# REDD+ Institutional Choices and their Implications for Local Democracy in the Kasigau Corridor, Kenya.

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# Problem statement 1/2

- REDD+ aims at mitigating climate change (through emissions reduction), but also improving the livelihoods, without compromising the governance, of forest dependent communities

- But concerns that REDD+ implementation could lead to negative **impacts on people** and biodiversity have been raised.

- REDD+ safeguards, formulated under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), aim at protecting the weak and vulnerable people from harmful effects as a result of REDD+ Implementation
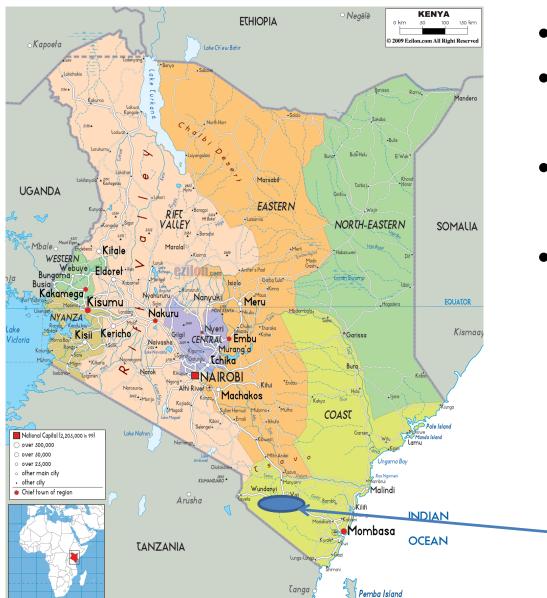
# Problem statement 2/2

- Recent governance reforms (e.g. decentralized forest management and devolution under many constitutions ) in Africa were aimed at increasing local participation, securing local rights and promoting local democracy

- So the broad question is:

- Does the implementation of REDD+ promote or undermine the tenets of "good governance", "democratic ideals" and the "spirit of devolution" that were presided by these reforms?

- This research uses the choice and recognition framework to interrogate the implications of REDD+ on local democracy in Kenya.

- *The implicit assumption of this framework is that institutional choices, have a bearing on local democracy: choice-**recognition** through transfer of resources)-basis for **accountabilit**y-ability for **responsiveness**.*

# Methods

- Document reviews
- Key informant interviews
- Intra household interviews
- PRA tools (local institutions mapping and ranking by various attributes)

REDD+ site-Kasigau corridor

# Research questions

1. Which institutions do REDD+ project implementers choose to work with at the local level and why?

2. What are the underlying/structural and symptomatic factors that determine institutional choice?

3. What are the implications of various institutional choices for local democracy?

4. What lessons can we draw from this study towards Paris and beyond?

# Key Findings

- There are numerous kinds of institutions at the local level that citizens use to seek representation.

- Local institutions are in a state of flux, i.e. continuous process of formation, dissolution and realignment with others.

- REDD+ institutional choices reveal a dynamic process of recognition and derecognition

- REDD+ project recognized state-sanctioned institutions, i.e. Locational Development Committees (LDCs), headed by chiefs, but shortly thereafter derecognized them in favour of newly – created Location Carbon Committees (LCCs) and Community Based Organizations (CBOs). Elected authorities were bypassed.

- LCCs and CBOs are "parallel institutions" that lack formal mechanisms of public accountability, & in most cases, do not survive beyond the lifetime of the project.

# Key Findings

- The derecognition of chiefs &  circumvention of elected leaders was predicated on:

-**Symptomatic factors**

    **-lack of downward accountability**

    **-corruption**

    **-bureaucracy and inefficiency among state-sanctioned institutions**

**structurally embedded factors**

-   **(here, history of institutional formation, colonial legacy, "decentralized despotism"**

- LCCs and CBOs, even though not democratically elected, were perceived by respondents as accountable and responsive to local needs (the project ensured multiple mechanism of accountability through audits, public display of records, technical and human resource support).

- LCCs and CBOs/parallel institutions, took the resources & power under REDD+

- The study illustrates the tension between recognizing democratically elected and/or state-sanctioned institutions that may be corrupt and inefficient and crafting parallel institutions to enhance accountability.

# Conclusions/Recommendations

- REDD+ has the potential to leverage democracy, through choice & recognition of institutions that are accountable and responsive to local needs. (Recognition= transfer of powers and resources).

- Democratically elected institutions could still lack effective mechanisms to hold leaders accountable; be corrupt and inefficient *(learn from REDD+ projects on the multiple mechanisms of accountability beyond elections)*.

- In the short term, recognizing parallel institutions may be necessary in order to meet REDD+ goals, but keeping them under the presidency of elected local governments.

- In the long term, migrating REDD+ partnerships and resources into mainstream local governance structures is ultimately critical in order not to undermine local democracy.

# Conclusions/Recommendations

- REDD+ safeguards are broad, but so far they do not address critical aspects of governance, including representation (they talk of participation, a weaker form of citizen engagement).

- Safeguards are to be "country-driven".. therefore we do not know what they will actually look like…there will be need to be explicit on which institutions REDD+ will fall under, who partners with who, bearing in mind it is not a "mere partnership".

- So far, safeguards only apply to parties that wish to receive results-based payments through the UNFCCC. What about private sector? Shouldn't safeguards apply to all actors implementing REDD+?

# What lessons can we draw from this study towards Paris and beyond?

- This study is about understanding the implications of "institutional choice" otherwise seen as "mere partnerships"; but which involves transfer of <u>material resources/benefits,</u> <u>power,</u> <u>legitimacy,</u> between "partners".

- Although article 2 of the convention, and indeed other articles do not explicitly state this, climate change negotiations are about governance, power and interests.

- Negotiators must continuously have in mind the implications of their decisions, partnerships and bargains, on poor local communities whose poverty is the subject of sustainable development goals (SDG's), and for whom democracy is meant to empower.

- This study was part of the Responsive Forest Governance Initiative (RFGI), a collaborative partnership focussed on environmental governance in Africa between IUCN, CODESRIA and University of Illinois in Urbana Champaign.

- It covered 12 countries in Africa with over 30 researchers. Findings have been published on the IUCN library online.

- https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/RFGI-WP-016.pdf