management.
- Balancing non-carbon and carbon benefits: Local community participation is contingent on both non-carbon and carbon benefits, necessitating a balance between community expectations and emission reduction goals. In Mushie, grand expectations beyond carbon emission reductions led to a focus on resource access rather than emission reductions. Similarly, in Brazil's Proambiente PES scheme, the provision of rewards led to the "crowd-out" effect, where conservation attitudes were undermined unless continuous rewards were provided.

In conclusion, the participation of local communities in REDD+ projects is multifaceted and influenced by a range of socioeconomic, institutional and environmental factors. By incorporating the lessons learned from diverse experiences, future REDD+ initiatives can enhance community engagement, promote sustainability and achieve broader conservation and development objectives.

5.3 Significance and contributions of the thesis

5.3.1 Contribution to knowledge

The first empirical contribution of this thesis is demonstrating the applicability of the four locations of power framework (developed by Ahlborg and Nightingale (2018) through their example of rural electrification in Tanzania) in a different context, i.e., forest governance

in the DRC. The thesis contributes to theorizations of power by probing where power actually emerges or is suppressed, using the purported empowerment of local communities in a REDD+ pilot project in the DRC. The result is an empirical study that enriches the philosophical debate on power that is highly relevant for PE scholars to engage with.

The second empirical contribution is related to the understanding of the notion of “full and effective participation” of local communities in REDD+. As prescribed in the REDD+ policy documents, this notion is largely rhetorical and framed as a linear progression. The reality – at the local level – is that this notion is dynamic, bound by the relations of power and the multiplicity of interactions and contingent on both carbon and non-carbon outcomes.

The third empirical contribution is related to the role of intermediaries and the participation of local communities. The inclusion of intermediaries in the institutional structure of local community participation may appear strategically necessary, but the ability of local elites to co-opt these brokerage roles may impede community autonomy.

The fourth empirical contribution is related to incentives and the participation of local communities. While incentives can enhance local community participation in REDD+ projects, their impact is influenced by various socioeconomic factors. Despite PES having apparently motivated the recruitment of large numbers of communities in Mushie, economic incentives alone may not suffice to improve participation.

The fifth contribution is related to forest governance structures and local context or power dynamics. The thesis demonstrates how the intersection of global policy frameworks with local governance systems poses challenges in aligning REDD+ objectives with community priorities and traditional resource management practices.

5.3.2 Statement of significance

The significance of the thesis for policies and society is very concrete. The main findings and recommendations are relevant for REDD+ policy action in Mai-Ndombe and the DRC in general. As Cancun safeguards are being implemented and the PIREDD/Plateaux embarks on phase 2, the findings and recommendations are important to guide this process. The findings and recommendations should also inform REDD+ projects in the DRC as lessons from REDD+ pilot projects.

The significance of the thesis for international funders of climate change mitigation is also concrete. The main findings and recommendations are relevant to the ecosystem-based mitigation they are funding and their local community participation approaches.

At a personal level, the significance of this research for the author is enormous, not only as a researcher, but also as a person. The author acquired knowledge and skills, built networks and collected valuable experiences that will stay with him. The encounters with local communities in the field also shaped the author’s perspective on policies and their impacts on people.

5.4 Future research

The empirical research in Mai-Ndombe and the evaluation of the local community participation in forest governance and REDD+ implementation offer much data for further analysis and leave several unanswered questions. The study used the four locations of power but focused particularly on the first three. There is an opportunity to delve further into the fourth location using the lens of Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+).

Although there were LCDs that were structured and LCDs that were revitalized, the research focused on the structured LCDs. This left unanswered questions about the nature and degree of empowerment of local communities in the revitalized LCDs.

On the biophysical front, it is frustrating that despite over a decade of work, there was simply not enough data beyond the self-reported carbon outcomes of the local communities to assess the carbon sequestration goals of the REDD+ pilot project. It will be relevant to conduct an analysis when these data are available, to avoid having local communities promote their interests over global mitigation goals and to address the trade-offs between community participation and emission reduction.

Finally, many interesting themes besides (but related to) governance and participation are worthy of further analysis and discussion, such as the long-term impact of PES delays on the implementation of REDD+ projects and the local community's participation, the impact of intermediaries such as land chiefs on the implementation of REDD+ projects, and more.

5.5 References

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Annexes

Annex A: List of respondents in the Semi-Structured Interview

Respondent ID	Respondent	Role	Specific relations with REDD+ Pilot Project	Role in Local Committee for Development (LCD)
R1	Jean Boleme Bokumusili	Traditional authority	Land chief	Senior advisor
R2	Ezona	Aministrative authority	The administrative authority where the pilot project was implemented	N/A
R3	Flory Botamba	Project Coordinator	WWF DRC REED+ focal point	N/A
R4	Valentin Bazo	WWF Mushie Base manager	WWF DRC- Mushie responsible of REDD+ pilot project in Mushie	N/A
R5	Christian MBAYA	Associate Project Manager	Responsible of PIREDD Plateaux	N/A
R6	Issa Lingbelu Tiaple	Programme Officer Centre des Technologies Innovatrices et le Développement Durable (CTIDD) The Reconstituted-GTCR (known as the 'GTCR-Rénové,' in French)	Civil Society overseeing the implementation REDD+ projects	N/A

R7	Claude Musimu Saleme	Mushie head of cadastral brigade	Demarcating lands for REDD+ pilot project activities of local communities Documenting and reporting land conflicts related to REDD+ pilot project activities	N/A
R8	Claude Mosengo	Mushie rural development inspector	Increasing local community awareness about local development opportunities from the project Tracking project's local development objectives	N/A
R9	Ezona	Mushie home affairs services	Channelling the local communities' claims to project management	N/A
R10	Claude kavava Kakesa	Agronomist Mushie environmental inspector	Monitoring of REDD+ pilot project activities	N/A
R11	Guy Motete	- Mushie agriculture services	Technical assistance to perform REDD+ pilot project	N/A

			activities such as savannah fire defense	
R12	Jarline KASSANDA	Programme Officer LICOCO DRC	Civil Society overseeing the implementation REDD+ projects	N/A
R13	Rigobert Mola	Coordinator Dynamique des Jeunes pour l'Environnement et le Développement Durable	Civil Society overseeing the implementation REDD+ projects	N/A
R14	Ignace Monza	Facilitator – WWF-DRC-Mushie	WWF-Mushie responsible for structuring the environment	N/A
R15	Philippe Nzita	National coordinator – Action Massive Rurale (AMAR)	In charge of the revitalization and restructuring of Local committee for development	N/A

Annex B: The semi-structured interview guide

PRÉAMBULE

Présentation personnelle avant l'entretien

Bonjour,

Nous vous remercions de nous recevoir aujourd'hui et de nous consacrer du temps. En quelques mots, l'entretien d'aujourd'hui fait partie de la recherche – terrain menée dans le cadre de notre thèse de doctorat en développement international à l'université d'Ottawa.

En particulier, cette recherche a pour but de comprendre dans quelles mesures les projets REDD+ peuvent-ils assurer l'empowerment des communautés locales?

Les entretiens que nous réalisons en ce moment sont exploratoires. C'est-à-dire que nous souhaitons recueillir le maximum d'informations possibles sur l'empowerment dans le cadre du projet REDD+ à Mushie.

Bien entendu, tout ce qui sera dit au cours de cet entretien restera absolument confidentiel. Si nous vous proposons de l'enregistrer, c'est pour faciliter notre discussion et éviter des erreurs dans notre prise de notes. Si vous le désirez, nous vous remettrons cette cassette une fois que nous aurons transcrit les informations qui sont nécessaires à notre recherche. Et nous allons aussi organiser une réunion de restitution.

La durée de l'entretien ne devrait en principe pas excéder une heure. Je tiens à dire qu'il n'existe pas de bonne ou mauvaise réponse, ce que nous cherchons à savoir, c'est bien comment **vous** percevez l'empowerment dans le cadre du projet REDD+ à Mushie.

Avez-vous des questions?

I. BREF QUESTIONNAIRE SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIQUE

Nous allons commencer par les questions sur vous et sur vos liens avec le projet REDD+ en RDC.

	Question	Réponse
I.1	Profession	
I.2	Organisme	
I.3	Sexe	
I.4	Lien avec le projet REDD+ en RDC	

II. Le projet REDD+ en RDC

TRANSITION

Nous venons de parler de vous et de vos liens avec le projet REDD+ en RDC, entrons maintenant un peu dans le concret. J'aimerais vous interroger sur vos opinions et vos connaissances du projet REDD+. C'est votre avis personnel et vos connaissances de la REDD+ qui nous intéresse. Commençons si vous le voulez bien par une question très générale.

A. Question générale

II. 1. Pouvez-vous nous parler de manière laconique de la REDD+ en RDC selon vous? Et quels sont ses objectifs, selon vous?

Relances obligatoires :

II.1.a. Si la finalité atténuation est apparue seule, poser la question sur l'adaptation.

II.1.b. Si la finalité adaptation est apparue seule, poser la question sur l'atténuation.

TRANSITION

Résumer ce qui a été dit...

Et reprendre :

B. Questions générales :

Faire commenter le discours induit sur les attentes des communautés locales. Ne reprendre que ce qui n'a pas été précédemment commenté spontanément par l'interlocuteur.

II.2.a Pouvez-vous m'expliquer quelles sont, à votre avis, les attentes des communautés locales par rapport au projet REDD+?

II.2.b. Relance pour la question spéciale :

II.2.b.1. Commentez un peu plus votre réponse sur les attentes des communautés locales dans le cadre des projets REDD+ en RDC? Notamment la manière de les satisfaire et atteindre les objectifs de la REDD+ en RDC au même moment?

II.2.b.2. Pensez-vous que les communautés locales ont, en général, accepté le projet REDD+? Quels sont les éléments qui vous font croire qu'elles ont accepté le projet REDD+?

III. Le projet REDD+ à Mushie

TRANSITION

Nous avons tenté de faire le tour de la REDD+ en RDC. Je pense que vous serez d'accord pour que l'on parle d'un projet spécifique. Essayons donc maintenant de voir comment, toujours selon votre opinion personnelle, le projet REDD+ essaie d'atteindre ses objectifs et satisfaire les attentes de la population à Mushie.

A. Question générale

III.1. Quels sont les objectifs de la REDD+ à Mushie?

Comment ces objectifs ont – été identifiés?

Relances obligatoires :

III.1.a. Quels sont les objectifs en termes d'atténuation à Mushie?

III.1.b. Quels sont les objectifs en termes d'adaptation à Mushie?

B. Questions spéciales sur le thème de la participation de la communauté locale

III.2.a. Comment est-ce que la communauté locale de Mushie comprend les objectifs du projet REDD+ local? Quels sont les éléments qui vous font croire qu'elle comprend les objectifs du projet REDD+ local de cette manière?

III.2.b.1. Quel est le rôle de la communauté locale dans l'identification de ces objectifs?

III.2.b.2. Comment elle joue ce rôle?

Relances obligatoires :

III.2.b.3. Comment elle joue ce rôle dans les structures mises en place pour l'exécution du projet?

III.2.b.2 Quels sont les outils à la disposition de la communauté locale pour jouer le rôle que vous venez d'indiquer?

III.2.c. Pensez-vous que les communautés locales à Mushie ont accepté le projet REDD+ local? Quels sont les éléments qui vous font croire qu'elles ont accepté le projet REDD+?

IV. LES PIÈGES SOCIO-ÉCOLOGIQUES

TRANSITION

Après avoir examiné la REDD+, nous allons examiner le problème qu'elle cherche à résoudre, à savoir : les pièges socioécologiques. Nous avons décomposé ce problème en deux thèmes : la vulnérabilité écologique et la vulnérabilité socioéconomique. Nous allons commencer par la vulnérabilité écologique.

A. la vulnérabilité écologique

IV.a.1. Parlez-nous de manière laconique de la déforestation, de la dégradation des forêts, des émissions des gaz à effet de serre et de la gestion durable des forêts à Mushie?

Question	Réponse
La déforestation	
La dégradation des forêts	

Les émissions des gaz à effet de serre	
La gestion durable des forêts	

IV.a.2.a. Quels sont les facteurs principaux qui influencent ces 4 éléments?

B. la vulnérabilité socioéconomique

IV.b.1. Parlez-nous des moyens d'existence de la population de Mushie?

IV.b.2 Pensez-vous que les moyens d'existence des communautés locales de Mushie sont affectés par la déforestation, la dégradation des forêts et les émissions des gaz à effet de serre?

IV.b.3. Si oui, comment?

V. L'empowerment

V.a.1. Pensez – vous que le projet REDD+ à Mushie a renforcé la capacité des communautés locales de Mushie dans la prise de décision et d'action liées l'atténuation?

V.a.1.a.Si oui, comment?

V.a.2. Pensez – vous que le projet REDD+ à Mushie a renforcé la capacité des communautés locales de Mushie dans la prise de décision et d'action liées l'adaptation?

V.a.2.a.Si oui, comment?

V.a.3. Pensez-vous que le projet REDD+ à Mushie a renforcé la capacité des communautés locales de Mushie à évaluer un projet REDD+?

V.a.3.a.Si oui, comment?

VI. En fin d'entretien

VI. a. Avez-vous quelque chose à ajouter, d'autres renseignements à transmettre que vous auriez pu oublier de dire ou que l'entretien n'a pas permis de toucher?

VI. b. Comment avez-vous vécu l'expérience. Que pensez-vous du questionnement? Auriez-vous ajouté ou supprimé des questions?

Nous vous remercions pour votre temps et toutes les informations que vous nous avez fournies

Annex C : Household Level Survey Questionnaire

Bonjour Monsieur/ Madame

Je m'appelle (Nom et post nom de l'enquêteur)

Sous la supervision du Centre de recherche Chaire de Dynamique Sociale de l'Université de Kinshasa, je conduis présentement une enquête sur les *politiques combinant atténuation et adaptation dans la lutte contre le changement climatique et l'identification des politiques d'adaptation aux changements climatiques, dans les zones forestières, basées sur le renforcement des capacités des communautés locales et le financement à travers les projets REDD+»,* dans le territoire de Mushie dans la province de Mai-Ndombe en République Démocratique du Congo.

Je voudrais vous poser des questions à ce sujet et vous prie d'y répondre. L'entretien va durer au maximum 30 minutes. Soyez rassuré que toutes les informations récoltées resteront strictement confidentielles et aucun ennui, vis-à-vis de votre personne, ne surviendra à cet effet. Je vous exhorte à formuler vos réponses de manière libre, indépendante et sincère, car la meilleure connaissance attendue de la présente étude, permettrait de jeter les bases d'un empowerment durable dans le cadre du projet précité.

Merci d'avance.

Information générale

0.1. Date de l'enquête : / /20...

0.2. Site d'enquête : 1. Bosina 2. Camp Molard 3. Lobobi

I. Traits caractéristiques du répondants (chef de famille : papa ou maman)

1.1		1.2	1.3				1.4				1.5				1.6			
Sexe		A g e	État matrimonial				Niveau d'instruction				Type d'activité principale liée aux forêts				Fréquence			
M	F	1 8 +	M	C	D	V	S / U	S e c	P r i m	Sa ns niv eau	Boi s de cha uffe	Cha rbon de bois (Ma kala)	Cueil lette/ chas se/ pêch e	Agric ulture	Tou s les jour s ou pres que	1 ou 2 fois par semaine	1 ou 2 fois par mois	Moins souvent

II. Traits relatifs au ménage

2.1		2.2		2.3		2.4	
Nombre de personnes à charge		Nombre total d'adultes		Nombre total d'adultes sans emploi		Nombre d'enfants (moins de 18 ans)	

2.5		2.6	
Quelle est votre source principale de revenu?		Quelle est la part de vos revenus provenant des produits ou services forestiers?	

Salaire	Activités forestières	Activités informelles	Soutien familial	Autres	0	1-25	26-50	51-75	76-100
1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

III. Question d'opinions sur l'état des forêts à Mushie et le mode de vie

Veillez indiquer dans quelles mesures vous êtes d'accord avec chacune des affirmations suivantes :

Une seule réponse possible par ligne

	Pas du tout d'accord	Plutôt pas d'accord	Ni d'accord ni en désaccord	Plutôt d'accord	Tout à fait d'accord
La déforestation est une menace sur le mode de vie à Mushie					
La dégradation des forêts est une menace sur votre mode de vie à Mushie					
La mauvaise gestion des forêts est une menace sur votre mode de vie à Mushie					
La pauvreté renforce la déforestation, dégradation des forêts, et la mauvaise gestion des forêts à Mushie					
La déforestation, dégradation des forêts, et la mauvaise gestion des forêts affectent vos revenus					

IV. Question d'opinion sur PIREDD- Plateau Mushie

4. 1	Avez-vous entendu parler du PIREDD – Plateau Mushie?							
	Oui				Non			
4. 2	Qui vous a parlé du PIREDD – Plateau - Mushie?							
	1. Chercheur	2. CLD	3. ONG Locale	4. Autorité administrative	5. Chef coutumier	6. Radio locale	7. WWF	8. Autre source d'information
	Comment avez-vous entendu parler du PIREDD – Plateau - Mushie?							
	1. une formation sur PIREDD	2. Une consultation sur PIREDD	3. Une réunion du CLD	4. Une enquête / une entrevue dans le cadre de la recherche	5. une émission de la radio locale	6. Une campagne de sensibilisation	7. Autre	
4. 3	Pourquoi avez-vous choisi de participer au PIREDD – Plateau – Mushie?							
	1. Les paiements		2. La lutte contre le changement		3. Information		4. La participation aux décisions	
4. 4	Pourquoi avez-vous choisi de ne pas participer au PIREDD – Plateau – Mushie?							
	1. Les anciens projets		2. Le manque d'informations sur		3. Le conseil principal		4. Autre raison	5. Je ne suis pas

		PIREDD – Plateau - Mushie			concern é	
4. 5	A quelle activité de PIREDD avez-vous participé?					
	1. Activité de protection des forêts	2. Activité de reboisement	3. Activité de mise en défens des savanes	Activité de gestion PIREDD – Plateau Mushie	Autres activités	
4. 6	Veuillez indiquer dans quelles mesures vous êtes d'accord avec chacune des affirmations suivantes : Une seule réponse possible par ligne					
		Pas du tout d'accord	Plutôt pas d'accord	Ni d'accord ni en désaccord	Plutôt d'accord	Tout à fait d'accord
	Les objectifs de PIREDD – Plateau – Mushie sont atteignables					
	J'ai été suffisamment informé sur PIREDD – Plateau - Mushie					
	Les opinions contre le PIREDD – Plateau – Mushie sont respectées au village					
	Le PIREDD – Plateau – Mushie est un sujet de conversation dans le ménage					
	Le PIREDD – Plateau – Mushie est un sujet de conversation dans le village					
	Les paiements dans le cadre de PIREDD – Plateau – Mushie améliorent vos revenus					
	Les retards de paiement influent ma décision de participer ou de me retirer du projet PIREDD – Plateau – Mushie					
	Malgré les retards de paiement je continuerai à participer au PIREDD – Plateau – Mushie					

V. Questions sur les connaissances de la déforestation et la dégradation des forêts avant et après PIREDD

Veuillez indiquer dans quelles mesures vous êtes d'accord avec chacune des affirmations suivantes :

Une seule réponse possible par ligne

	Pas du tout d'accord	Plutôt pas d'accord	Ni d'accord ni en désaccord	Plutôt d'accord	Tout d'accord
Je connaissais les conséquences de la déforestation et de la dégradation des forêts avant l'arrivée du PIREDD					
J'ai découvert les conséquences de la déforestation et de la dégradation des forêts grâce à PIREDD					
Le village avait pris les initiatives pour réduire les conséquences de la déforestation et de la dégradation des forêts avant l'arrivée de PIREDD					
Le village a pris les initiatives pour réduire les conséquences de la déforestation et de la dégradation des forêts après l'arrivée de PIREDD					
Le programme de sensibilisation sur les raisons et les conséquences de la déforestation mis en place par PIREDD m'a motivé à soutenir le projet					

VI. Question d'opinion sur le CLD

5.1	Qui a décidé de la participation du village au PIREDD – Plateau – Mushie?						
	1. Le chef coutumier	2. L'administrateur du territoire de Mushie/ kapita	3. WWF	4. Le conseiller principal du CLD	5. CLD (Comité)	6. Le village	7. Autre
5.2	Qui défend vos intérêts auprès de l'équipe de PIREDD – Plateau – Mushie?						
	1. CLD (comite)	2. WWF	3. Le conseiller principal du CLD	4. Administrateur du territoire	5. Le chef coutumier	6. Le village (auto - gestion)	7. Autre
5.3	Êtes-vous membre du CLD?						
	Oui		Non, membre d'aucune organisation		Non, membre d'une autre organisation		
5.4	Veuillez indiquer dans quelles mesures vous êtes d'accord avec chacune des affirmations suivantes : Une seule réponse possible par ligne						
		Pas du tout d'accord	Plutôt pas d'accord	Ni d'accord ni en désaccord	Plutôt d'accord	Tout à fait d'accord	
	Le CLD du village est connu dans tout le village						
	Le CLD du village est associé à la gestion du projet						
	Le CLD influence les décisions prises par l'équipe du projet						
	Le CLD organise des activités ayant un impact sur le						

	développement local					
	Le CLD du village porte les attentes du village du PIREDD – Plateau - Mushie					
	Les membres du comité du CLD sont choisis par les membres du CLD de manière transparente et démocratique					
5.5	Veuillez indiquer dans quelles mesures vous êtes d'accord avec chacune des affirmations suivantes : Une seule réponse possible par ligne					
		Pas du tout d'accord	Plutôt pas d'accord	Ni d'accord ni en désaccord	Plutôt d'accord	Tout à fait d'accord
	Je suis membre du CLD mais je ne participe pas à la prise de décisions liées au PIREDD					
	Je suis informé des décisions liées au PIREDD après seulement					
	Je suis consulté sur des questions liées au PIREDD sans avoir la garantie que mes opinions influencent les décisions qui seront prises par WWF					
	Je suis invité (ou participe volontairement) à des activités organisées par le CLD mais je ne participe pas au processus décisionnel sur PIREDD					
	Les opinions contre le projet PIREDD sont acceptées dans le CLD					
	Je fais entendre ma voix et j'influence les décisions qui seront prises par WWF					

Annex D: Focus Group Question

	Main questions
LCD's structuration	Organizer of the Elections - Who was the organizer of the elections? Election Process - How was the election organized? - What specific steps were taken to ensure the election process was fair and transparent? Challenges and Results - What were the main challenges encountered during the election process? - What were the outcomes of the election? - How do you perceive the overall process of the election?
LCD's role	Role of Local Committee for Development (LCD) - What is your role as Local Committee for Development (LCD) in the REDD+ pilot project? Implementation, Monitoring, and Verification - What is your role in the implementation, monitoring, and verification of REDD+ pilot project activities? - Can you provide examples of specific tasks you are responsible for?
LCD's representation of local communities	- How do you represent local communities in the REDD+ pilot project? - Do you think you represent local communities equitably and efficiently in the implementation of the REDD+ pilot project? - What strategies do you use to ensure fair representation?
LCD relations with the project (WWF)	- What do you think about your collaboration with the project? - What are the outcomes and the areas of improvement?
LCD relations with the administrative authority and traditional authority	Collaboration with Administrative Authority - What do you think about your collaboration with the administrative authority (including different services under his authority) in the implementation of the project? - How effective has this collaboration been? Collaboration with Traditional Authority - How has your collaboration with the traditional authority (including the land chief) been in the implementation of the project? - Can you describe any challenges or successes in this collaboration?

Additional Comments	• Is there anything else you would like to share about the election process or the REDD+ pilot project that we haven't covered? • Do you have any suggestions for future projects or initiatives in the community that are designed to include local communities in the design and implementation?
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Programme d'Investissement pour la Forêt

PIREDD Plateaux

REPUBLIQUE DEMOCRATIQUE DU CONGO

**MINISTRE DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT ET DEVELOPPEMENT
DURABLE (MEDD)**

PROGRAMME D'INVESTISSEMENT POUR LA FORET (PIF)

**PROJET DE GESTION AMELIOREE DES PAYSAGES FORESTIERS
(PGAPF)**

COMPOSANTE I : PIREDD PLATEAUX

**CONTRAT N°120 /IDA/PGAPF/WWF/PSE/2017A
PAYEMENT POUR SERVICES ENVIRONNEMENTAUX
ACTIVITE : AGROFORESTERIE**

Entre les soussignés

Le Comité Local de Développement du Terroir NTOTE VAKA BONZALE, Village LOBOBI Groupement BANUNU, Chefferie : BABOMA NORD. Territoire: MUSHIE représenté par:

- Président :
- Secrétaire :
- Conseiller :

Et l'Unité de Coordination du Programme d'Investissement pour la Forêt (UC-PIF),

Représenté par :

Le Coordinateur de l'UC-PIF : Clément Vangu-Lutete

PREAMBULE

- Les fonds de ce contrat ont été alloués par le Programme d'Investissement pour la Forêt (PIF), avec la Banque Mondiale en qualité d'Organe d'exécution du Fonds Stratégique pour le Climat. Ayant une expertise avérée et une expérience de plus de 10 ans dans la zone du PIREDD Plateaux, le Fonds Mondial pour la Nature (WWF) a été sélectionné par le Ministère de l'Environnement, Conservation de la Nature et Développement Durable (MECN-DD) comme Maître d'Ouvrage Délégué (MOD) de la Composante I du PGAPF.
- Les activités, objet du présent contrat, résultent de la collaboration entre le CLD et le WWF. La communauté adhère donc volontairement à la vision et objectif du PIREDD Plateaux et s'engage à la mise en œuvre des activités afin d'en tirer tous les bénéfices qui en résulteraient.
- Toutes les parties (y compris les ménages individuels impliqués) conviennent que cette initiative est mise en œuvre à travers le CLD et que le CLD est le partenaire et l'interlocuteur de l'UC-PIF (et par délégation du WWF) et de l'administration du Territoire/Secteur. Toutefois, les parties s'accordent que certaines activités pourraient être exécutées au niveau des ménages. Dans ce cas, le CLD restera responsable de la gestion des transactions entre l'UC-PIF et lesdits ménages.
- Les préalables pour l'octroi de ce contrat sont les suivants:
 - Le CLD doit être reconnu par l'administration du Territoire/Secteur avec une autorisation de fonctionnement en bonne et due forme ;
 - Le CLD doit avoir un comité de gestion fonctionnel ;

- Le CLD doit disposer d'un accord de collaboration signé entre le CLD, le Chef de terre dont il appartient et le WWF ;
- Les activités doivent être intégrées dans le Plan de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles élaboré dans le cadre du PIREDD Plateaux ;

Les parties conviennent de ce qui suit :

TITRE I : DES OBJECTIFS

Article 1

Le présent Contrat a pour objectif la mise en place de 19 ha de boisement agroforestier avec deux essences différentes dans le Village LOBOBI, Terroir NTOTE VAKA BONZALE, au plus tard le 30 novembre 2017, selon les modalités d'exécution prévues par le Contrat. Pour ce faire une production de plantules de bonne qualité est à exécuter selon le tableau ci-dessous :

Essences	Surface (ha)	Ecartement	Nombre plantules à produire
Agrume	4	4 X 4	2500
Palmier à huile	15	8 X 8	2344
Total	19		4844

TITRE 2. DES ROLES ET DES RESPONSABILITES

Article 2

Dans le cadre de ce Contrat, le WWF à pour responsabilités :

- Assurer une formation des pépiniéristes, sur la conduite et l'installation des pépinières, et production des plants, avant le début des travaux ;
- Diffuser les techniques d'agroforesterie aux ménages encadrés par le CLD ;
- Apporter un encadrement et un accompagnement technique pendant toute la durée du Contrat ;
- Apporter un appui financier couvrant les travaux nécessaires à la production de plantules et à l'installation des boisements ;
- Planter les plantules en âge de plantation, soit ayant atteint environ 15 à 30 cm de hauteur. Ces plantules feront l'objet d'une sélection par l'agroforestier du Territoire et le nombre sera consigné dans un Procès Verbal de constat des plantules suivant **le modèle en annexe 1** au prix de **0,20 USD** (Deux centimes de Dollar Américain) **et 0,00 USD** (zéro Dollars Américains) **par plantule** de respectivement **Agrume** et **Palmier à huile** (en cas de paiement en Franc Congolais, le taux USD

utilisé sera celui de bureau de change). 5% sera défalqué sur le montant total des plants par le CLD pour son fonctionnement.

- **Le paiement des plants Agrumes se fait en deux tranches, dont une tranche (50 %) après la vérification de plantules, après 3 (trois) mois de production, et une tranche (50 %) après la mise en terre de ces derniers.**
- Payer la surproduction des plants sous condition d'un accord commun. Le projet n'est pas obligé de payer tout le surplus des plants produits par le pépiniériste, mais une quantité suivant les besoins des planteurs choisis. Le paiement de la surproduction fera l'objet d'un avenant au présent Contrat et repris dans le PV de constat des plantules. La plantation sur base d'un avenant est seulement autorisée après un deuxième accord de collaboration entre le CLD et le WWF.
- Pour l'accomplissement des tâches qui sont assignées dans le cadre de ce Contrat, il sera versé aux ménages à travers le CLD un montant total de **150 USD** (cent-cinquante Dollars Américains) **pour 1 hectare planté**, entretenu et protégé, dont **5% pour les frais de fonctionnement du CLD et 95% pour les ménages concernés**. Le montant total payé au ménage à travers le CLD sera calculé en fonction de la superficie totale réalisée et validée ;

Dans le cadre du présent Contrat, le CLD a pour responsabilités :

- Encadrer les pépiniéristes pour la production de plantules ;
- Mettre en place des pépinières permettant la production des plantules des espèces désignées selon les capacités, les normes et les dimensions exigées par le projet ;
- Assurer les opérations d'entretien des plantules, de remplacement et de protection des plantules ;
- Ne pas modifier l'usage du sol sur lequel la pépinière est installée, avant la plantation ;
- Identifier les terrains à reboiser et encadrer les ménages pour la mise en place de boisements, ainsi que l'entretien et la protection contre le feu de brousse et autres ravageurs ;
- Faciliter la distribution des plantules aux ménages encadrés ;
- Suivre la mise en place, regarnissage, entretien et protection de boisements réalisés par les ménages encadrés ;
- S'engager à la mise en place du système agroforestier avec des cultures aux choix de la population ;
- Etre disponible et mettre à la disposition de l'équipe du projet des informations souhaitées lors des missions de suivi ;
- Ne pas être à l'origine d'un conflit d'intérêt en adhérant aux mêmes activités que ceux faisant état du présent contrat proposés par tout autre intervenant différent

du projet, au risque de compromettre l'atteinte des résultats escomptés de ce dernier ;

- Faciliter et accompagner l'équipe du Projet PIREDD Plateaux sur terrain et rapporter tout incident qui compromettrait au respect des termes du présent contrat ;
- Protéger les intérêts de Projet PIREDD Plateaux dans le milieu ;
- Informer les ayants droits et la population des activités de projet et assurer la gestion des droits coutumiers ;

Article 3 :

Les deux parties s'engagent à :

- Respecter les règles déontologiques dans le domaine des activités mises en œuvre par chaque partie, dont le respect de l'autorité, la confidentialité, la courtoisie ;
- S'informer mutuellement sur le déroulement des activités et toute autre information utile relative à la gestion des ressources naturelles et ses corollaires ;
- S'assurer que la superficie indiquée dans le présent Contrat ne présente aucun conflit à la date de la signature du présent Contrat ;

Le CLD et la communauté s'engagent à adhérer aux valeurs de conservation à savoir :

- Respecter la loi sur la chasse, participer au suivi effectué dans le cadre du respect de la chasse coutumière et lutter contre le braconnage,
- Dénoncer les auteurs des feux de brousses
- Respecter les dispositions de la loi sur la pêche,
- Identifier et délimiter les zones de protection (frayères et sources d'eau) et les protéger effectivement ;
- Faire le suivi et la surveillance des forêts du Terroir;
- Respecter le Plan de Gestion de Ressources Naturelles ;

TITRE 3. PLANNING DES ACTIVITES

- Mise en place des pépinières : **Acacia (Août 2017) et Agrumes (Juin 2017) ;**
- Production des plantules de qualité à destination des ménages encadrés : **Août - Octobre 2017 ;**
- Faciliter la distribution des plantules aux ménages : **Octobre 2017 ;**
- Suivi des ménages et la mise en place des boisements : **Novembre 2017 ;**
- Regarnissage et entretien des plantations : **Mars - Avril 2018 ;**

- Mise en place des dispositifs de gestion des feux de brousse : **Mai - Juin 2018 et 2019 ;**
- Suivi de l'entretien et protection des plantations : **jusqu'en décembre 2019 ;**

Article 4:

Le présent Contrat peut être amendé sur consentement mutuel des deux parties contractantes. Les modifications apportées au texte original feront l'objet d'un avenant.

Article 5 :

L'accord sera appliqué conformément aux lois en vigueur en RDC. Tout litige qui n'aura pas été réglé à l'amiable sera soumis aux cours et tribunaux compétents.

Titre 4 : MOYENS FINANCIERS

Article 6 :

Pour l'accomplissement des tâches pour la production de plantules qui vous sont assignées dans le cadre de ce contrat, le projet s'engage à remettre la somme de **0,20 USD** (Deux centimes de Dollar Américain) et **0,00 USD** (zéro Dollars Américains) **par plantule** pour respectivement **Agrume** et **Palmier à huile** au CLD.

Le paiement des plantules agrumes se fait en deux tranches, une première tranche après 3 mois la mise en place des pépinières et une autre tranche après leurs mises en terre dans la plantation.

Ces plantules feront l'objet d'une sélection par l'agroforestier de territoire (WWF) suivant **la fiche de suivi de pépinière en annexe 2** et le nombre consigné dans un PV de constat suivant **le modèle en annexe 1**. Le PIF s'engage à remettre au CLD la somme de **250 USD (Deux cent cinquante dollars Américains)**, selon les modalités ci-dessous pour la production des plants de bonne qualité:

Essences	Nombre de plantules à produire	Prix unitaire (USD)	Montant total (USD)	Montant pour les ménages (95 %) (USD)	Montant pour le fonctionnement de CLD (5%) (USD)
Agrume	2500	0,20	250 (Tranche 1)	118.75	6.25
			250 (Tranche 2)	118.75	6.25
Palmier à huile	2344	0,00	0	0	0
Total	4844		250	237.5	12.5

Le projet PIREDD se chargera du paiement en espèces au CLD. Sur base de la vérification du nombre des plantules produites par le pépiniériste, le paiement se fera après la mise en terre des plantules :

- Sur présentation d'une fiche de livraison présentée par le CLD ;
- Le paiement prévu sera fait par la signature de deux documents : une fiche de paiement collectif avec les noms et signatures de tous les pépiniéristes (ménages) et une facture de perception de fonds avec signature du Président CLD et du Trésorier d'une part et d'autre part la signature du Chef de projet ou son représentant et de l'agent payeur du projet.

Article 7 :

A titre de contribution pour service environnemental presté, et en compensation d'une partie de l'investissement en temps et en argent lié à la préparation, à l'installation et à l'entretien de la plantation, le PIF s'engage à remettre la somme de **150 USD (cent cinquante dollars américains)** montant évoqué déjà à l'article 2 du présent Contrat) à l'hectare dans la seule condition où le CLD a scrupuleusement respecté les normes de qualité. Il est explicitement convenu que les hectares de plantation réalisés ne respectant pas les normes de qualité (alignements, écartements, entretiens, taux de survie, etc.) ne seront pas validés. Le PIF s'engage à remettre au CLD la somme de **150 USD (cent cinquante dollars américains)**, sur base de la **fiche de suivi de la plantation en annexe 2 et le procès-verbal de constat des sub-unités de plantation en annexe 4**, selon les modalités ci-dessous :

- Après la préparation du terrain (défrichage, piquetage et trouaison) et la plantation respectant les normes indiquées dans le module des normes techniques (superficies en ha), écartement (en m) et essences), le PIF payera **75 USD (septante cinq dollars américains) par hectare**, après vérification sur le terrain (3 mois après la plantation) ;
 - L'UC-PIF se réserve le droit d'effectuer le paiement au prorata du nombre de plants effectivement mis en terre et vivants.
 - L'UC- PIF se réserve le droit de réduire le paiement si le nombre d'hectares est inférieur à celui contracté.
 - L'UC- PIF se réserve le droit de réduire le paiement de 25% si la plantation n'est pas bien protégée par un coupe-feu.
 - L'UC- PIF se réserve le droit de réduire le paiement de 25% si la plantation n'est pas bien désherbée (en cas d'agroforesterie).

- L'UC-PIF payera la deuxième tranche de paiement d'un montant de **50 USD (cinquante dollars américains) par hectare**, après vérification sur le terrain (9 mois après la plantation) ;
 - L'UC- PIF se réserve le droit d'effectuer le paiement au prorata du nombre de plants vivants et bien portants.
 - L'UC- PIF se réserve le droit de réduire le paiement de 25% si la plantation n'est pas bien protégée par un coupe-feu ;
 - L'UC- PIF se réserve le droit de réduire le paiement de 25% si la plantation n'est pas bien désherbée (en cas d'agroforesterie) ;
 - Le paiement se fera après vérification sur le terrain de l'état de la plantation ;

- L'UC-PIF payera la troisième tranche de paiement d'un montant de **25 USD (vingt-cinq dollars américains) par hectare**, après vérification sur le terrain (27 mois après la plantation) ;
 - L'UC- PIF se réserve le droit d'effectuer le paiement au prorata du nombre de plants vivants et bien portants.
 - L'UC- PIF se réserve le droit de réduire le paiement de 25% si la plantation n'est pas bien protégée par un coupe-feu.
 - Le paiement se fera après vérification sur le terrain de l'état de la plantation.

L'UC- PIF s'engage à remettre au CLD la somme de **2850 USD (Deux mille huit cent cinquante Dollars Américains)**, selon les modalités ci-dessous :

Activités	Vérification	USD/1 ha	Superficies réalisées ha	Montant USD(Présent Contrat)
Travaux préparatoire (Layonage, Piquetage, Trouaison), la mise en place de plantules, protection de plantations avec coupe feux	3 mois après mise en place de la plantation	75	19	1425

Regarnissage et entretien de la plantation, entretien de coupe feux	9 mois après mise en place de la plantation	50		950
Entretien de plantation et coupe feux	27 mois après la mise en place de la plantation	25		475
Montant total (USD)			2850	
Montant pour les ménages (USD)			2707.5	
Montant pour le fonctionnement de CLD (5%) (USD)			142.5	

L'UC-PIF se chargera du paiement en espèces au CLD. Le paiement sera effectué après la vérification du reboisement par le WWF. Le paiement prévu sera fait selon les procédures décrites ci-haut comme pour celui des plantules.

Article 9 : LIMITES DU CONTRAT ET GESTION DES LITIGES

- Le CLD mentionnera le soutien financier de l'UC- PIF dans tout rapport/publication ou activités de sensibilisation et/ou de communication relatifs aux activités menées dans le cadre du présent Contrat ;
- Aucune des parties ne prendra d'engagement ni de position au nom de l'autre partie sans en avoir le consentement écrit ;
- Avant toute prise de décision importante relative à l'objet du présent Contrat, ou dans les conventions spécifiques, chaque partie informera l'autre ;
- Aucune des deux parties n'a d'autorité pour créer des obligations légales au nom de l'autre partie ;

- Si des difficultés surviennent à l'occasion de l'interprétation ou de l'exécution du présent Contrat, les deux parties s'engagent à résoudre les litiges à l'amiable par voie de conciliation directe ;
- Tout différent relatif à l'interprétation et/ou l'exécution du présent Contrat ou de toute convention conclue sur son fondement qui ne pourrait être résolu à l'amiable entre les Parties sera résolu par arbitrage ;
- L'UC-PIF se réserve le droit de résilier le contrat suite à des actes inciviques répétés dans le terroir de la communauté bénéficiaire, après trois avertissements écrits ;
- Toute information erronée, fournie intentionnellement ou pas, entrainera la résiliation du présent contrat ;

Article 10 :

Le présent Contrat est signé par les représentants du CLD (Président, Secrétaire et le Conseiller), le Ministère de l'ECN-DD (le Coordonnateur de l'UC-PIF) et est en outre visé par le Chef de secteur, il entre en vigueur à la date de sa signature entre les trois parties.



REPUBLIQUE DEMOCRATIQUE DU CONGO

MINISTERE DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT ET DEVELOPPEMENT DURABLE (MECN-DD)

PROGRAMME D'INVESTISSEMENT POUR LA FORET (PIF)

PROJET DE GESTION AMELIOREE DES PAYSAGES FORESTIERS (PGAPF)

COMPOSANTE I : PIRED D PLATEAUX

**CONTRAT N° 0000 : PAIEMENT POUR SERVICES
ENVIRONNEMENTAUX**

ACTIVITE : MISE EN DEFENS DE SAVANE

Entre les soussignés

Le Comité Local de Développement du Terroir **XXX**, Village **XXX**, Groupement **XXX**,
Chefferie : **XXX**, Territoire : **XXX**, représenté par :

- Président : **XXX**
- Secrétaire : **XXX**
- Conseiller : **XXX**

Et l'Unité de Coordination du Programme d'Investissement pour la Forêt (UC-PIF),

Représenté par Monsieur Clément VANGU LUTETE, Coordonnateur du PIF.

PREAMBULE

- Les fonds de ce contrat ont été alloués par le Programme d'Investissement pour la Forêt (PIF), sous financement de la Banque Mondiale en qualité d'Organe d'exécution du Fonds Stratégique pour le Climat. Ayant une expertise avérée et une expérience de plus de 10 ans dans la zone du PIREDD Plateaux, le Fonds Mondial pour la Nature (WWF) a été sélectionné par le Ministère de l'Environnement, Conservation de la Nature et Développement Durable (MECN-DD) comme Maître d'Ouvrage Délégué (MOD) de la Composante I du PGAPF.
- Les activités, objet du présent contrat, résultent de la collaboration entre le CLD et le WWF. La communauté adhère donc volontairement à la vision et objectif du PIREDD Plateaux et s'engage à la mise en œuvre des activités afin d'en tirer tous les bénéfices qui en résulteraient.
- Toutes les parties (y compris les ménages individuels impliqués) conviennent que cette initiative est mise en œuvre à travers le CLD et que le CLD est le partenaire et l'interlocuteur de l'UC-PIF (et par délégation du WWF) et de l'administration du Territoire/Secteur. Toutefois, les parties s'accordent que certaines activités pourraient être exécutées au niveau des ménages. Dans ce cas, le CLD restera responsable de la gestion des transactions entre l'UC-PIF et lesdits ménages.
- Les préalables pour l'octroi de ce contrat sont les suivants :
 - Le CLD doit être reconnu par l'administration du Territoire/Secteur avec une autorisation de fonctionnement en bonne et due forme ;
 - Le CLD doit avoir un comité de directeur fonctionnel ;
 - Le CLD doit disposer d'une convention de collaboration signée avec le WWF ;
 - Le CLD doit détenir un acte de cession de terre signé par le Chef de terre et contresigné par le chef de village ;
 - Les activités doivent être intégrées dans un Plan de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles élaboré dans le cadre du PIREDD Plateaux ;

Les parties conviennent de ce qui suit :

TITRE I : DES OBJECTIFS

Article 1

Le présent Contrat a pour objectif de mettre en défens **XXX** ha de savane anthropique dans le Village **XXX**, Terroir **XXX**, à partir de la date de signature de contrat, selon les modalités d'exécution prévues par le Contrat. Le présent contrat prend effet à la date de sa signature par les deux parties et se terminera le **31 décembre 2019**.

Les normes d'établissement des coupe-feux ci-après doivent être respectées:

- Au moins vingt-six mètres de largeur (deux coupes feux de trois mètres séparés de vingt mètres) ;
- Les coupe feux sont requis entre les savanes mises en défens & autres savanes et les savanes mises en défens & les villages ;
- Les coups feux ne sont pas requis entre la savane mise en défens et la forêt.

TITRE 2. DES ROLES ET DES RESPONSABILITES

Article 2

Dans le cadre de ce Contrat, le WWF à pour responsabilités de :

- Apporter un encadrement et un accompagnement technique pendant toute la durée du Contrat ;
- Assurer le contrôle, le suivi et la vérification de la conformité des activités menées par le CLD dans le cadre du présent contrat pendant toute cette durée.

Dans le cadre du présent Contrat, le CLD a pour responsabilités :

- En cas de détection des feux ou d'autres activités illicites (carbonisation, les feux de camps), le CLD prendra toutes les dispositions pour les stopper et en informera le WWF ;
- Faire respecter les règles de protection des savanes mises en défens auprès des communauté et ménages individuels impliqués ;
- Ne plus créer des nouveaux champs dans les zones de savanes mise en défens par la communauté ;
- Abandonner les champs existants dans ces zones dans une période de deux ans à partir de la signature du présent contrat (Si la communauté à besoin des champs additionnels, ils seront créés dans les zones de savanes non misent en défens. Les communautés peuvent faire de l'agroforesterie dans une partie de la savane mise en défens et le payement sera fonction d'activités réalisées.)
- Etre disponible et mettre à la disposition de l'équipe du projet des informations souhaitées lors des missions de suivi ;

- Ne pas être à l'origine d'un conflit d'intérêt en adhérant aux mêmes activités que celles faisant état du présent contrat proposé par tout autre intervenant différent du projet, au risque de compromettre l'atteinte des résultats escomptés de ce dernier ;
- Faciliter et accompagner l'équipe du Projet PIREDD Plateaux sur terrain et rapporter tout incident qui compromettrait au respect des termes du présent contrat ;
- Protéger les intérêts de Projet PIREDD Plateaux dans le milieu ;
- Informer les ayants droits et la population des activités de projet et assurer la gestion des droits coutumiers.

Article 3 :

Les deux parties s'engagent à :

- Respecter les règles déontologiques dans le domaine des activités mise en œuvre par chaque partie, dont le respect de l'autorité, la confidentialité, la courtoisie ;
- S'informer mutuellement sur le déroulement des activités et toute autre information utile relative à la gestion des ressources naturelles et ses corollaires ;
- S'assurer que la superficie indiquée dans le présent Contrat ne présente aucun conflit à la date de la signature du présent Contrat ;

Le CLD s'engage à :

Le CLD et la communauté s'engagent à adhérer aux valeurs de conservation à savoir :

- Respecter la loi sur la chasse, participer au suivi effectué dans le cadre du respect de la chasse coutumière et lutter contre le braconnage,
- Dénoncer les auteurs des feux de brousses
- Respecter les dispositions de la loi sur la pêche,
- Identifier et délimiter les zones de protection (frayères et sources d'eau) et les protéger effectivement ;
- Faire le suivi et la surveillance des forêts du Terroir ;
- Respecter le Plan de Gestion de Ressources Naturelles ;

TITRE 3. PLANNING DES ACTIVITES

- Mise en place des coupes feux : **mai 2017** ;

- Entretien des coupes feux deux fois par an (en **Mai-Juin** et en **Janvier-Février**), les dates précises d'entretien des coupes feux seront adaptées selon les conditions climatiques du milieu ;

Article 4 :

Le présent Contrat peut être amendé sur consentement mutuel des deux parties contractantes. Les modifications apportées au texte original feront l'objet d'un avenant.

Article 5 :

L'accord sera appliqué conformément aux lois en vigueur en RDC. Tout litige qui n'aura pas été réglé à l'amiable sera soumis aux cours et tribunaux compétents.

Titre 4 : MOYENS FINANCIERS

Article 6 :

Afin de compenser le CLD pour la mise en défense de savanes, l'UC-PIF s'engage à payer au CLD la somme de **cinq (5) dollars par hectare**, de savane protégée, **par an**, en absence des feux et d'activités illicites. La surface totale de coupes feux à mettre en place dans la savane est identifiée par le responsable de Suivi Evaluation et MRV (WWF) suivant **la fiche de mise en défens de savane en annexe 1**.

L'UC-PIF s'engage à remettre au CLD la somme de **XXX USD (XXX dollars Américains)**, selon les modalités ci-dessous pour la superficie de savane effectivement protégées :

Surface de savane	Prix unitaire (USD)	Prix total (USD)
XXX	5	XXX

L'UC-PIF se chargera du paiement en espèces au CLD. Le paiement sera effectué après la vérification de la savane effectuée par le WWF. Le paiement prévu sera fait moyennant la fiche de paie signée par le CLD.

Article 7 :

- Le WWF fait le monitoring de la savane mise en défens avec le Forest Watcher App développé par le WRI (World Ressource Institut) avec l'appui de USFS (United States Forest Service) pour identifier les points de feu depuis la dernière vérification.

- Sur la base du rapport des points de feux depuis la dernière vérification, le CLD et le WWF conduiront deux visites par an (Juin, Février). Cette visite aura comme objectif de vérifier les résultats de l'analyse du rapport et de déterminer les paiements relatifs aux résultats de manière suivante.
- Le CLD et le UC-PIF conviennent d'effectuer deux paiements de 5 USD par hectare de savane effectivement protégées, dont le premier paiement une année après la signature de contrat et la deuxième, deux ans après la signature de contrat ;
- Le paiement est proportionnel aux superficies effectivement protégées. En cas de détection et vérification sur terrain de feu dans la savane mise en défens, et/ou que le coupe feux n'est pas bien entretenu, le UC-PIF se réservera le droit de réduire le paiement de la manière suivante :
 - 1/ Le paiement est conditionné également par la qualité de l'entretien de coupe de feux comme spécifié au article 1. En cas de non-conformité à ces critères, le UC-PIF se réserve le droit de réduire le paiement par 25%, soit une réduction de dollars par vérification dans l'hypothèse qu'il n'y a aucune autre réduction ;
 - 2/ Le paiement est conditionné également pour la protection des savanes mises en défens contre le pâturage par les animaux domestiques (vaches ou chèvres et mouton). En cas de non-conformité à ce critère, le UC-PIF se réserve le droit de réduire le paiement par 25% soit une réduction de dollars par vérification dans l'hypothèse qu'il n'y a aucune autre réduction.
- En cas de non respect des échéances ou conformité au présent contrat, le UC-PIF a le droit d'opposer au CLD l'exception d'inexécution qui consiste à ne pas payer le montant convenu tant que le CLD n'aura pas rempli correctement sa part du contrat. Ceci résultera en une rupture dans les deux mois qui suivent la période spécifiée à l'article 1.

Article 9 : LIMITES DU CONTRAT ET GESTION DES LITIGES

- Le CLD mentionnera le soutien financier de l'UC- PIF dans tout rapport/publication ou activités de sensibilisation et/ou de communication relatifs aux activités menées dans le cadre du présent Contrat ;
- Aucune des parties ne prendra d'engagement ni de position au nom de l'autre partie sans en avoir le consentement écrit ;
- Avant toute prise de décision importante relative à l'objet du présent Contrat, ou dans les conventions spécifiques, chaque partie informera l'autre ;
- Aucune des deux parties n'a d'autorité pour créer des obligations légales au nom de l'autre partie ;
- Si des difficultés surviennent à l'occasion de l'interprétation ou de l'exécution du présent Contrat, les deux parties s'engagent à résoudre les litiges à l'amiable par voie de conciliation directe ;

- Tout différent relatif à l'interprétation et/ou l'exécution du présent Contrat ou de toute convention conclue sur son fondement qui ne pourrait être résolu à l'amiable entre les Parties sera résolu par arbitrage ;
- L'UC-PIF se réserve le droit de résilier le contrat suite à des actes inciviques répétés dans le terroir de la communauté bénéficiaire, après trois avertissements écrits ;
- Toute information erronée, fournie intentionnellement ou pas, entraînera la résiliation du présent contrat ;

Article 10 :

Le présent Contrat est signé par les représentants du CLD (Président, Secrétaire et le Conseiller), le Ministère de l'ECN-DD (le Coordonnateur de l'UC-PIF) et est en outre visé par le Chef de secteur, il entre en vigueur à la date de sa signature entre les trois parties.

SIGNATURES

Pour le CLD

- Président :
- Secrétaire :
- Conseiller :

Pour le Ministère de l'ECN-DD

- Clément VANGU LUTETE, Coordonnateur du PIF

Pour le Secteur

- Chef de secteur :

Annexe 1 :

Fiche de suivi de la mise en défens

SIGNATURES

Date : 01/06/2017

Pour le CLD

- Président :
- Secrétaire :
- Conseiller :
- Témoin : Chef de secteur :

Pour le Ministère de l'ECN-DD

- Coordonnateur de l'UC-PIF : Clément Vangu-Lutete
.....

ANNEXES

- Modèle PV de constat de plantules
- Modèle Fiche de suivi de la pépinière
- Modèle Fiche de suivi de la plantation
- Procès-verbal de constat des sub-unités de plantation
- Accord de collaboration entre le WWF et le CLD.

BON DE SERVICE N° 03/ AGRIPEL /WWF/PIREDD/2018

DEMANDEUR :	Projet PIREDD Plateaux
TERRITOIRE :	KWAMOUTH
SERVICES TECHNIQUE :	Agriculture Pêche et Elevage (AGRIPEL)
NATURE DE LA PRESTATION :	• Appuyer les CLD dans la mise en place des parcs à bois de manioc et des champs de production d'arachide. • Accompagner les CLDs dans la mise en place des plantations acacia et arbres fruitiers 2018 – A. • Evaluer le taux de regarnissage dans les plantations acacia 2017 A et B.
DURÉE DE LA PRESTATION :	100 jours de travail suivant le chronogramme joint.
COMPENSATION : Rémunération, autres frais et modalité de paiement	1800,00 USD soient • 1.000,00 USD (10 USD X 100 jrs) pour la prestation globale de 7 agronomes. • 300,00 USD transport (5 USD X 6 agents sans motos). • 500,00 USD (5 USD X 100 nuitées) • 30 Litres essence • 1 litre SAE 40
NOMBRE DES PERSONNES:	7 agents de STD AGRIPEL

SITE DES TRAVAUX :	Kwamouth Cité, Itubi, Lemio, Liduma, Malonga, Mokele, Masse, Mayimpili, Mbalibana, Masia – Kwa, Salongo,
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Fait à Mushie, le 2 novembre 2018.

Hicham Daoudi

Chef de Projet PIREDD

Annex H : Contract of collaboration between WWF and LCD



PROVINCE DU MAÏ-



THE WORLD BANK
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Programme d'Investissement pour la Forêt

PIREDD Plateaux

Projet Intégré REDD (PIREDD) du District du Plateau

- Accord de collaboration entre WWF et CLD -

Nous soussignés, représentants du comité local de développement (CLD) du village et/ou localité Esanga Bampee territoire de Mushie Province de Maï-Ndombe.

Après avoir été démocratiquement élus pour représenter toute la communauté, avec notre consentement libre et informé, et avec l'appui des ayants droit et chefs coutumiers, mais aussi après avoir été sensibilisés sur le projet intégré REDD+ plateaux exécuté par le WWF qui consiste à tester une approche de gouvernance et d'innovation technique permettant de réduire globalement la déforestation à grande échelle tout en améliorant les conditions de vie des populations locales.

Ayant pris connaissance du dit projet, acceptons de participer avec le WWF dans la mise en œuvre des activités suivant, du projet PIREDD plateaux :

1. Renforcer la gouvernance des ressources naturelles du Plateau:

Appuie à la formulation et la mise en œuvre de politiques cohérentes de développement dans la zone du projet en créant ou en renforçant des cadres de concertation multisectorielle sur la gestion des ressources naturelles. Pour cela le projet sera actif au niveau provincial, mais également en appuyant la structuration au niveau local (CARG et CLD), pour la meilleure gestion des ressources naturelles.

2. Renforcer les capacités des services techniques décentralisés:

Les services de l'état requièrent une organisation adéquate et des moyens suffisants pour accomplir leur fonction. La validation et la mise en œuvre harmonieuse des Plans de Gestion de Ressources Naturelles (PGRN) de Comités Locales de Développement (CLD) requièrent la collaboration étroite des services techniques des différents Ministères concernés par les terroirs villageois : les Affaires Foncières, l'Agriculture et l'Environnement.

3. Réaliser des investissements structurants:

Ces investissements concerneront au minimum l'entretien des points chauds des principales routes des territoires de Kwamouth, Mushie, Bolobo et Yumbi, la réfection ou la réhabilitation des ponts stratégiques.

4. Aider les CLD à élaborer et à mettre en œuvre des PGRN:

La réalisation des Plans de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles (PGRN) de Comités Locales de Développement (CLD) suit la création de ceux-ci. Les CLD concernent l'ensemble des membres de la communauté villageoise, tous engagés par les décisions des plans en matière d'usage des sols, des eaux, des ressources faunistiques. Le WWF accompagne ce processus en fournissant des animateurs et une équipe de délimitation par géolocalisation, qui opère en appui aux chefs de terre. Sur ces bases une carte du terroir qui fait partie des statuts est éditée. Le WWF appui les CLD dans les démarches d'enregistrement des statuts auprès du service du Plan (statut d'ASBL) et du Développement Rural du territoire et de la Province, qui délivrent l'autorisation d'exercer. Les PGRN déposés à l'administration territoriale (avec l'appui de WWF) font l'objet de Plans d'Investissements négociés avec le projet.

5. Appuyer la réalisation des investissements des PGRN :

La mise en œuvre des Plans ou Contrats d'Investissement sera appuyée par le WWF, accompagné par les Services Techniques et le cas échéant par des opérateurs d'appui spécialisés (agriculture, pêche...). Dans le cadre des Plans, toutes activités susceptibles de limiter la déforestation ou la dégradation forestière, pourront être financées par le projet.

Les investissements prévus portent sur les questions suivantes :

Renforcement de capacité de CLD pour produire des plants agro-forestier en pépinières ;

Les CLD disposent d'au moins un parc à bois de manioc et chaque groupement d'un agri-multiplicateur pour la diffusion des variétés améliorées de cultures saisonnières ;

2'000 ha de fermes privés participent au projet ;

100'000 ha de concessions communautaires sous contrat de Payement pour Service Environnementaux (PSE) ;

8'750 ha de savanes anthropiques mise en défense (surface minimal 200 ha) sous contrat PSE;

5'000 ha d'agroforesterie sous contrat PSE ;

Autres investissements socio-économiques ;

6. Activités transversales

Sensibilisation des femmes sur leur rôle prépondérant dans la gestion de CLD. Sensibilisation des hommes sur l'importance de promouvoir les femmes de leurs communautés dans des rôles du leadership pour la pérennité des acquis du projet. Ces activités seront combinées avec d'autres pour besoin d'optimisation des coûts.

La communauté reconnaît avoir été sensibilisée et informée sur les différentes activités du projet, donne son consentement libre et accepte de participer pleinement à la mise en œuvre de ces activités avec le WWF.

Le WWF s'engage à appuyer, dans la mesure de ses capacités, la mise en œuvre de ces activités pour le développement durable des Communautés locales de la zone du projet PIREDD plateaux.

Fait à ESANGA BAMPEE, Le / /

Organisation	Fonction	Nom	Signature	Date
CLD	Président			
CLD	Secrétaire			
Autorité local	Chef de localité			
Autorité local	Chef de terre			
WWF	Chef de projet PIREDD	Ir. Hicham Daoudi		

REPUBLIQUE DEMOCRATIQUE DU CONGO
Province de KWILU
Secteur
Village

STATUTS DU CLD
Du village

.....

PREAMBULE

La République Démocratique du Congo ayant, dans sa constitution, optée pour la décentralisation comme mode de gestion du pays ;

Sachant que, cela ne peut être possible que si la participation citoyenne est effective et totale à la réalisation des actions qui concourent à son développement ;

Vu la nécessité de se regrouper au sein d'une structure communautaire de développement local et de conservation en vue de mobiliser toutes les couches de la population et d'engager l'autorité compétente à s'y impliquer à la résolution des problèmes de la localité ;

Nous les **COMMUNAUTES LOCALES** du Territoire de dans la Province de KWILU ; Secteur/Chefferie , Groupement de , Village de

Décidons conformément à la loi n°004 du 20 juillet 2001, portant dispositions générales, applicables aux Associations Sans But Lucratif et aux Etablissements d'Utilités publiques de créer ***Une Association Communautaire, dénommée : « Comité Local de Développement de en sigle CLD/.....*** Dont les règles de son fonctionnement, son organisation et sa gestion, sont régies dans les statuts dont le contenu suit :

CHAPITRE I : DE LA CREATION, DE LA DENOMINATION, DU SIEGE SOCIAL, DES OBJECTIFS ET DE LA DUREE.

Article 1 : De la Création et de la Dénomination.

Il est créé à en date du/...../20....., une Structure Communautaire dénommée : « **Comité Local de Développement de** » en sigle, **CLD/....**

Article 2 : Du Siège Social

Le siège de CLD/..... est établi provisoirement à, Groupement, Secteur/Chefferie de, Territoire de, dans les Plateaux, dans la Province de Kwilu, en République Démocratique du Congo. Il peut être transféré en tout autre lieu sur décision de l'Assemblée Générale.

Article 3 : Du rayon d'action

Le CLD/..... Exerce ses activités sur le terroir villageois de Et ses environs.

Article 4 : De la durée

Le CLD est créé pour une durée indéterminée.

Article 5 : Des Objectifs

Le CLD/..... a pour objectifs :

- ✓ Identifier les problèmes liés au développement de village ;
- ✓ Elaborer le plan de développement local et les projets spécifiques de ;
- ✓ Assurer la formation de responsables des organes de ;
- ✓ Aider les membres des différents localités à faire leurs plans de développement local, la planification de leurs activités et harmoniser les relations entre eux (faciliter les échanges d'expériences, organiser les visites,...) ;
- ✓ Défendre les intérêts et les droits des membres auprès des tiers;
- ✓ Faciliter la circulation des informations entre les membres de CLD liés au développement et à la conservation de la nature;
- ✓ Contribuer à la lutte contre la pauvreté dans les chefs des communautés du village ;
- ✓ Améliorer les conditions de vies de la population de au moyen des activités alternatives à la chasse et à la pêche.
- ✓ Aider les membres à s'organiser pour son auto-prise en charge ;
- ✓ Entretenir les infrastructures Communautaire construites/réhabilités ;
- ✓ Valoriser les ressources naturelles locales ;
- ✓ Gérer les conflits entre ses membres et les tiers.

CHAPITRE II : MEMBRES, ADHESION, CATEGORIES, DROITS ET OBLIGATIONS, PERTES DE QUALITE DES MEMBRES.

Article 6 :

Il existe deux catégories de membres au sein du CLD :

- Membres effectifs ;
- Membres d'honneur ;

1. Membres effectifs

Membres fondateurs : toute personne physique ayant participé le jour de la création du CLD et signé les présents Statuts. Le fondateur est de droit membre effectif ;

2. Membres d'honneur

Est membre d'honneur, toute personne physique ou morale qui contribue moralement, matériellement ou financièrement à la réalisation des objectifs du CLD.

Article 7 : **Adhésion des membres**

Peut être membre du CLD toute personne physique qui :

1. Sollicite son adhésion par écrit auprès du CD ;
2. Avoir pris connaissance des Statuts et du R.I et accepte de s'y conformer;
3. Avoir libéré son droit d'adhésion.

Article 8 : **Droits et obligations des membres effectifs**

Tous les membres effectifs bénéficient des droits suivants :

- Egalité de traitement entre les membres (ils sont tous égaux et ont les mêmes droits) ;
- élire et être élus aux différents postes des organes du CLD ;
- Jouir de tous les avantages du CLD ;
- Droit au partage des résultats du CLD, en fonction du travail réalisé ;
- Droit d'être informé de tout ce qui se passe dans le CLD.

Article 9 : **Les membres effectifs ont l'obligation** de :

- Respecter les Statuts et le Règlement Intérieur du CLD;
- S'interdire d'exercer des activités contraires au CLD ;
- Participer aux différentes activités du CLD (réunions, formations, travaux d'intérêts communautaire) ;
- Veiller et œuvrer pour la bonne marche du CLD ;
- Libérer les cotisations régulières et ou ponctuelles décidées par l'Assemblée Générale.

Article 10 : ***De la perte de la qualité de membre***

La qualité de membre se perd par :

1. La démission donnée dans les conditions prévues par le Règlement Intérieur ;
2. le Décès ;
3. L'exclusion définitive prononcée par l'Assemblée Générale sur proposition du Comité Directeur et / ou du Comité de Contrôle selon le cas prévu dans Règlement Intérieur ;
4. Dissolution et **liquidation** du CLD membre ;

Article 11 : ***De la démission***

La démission ou le retrait pour des raisons personnelles des membres est libre et volontaire.

Cependant, le membre démissionnaire est tenu d'adresser une lettre de démission 30 jours avant au Comité Directeur qui en tiendra informé l'Assemblée Générale.

Le membre démissionnaire ne peut pas réclamer le remboursement de droit d'adhésion et des cotisations ponctuelles qu'il a versé.

Article 12 : ***De la suspension et exclusion***

- ✓ La suspension est prononcée par le Comité Directeur et notifié endéans 15 jours par porteur ;
- ✓ La décision est rendue exécutoire un mois après notification par écrit afin de donner l'occasion au membre de présenter sa défense.
- ✓ La décision d'exclusion est prise et prononcée par l'Assemblée Générale à la majorité de 2/3 des membres sur proposition du Comité Directeur.

Article 13 : ***Des causes de suspension ou d'exclusion***

- Les manquements graves : vols, injures, calomnies et autres ;
- Le non-respect des obligations vis-à-vis du CLD ;
- Le non respect des textes de base.

CHAPITRE III : LES ORGANES

Article 14 : Le CLD comprend ***trois organes*** :

1. L'Assemblée Générale;
2. Le Comité Directeur ; et
3. Le Comité de Contrôle.

Article 15 : **Assemblée Générale**

L'Assemblée Générale est l'organe suprême du CLD. Ses décisions sont obligatoires pour les membres.

Article 16 :

Il est prévu deux sortes d'Assemblées Générales :

- L'Assemblée Générale Ordinaire qui se tient deux fois l'an, et est convoquée par le Président du Comité Directeur sur base d'une invitation écrite envoyée aux membres par une lettre recommandée – ou au porteur avec accusé de réception 10 jours avant sa tenue. La date, l'heure et le lieu seront repris sur l'invitation, l'assemblée ne délibérera que sur les points inscrits à son ordre du jour.
- L'Assemblée Générale Extraordinaire qui peut être convoquée sur demande du Comité Directeur, du comité de contrôle, du 2/3 de ses membres. Si le quorum n'est pas atteint, une seconde AG sera convoquée endéans 15 jours. Cette fois, le quorum atteint ou non elle siègera valablement.

Article 17: **Du Comité Directeur**

Le Comité Directeur est l'organe chargé de la conception et de la gestion du CLD. Il veille au bon fonctionnement et la bonne gestion de ce dernier. Il est composé de 11 membres à savoir :

- Un Président ;
- Un Vice-président ;
- Un Secrétaire ;
- Un secrétaire adjoint ;
- Un trésorier ;
- Conseiller principal
- Conseiller chargé de développement ;
- Conseiller de conservation ;
- Conseiller chargé des questions sociales et genres ;
- Conseiller chargé de règlement des conflits ;
- Un chargé des relations publiques ;

Cette composition tient compte de la représentation féminine.

Tous les membres du Comité Directeur sont élus par l'Assemblée Générale au suffrage universel direct à l'exception de **conseiller de droit**. Leur mandat est de Trois ans renouvelable une fois. Ils n'ont pas de salaire pour le service qu'ils rendent à la communauté mais peuvent avoir le jeton de présence fixé par l'Assemblée Générale, qu'ils reçoivent chaque fois qu'ils sont en réunion afin, de leur permettre de payer le transport, si le besoin se fait sentir et en fonction des disponibilités en caisse.

Article 18 : **Les Rôles du Comité Directeur :**

- ✓ Assure la gestion courante du CLD ;
- ✓ Appliquer les décisions de l'AG;
- ✓ Il représente le CLD auprès des tierces ;
- ✓ Il convoque et préside les réunions ;
- ✓ Il veille à la discipline et à la bonne marche du CLD ;
- ✓ Il propose la modification du Statuts et de R.I ;
- ✓ Rédige le plan de développement de l'entité décentralisée ;
- ✓ Rédige les lettres de demande d'appui aux partenaires ;
- ✓ Présente les rapports d'activités et financiers à l'AG ;

- ✓ S'informe sur toutes les opportunités qui peuvent conduire la localité vers un développement.

Les attributions des membres des différents organes sont amplement définies dans les Règlements Intérieurs.

Article 19 : Du Comité de Contrôle

Le Comité de Contrôle est l'organe chargé de contrôler toutes les ressources du CLD.

Il est composé de trois personnes élues par l'assemblée générale. Les membres du Comité de Contrôle ne peuvent avoir des relations familiales avec les membres du C.D, pour éviter la complaisance. Ils n'ont pas de salaire pour le service qu'ils rendent à la communauté mais peuvent avoir le jeton de présence fixé par l'Assemblée Générale, qu'ils reçoivent chaque fois qu'ils sont en réunion afin, de leur permettre de payer le transport, si le besoin se fait sentir et en fonction des disponibilités en caisse.

Article 20 : Le Comité de Contrôle a pour rôle notamment de :

- Vérifier tous les documents comptables du CLD;
- Faire des inventaires du patrimoine du CLD ;
- Dresser les bilans des activités du CLD ;
- Formuler des propositions sur la bonne utilisation des ressources du CLD ;
- Prélever les déficiences et faire le rapport à l'AG qui doit décider souverainement ;
- Vérifier le respect des règles et procédures de gestion du CLD et de l'Unité de production.

CHAPITRE V : De La Gérance de l'Unité de production

Article 21:

1. La gérance est composée du Gérant, nommé par le Comité Directeur ainsi que des agents dépendant de ses services ;
2. Le Comité Directeur fixe les modalités de l'engagement et du licenciement du gérant, la nature de son contrat, le montant de sa rémunération ainsi que les autres avantages pouvant lui être accordés ;
3. Le gérant exerce ses fonctions sous l'autorité du Comité Directeur, il assiste avec voix consultative aux réunions du Comité Directeur;
4. Le gérant est chargé de la gestion courante de l'Unité de production. L'étendue de ses pouvoirs est déterminée par Règlement Intérieur du CLD.

CHAPITRE VI: Des Dispositions Financières.

Article 22 : Les ressources financières du CLD proviennent de :

- Droit d'adhésion ;
- Cotisations des membres ;
- Des revenus des activités d'autofinancement ;
- Emprunts, dons, legs et subventions de l'Etat congolais et de différents partenaires nationaux et internationaux.

Article 23 :

Toutes les entrées et sorties des fonds doivent être justifiées et enregistrées dans un cahier ou livre de caisse par le caissier. Il ne peut effectuer aucune sortie des fonds lorsque celle-ci n'a pas été demandée par écrit par le Président du C.D et cela, exclusivement pour des besoins du CLD.

Article 24 :

La durée de l'exercice social est d'une année civile. Il commence le 1^{er} janvier et se termine le 31 décembre de chaque année. Exceptionnellement ; le premier exercice commence à la date de la création et se termine le 31 décembre de l'année de la création. A la fin de l'exercice, le Président du C.D établit le compte d'exploitation et le bilan comportant l'inventaire des biens et dettes de l'association. Ces états financiers sont présentés par le Président de l'union à l'assemblée Générale pour examen et approbation. Elle peut aussi, le cas échéant, décider de l'affectation des excédents à la fin de l'exercice social.

CHAPITRE VII : Des dispositions finales et transitoires.

Article 25 : **Règlement des différends**

1. Tout litige pouvant survenir à l'occasion de l'interprétation ou de l'application des présents Statuts entre ceux-ci et le CLD ou entre celle-ci et les tiers, doit d'abord trouver solution à l'amiable ;
2. En cas de non-conciliation des parties en conflit, la partie lésée saisit le Comité Directeur;
3. En cas d'échec, le membre non satisfait de la décision du Comité Directeur peut soumettre le différend à l'arbitrage de l'assemblée Générale du CLD. En cas d'échec, le litige peut être porté devant les juridictions compétentes.

Article 26: **Dissolution**

La dissolution du CLD peut être prononcée par l'assemblée Générale Extraordinaire sur proposition du Comité Directeur et doit recueillir les 2/3 des membres votant. Cette dissolution peut être faite dans des conditions prévues par la loi des ASBL en vigueur en République Démocratique du Congo.

Article 27 : **Liquidation**

Un comité de liquidation est désigné par l'assemblée Générale pour procéder à la liquidation des biens du CLD. Il est composé de trois (3) membres qui n'ont pas été membres ni du Comité Directeur, ni du Comité de contrôle ;

A la liquidation, tous les biens sont cédés à une ou plusieurs Unions encore en activité dans le rayon d'action du CLD ;

Le mandat de ce comité de liquidation est d'un à trois mois.

Article 28 :

L'Assemblée Générale décide de l'amendement des statuts et Règlement Intérieur. Elle examine les conditions de leur modification.

Article 29 :

Sur décision de l'Assemblée Générale, le CLD peut adhérer à une ou plusieurs plates formes poursuivant les mêmes objectifs que lui, dont les conditions sont précisés dans le Règlement intérieur.

Article 30 :

Tous les cas non prévus dans le présent Statuts feront l'objet du R.I qui viendra lui compléter.

Article 31 :

Les présents statuts prennent force exécutoire le jour de son adoption par l'Assemblée Générale Constitutive et Elective. Et entrent en vigueur à la date de sa signature.

Fait à, le/...../ 20.....

République Démocratique du Congo

Province de

Territoire de

Secteur/.....

Groupement de

Village

REGLEMENT INTERIEUR DU CLD.....

..... **20.....**

Préambule

Conformément à l'article 28 de nos Statuts, ces présents règlements intérieurs précisent les dispositions financières, le fonctionnement des organes et attributions des membres, le règlement des conflits et sanctions éventuelles...

CHAPITRE I : DE LA CREATION ET DE LA DENOMINATION, DU SIEGE SOCIAL ET DU RAYON D'ACTION, DES OBJECTIFS ET DE LA DUREE.

Article 1 : De la création et de la dénomination.

Il est créé en date du .../.../20..... à Une structure des acteurs locaux dénommée : Comité Local de Développement du village en sigle CLD/.....;

Article 2 : Du siège social et du rayon d'action :

Le siège social du CLD/..... est établi au village et son rayon d'action s'étend sur l'étendue du (des) village

Article 3 : Des objectifs :

Le CLD/ a pour objectifs de susciter un dynamique durable d'auto-prise en charge et d'appui pour les initiatives de développement et de conservation au niveau du village Les actions retenues pour ce faire sont notamment les suivantes :

- Offrir un cadre d'échanges permanents entre les acteurs œuvrant autour des mêmes ressources vitales par la création des plates-formes thématiques ou cadres de réflexion du village, vivant un idéal commun ;
- Elaborer le plan de développement local et les projets spécifiques de terroir;
- Comprendre et avoir une vision unique sur les concepts de conservation de la bonne gouvernance environnementale et de développement durable ;
- Partager et recevoir les idées majeures fondées sur l'expérience et le savoir faire en gestion durable des ressources naturelles ;
- Collecter et partager des informations et données tant quantitatives que qualitatives sur les acteurs, les motivations et stratégies autour de ressources vitales menacées ;
- Appliquer les connaissances et compétences nouvelles acquises à partir des échanges et formations reçues ;
- Servir de créneau pour atteindre les communautés locales (villages) à travers des conseils pratiques pour réduire et prévoir les pressions sur les ressources naturelles ;
- Apprendre les outils et méthodes innovantes nécessaires à la réflexion et au développement des plans stratégiques locaux focalisés sur la bonne gouvernance des ressources vitales menacées ;
- Insuffler une dynamique nouvelle de production de valorisation et de réglementation dans l'utilisation des ressources naturelles ;
- Standardiser les visions, les pratiques et comportements des acteurs locaux (des villages) autour des ressources naturelles et en particulier du village;
- Créer un cadre de collaboration entre les CLD et d'autres partenaires impliqués dans la conservation et gestion durable de l'environnement.

Article 4 : De la durée :
Le CLD/ Est créé pour une durée indéterminée.

CHAPITRE II : DES MEMBRES, CATEGORIES DES MEMBRES, ADHESION, DROITS ET OBLIGATIONS, PERTE DE QUALITE DES MEMBRES.

Article 5 : Des membres.
Le CLD/ Comprend les catégories de membres à savoir : les Membres effectifs, et les membres d'honneurs.

Article 6 : Peut être membre effectif de CLD/ toute personne physique
Membre des ménages habitant le village ayant atteint dix huit ans révolus.

Article 7 : Peut être membre d'honneur toute personne physique ou morale qui s'intéresse aux problèmes de conservation des ressources naturelles et au développement des ménages habitant en permanence le village

Article 8 : Adhésion des membres :
L'adhésion des membres est libre et volontaire.

Article 9 : Les droits des membres du CLD/.....:

- Les membres de CLD sont tous égaux ;
- Ils ont le droit d'élire leurs responsables et d'être élus ;
- Ils ont le droit d'être informés de tout ce qui se passe dans le CLD ;
- Ils ont le droit de bénéficier des services et avantages offerts par le CLD ;

Article 10 : Les obligations des membres de CLD/

Les membres ont l'obligation de :

- Respecter les Statuts et Règlement intérieur ;
- Participer aux différentes activités du CLD (réunions, formations, travaux communautaires) de façon active et responsable ;
- Verser les cotisations régulièrement pour permettre au CLD de réaliser ses activités et atteindre ses objectifs,
- Veillez et œuvrer à la bonne marche de CLD ;
- Respecter les biens du CLD ;

Article 11 : Perte de qualité de membre.

Le membre de CLD/ perd sa qualité (de membre) par :

- La non observation des Statuts et Règlement Intérieur;
- Faute lourde (indigne perturbateur, conflictuel, injures, vols, bagarres, adultère, détournement de fonds et de biens...) ;
- Décès,
- Incompétence notoire dans l'exercice de ses fonctions ;
- Absences répétées non motivées et non autorisées ;

- Démission (de ce fait, il perd tous les avantages auxquelles il pouvait prétendre s'il démissionne pour des raisons personnelles. Si c'est pour d'autres raisons, l'Assemblée Générale peut examiner et trancher).

Dans tous les cas, l'exclusion doit être prononcée par l'Assemblée Générale sur proposition du Comité Directeur.

CHAPITRE III : REGIME DISCIPLINAIRE

Article 12 : Sont considérés comme fautes légères : les retards et les absences non motivés.

Article 13 : les fautes légères sont passibles aux sanctions ci-après :

- Retards aux réunions = 500 Fc d'amende
- Retards aux travaux = 500 Fc d'amende
- Absences aux réunions non justifiées = 500 Fc d'amende
- Absences aux travaux = 1000 Fc d'amende

En cas de récidive, le membre est soumis au règlement disciplinaire ci-après :

- Avertissement
- Blâme ;
- Suspension
- Exclusion
- Révocation ;

Article 14 : Sont considérés comme fautes lourdes :

- Non observation des textes de base (Statuts et Règlement Intérieur)
- Injures, vols, bagarres, adultère, détournement des fonds et des biens...

Article 15 : Les fautes conduisent à l'exclusion et ou à la révocation qui doit être prononcées par l'Assemblée Générale sur proposition du Comité Directeur.

Article 16 : Dans tous les cas, le Comité Directeur a le pouvoir d'appréciation de tout manquement reproché à un membre. En outre, aucune décision de suspension, d'exclusion ou de révocation d'un membre ne pourra être prise tant que l'intéressé n'a pas été invité formellement à présenter ses moyens de défense.

CHAPITRE IV : DES RESSOURCES ET DISPOSITIONS FINANCIERES

Article 17 : Les ressources de CLD proviennent de :

- Cotisations des membres en nature, en espèces ou en service ;

- Produits des activités d'autofinancement (vente de services, vente des produits agricoles) ;
- Dons, legs, cession ;
- Subsidés ;
- Crédit ;
- Subventions ;
- Autres perceptions (amendes....)

Article 18 : Les fonds de CLD sont gardés par le caissier. Une grande partie peut être gardée dans une coopérative ou une autre institution financière pour générer les intérêts.

Article 19 : Pour sortir les fonds (l'argent), trois signatures sont nécessaires :

- Celle du Président
- Celle du caissier(e)
- Celle du conseiller principal

Article 20 : Toute entrée et sortie d'argent doivent être autorisées au préalable par un bon signé par le Président, ces deux opérations exigent des justificatifs et doivent être enregistrées dans un cahier ou livre de caisse.

Article 21 : Les autres matériels doivent être gardés au siège de CLD ou à un endroit choisi par le Comité Directeur.

CHAPITRE V : DES ORGANES DE CLD ET DE LEUR FONCTIONNEMENT

Article 22 : Le CLD comprend 3 organes à savoir :

- L'Assemblée Générale (AG)
- Le Comité Directeur (CD)
- Le Comité de Contrôle (C.C.)

SECTION I : L'ASSEMBLEE GENERALE

Article 23 : L'Assemblée Générale est l'organe suprême de CLD. Elle est composée de tous les membres adhérant au CLD.

Article 24 : L'Assemblée Générale a pour rôle de :

- Fixer les grandes orientations à suivre ;
- Déterminer les priorités à suivre ;
- Valider les plans et projets de conservation et de développement local du village
- Elire et révoquer les membres du Comité Directeur et membre du Comité de Contrôle ;

- Elaborer le plan de conservation et de développement local du village ;
- Sanctionner les membres selon les Statuts et Règlement Intérieur ;
- Approuver les rapports d'activités et financiers du Comité Directeur ;
- Désigner ses responsables aux regroupements des CLD de l'axe.

Article 25 : l'Assemblée Générale se réunit en session ordinaire (AGO) deux fois l'an et en session extraordinaire (AGE) chaque fois que le besoin se fait sentir ;

Article 26 : L'Assemblée Générale siège valablement lorsque la majorité des membres est présente. Elle est convoquée par le Président du CD ou à son absence par le Vice-président en précisant la date, l'heure, l'ordre du jour et le lieu où va se tenir l'Assemblée Générale ;

Article 27 : Pour bien siéger, l'Assemblée Générale doit réunir au moins les 2/3 des membres ;

Article 28 : En cas de nécessité, l'Assemblée Générale constitue son bureau composé d'un président, d'un secrétaire rapporteur et d'un membre ;

SECTION II : LE COMITE DIRECTEUR

Article 29 : Le Comité Directeur est l'organe d'exécution des décisions et Recommandations prises par l'Assemblée Générale ;

Article 30 : le Comité Directeur est composé de 11 membres suivants :

- Un Président ;
- Un Vice-président ;
- Un Secrétaire ;
- Un secrétaire adjoint ;
- Un trésorier/caissier ;
- Conseiller principal
- Conseiller chargé de développement ;
- Conseiller de conservation ;
- Conseiller chargé des questions sociales et genres ;
- Conseiller chargé de règlement des conflits ;
- Un chargé des relations publiques ;

Article 31 : Les membres du Comité Directeur doivent répondre aux qualités/
Critères ci-après :

- être compétent, courageux, dynamique, disponible, intègre et dévoué, aimer le développement, accepter de travailler à titre bénévole, manifesté le volontariat, observer l'attitude de restitution et interaction.

Article 32 : Le mandat du Comité Directeur est de trois ans renouvelable une fois.

Article 33 : Le Comité Directeur a pour rôle de :

- Gérer au quotidien le CLD ;
- Assurer l'animation permanente de la population ;
- Organiser et contrôler le travail arrêté par l'Assemblée Générale ;
- Rédiger les procès-verbaux des réunions ;
- Veillez à l'application des décisions et recommandations des réunions ;
- Représenter les CLD à l'extérieur ;
- Rédiger le plan de développement de CLD à soumettre à l'Assemblée Générale ;
- Gérer les projets de conservation et de développement ;
- S'informer sur toutes les possibilités qui peuvent favoriser le développement du village ;
- Tenir l'Assemblée Générale et informer la population de tout ce qu'il voit, entend et pense ;
- Veillez à la discipline et à la bonne marche du CLD ;
- Proposer les modifications des Statuts et du R.I. à l'Assemblée Générale ;
- Présenter les rapports d'activités et financiers à l'Assemblée Générale ;
- Gérer les biens de CLD ;
- Entreprendre les activités de plaidoyer et de lobbying ;

Article 34 : le Comité Directeur se réunit une fois par mois, donc chaque fin du mois et est convoqué par le Président qui en précise, l'heure, le lieu et l'ordre du jour ;

Article 35 : Les attributions des membres du Comité Directeur sont :

1. Le Président :

- Dirige et coordonne toutes les activités du CLD ;
- Convoque et dirige les réunions du CLD et du Comité Directeur ;
- Organise le travail au sein du Comité Directeur et du CLD ;
- Prend les initiatives liées à l'autopromotion du village ;
- Veille sur la bonne gouvernance des ressources nature du village en collaboration avec le chef de village et les différentes parties prenantes ;
- Veille sur l'application des normes de gestion des ressources naturelles locales ;
- Engage le CLD vis-à-vis de l'extérieur ;
- Assure la gestion administrative financière et matérielle de CLD ;
- Signe toutes les entrées et sorties de fonds avec le Trésorier/caissier et le conseiller principal ;
- Autorise les entrées et sorties de fonds ;
- Collabore étroitement avec les parties prenantes et le chef de terre en sa qualité de conseiller principal.

2. Le Vice-président :

- Assure la surveillance et l'application de toutes les décisions prises par l'AG ou le Comité Directeur et en fait rapport aux Président du Comité Directeur ;
- Travaille conjointement avec le Président sur toutes les matières lui confiées par ce dernier ;
- Convoque l'Assemblée Général en cas d'absence du Président et d'urgence (faillie du Président du Comité Directeur par exemple) ;
- Remplace le Président en cas d'absence ;

3. Le secrétaire rapporteur :

- Garde le cachet et les archives et tient toute la documentation du Comité Directeur ;
- Dresse les procès-verbaux et comptes rendus de différentes réunions du Comité Directeur qu'il signe avec le Président ;
- Assiste le Président et le Vice-président dans leurs attributions ;
- Dirige les activités du Comité Directeur en cas d'empêchement du Président et du vice-président ;

4. Le secrétaire rapporteur adjoint :

Accompagne et remplace le secrétaire titulaire en cas d'absence ou d'empêchement.

5. Le Trésorier/Caissier :

- Perçoit les cotisations des membres moyennant un reçu ;
- Garde les fonds de CLD ;
- Tient tous les documents comptables de CLD ;
- Fait les rapports de caisse au Président qui à son tour le fera aux autres membres du Comité Directeur ;
- Signe conjointement toutes les entrées et sorties de fonds avec le Président et le conseiller principal ;

6. Le conseiller principal :

- Assiste le Comité Directeur par ses sages conseils ;
- Soutient toutes les initiatives de l'autopromotion au niveau du village ;
- Signe toutes les entrées et sorties de fonds avec le Président et le trésorier/caissier ;
- Veille sur la cohésion sociale au sein du Comité Directeur ;
- Préviend tous les cas de conflits au niveau du village ;
- Arbitre les cas de conflits constatés.

7. Le conseiller de conservation :

- Collabore avec les différents partenaires de développement sur instruction du Comité Directeur ;

- Représente le Comité Directeur auprès des partenaires (WWF, ICCN, autres institutions de conservation) ;
- Assure la surveillance des normes de gestion des ressources naturelles ;
- Fait les rapports au Comité Directeur de toutes les réunions auxquelles il prend part ;
- Initie des activités/plans de conservation et les soumet au Comité Directeur ;

8. Le Conseiller chargé au développement :

- Est animateur des activités d'autopromotion du village ;
- Prend des initiatives de développement durable et identifie les partenaires éventuels pour l'appui ;
- Mobilise les ressources surtout locales pour la mise en œuvre du plan de développement local (PDL) ;
- Diffuse les techniques culturelles innovantes compatibles à la gestion des ressources naturelles ;

9. Le conseiller chargé des questions sociales et genre :

- Identifie les activités des femmes dans le village et en assure l'autopromotion ;
- Identifie les problèmes spécifiques aux femmes dans le village, les planifie et en propose des solutions au Comité Directeur ;
- Identifie les problèmes sociaux (l'analphabétisme, l'encadrement des enfants, des filles, des filles-mère, mères, des garçons, des veuves, des orphelins, des vieillards...) les planifie et en propose des solutions au Comité Directeur ;

10. Le chargé des relations publiques :

- Est chargé des contacts à l'intérieur et extérieur du village ;
- Sert d'appui aux conseillers chargés des affaires sociales et genre, développement, conservation et au conseiller principal ;
- Fait des rapports des contacts au Comité Directeur ;

11. Le conseiller chargé de règlement des conflits :

Il assiste le conseiller principal dans la gestion des conflits entre les membres de CLD et s'occupe de l'attribution des tâches lors des différents travaux de terrain. Il joue aussi le rôle de mobilisateur du CLD.

SECTION III : LE COMITE DE CONTROLE

Article 36 : Le comité de contrôle est un organe chargé de contrôler toutes les Ressources financières et matérielles du CLD. Il rend compte à l'Assemblée Générale et non au Comité Directeur ;

Article 37 : Le comité de contrôle est composé de trois membres compétents, Intègres, fermes, stricts, choisis par l'Assemblée Générale. Ces

personnes ne peuvent pas avoir des relations de parenté avec les membres du Comité Directeur ;

Article 38 : le comité de Contrôle a pour attributions :

- Vérifier tous les documents comptables du Comité Directeur ;
- Contrôler la régularité et la sincérité des inventaires et autres aspects financiers ;
- Donner des propositions sur la bonne utilisation de toutes les ressources (financières, matérielles, humaines...)

CHAPITRE VI : REGLEMENT DES CONFLITS ET LITIGES

Article 39 : Les conflits seront traités à l'amiable par le comité directeur en Présence du conseiller principal et du chargé des conflits, si possible avec quelques autres, si les conflits persistent, ils seront transférés à L'Assemblée Générale pour le règlement éventuel.

Article 40 : Si les litiges dépassent les compétences de l'Assemblée Générale, alors On peut recourir aux tribunaux du ressort.

CHAPITRE VII : DISPOSITIONS FINALES

Article 41 : L'Assemblée Générale décidera de la modification des Statuts et du Règlement Intérieur.

Article 42 : Le présent Règlement Intérieur entre en vigueur à la date de son adoption.

Fait à le .../...../20.....

Liste des membres du Comité directeur :

N°	Noms et post-noms	Sexe	Fonctions	Signature

Liste des membres du Comité de Contrôle :

N°	Noms et post noms	Sexe	Fonctions	Signature

LISTES DES MEMBRES ET LEURS SIGNATURES

N°	NOMS COMPLETS	Sexe	Village	SIGNATURE

