Field Report to Luki Biosphere Reserve Kifulu and Kiobo, Democratic Republic of the Congo

May 22, 2012
Lessons from Kifulu

- Is on edge of reserve
- Economy is based on farming, charcoaling and brick making
- Has 366 people and is expanding with settler arrival
- It lacks infrastructure, has no school and no clinic and has air of poverty
- People feel that they lack land but no maps are available
Kifulu 2

• Neither INERA nor local Govt provide services to the community

• Women are not participating in decisions

• People feel powerless and want a better relationship to Reserve
  “like a marriage contract”
There are 3 FPIC problems:

- Land was taken by force in the colonial era
- Then logging companies came in but they did not even consult
- WWF Reforestation project did have consultations but project was plagued by misunderstandings on both sides

- Reflexion: dialogue alone does not assure understanding
Lessons from Kiobo

• The Reserve was established in 1937 by the Belgians
  – They lived well from the forests
  – Their lands were taken by the Belgians by force, without their consent
  – The Research Station was established on the previous Kiobo village site and the people moved off into the forest to their present site
  – But the Belgians knew the people were the original owners of the whole area
  – People expressed frustration – it appears that the government no longer recognizes their original ownership
Kiobo 2

• The Belgians provided medical assistance, helped with funerals and agricultural advice

• This situation continued to the 1980s.
  – Question: this was also around the time the area was converted to a Biosphere Reserve. Is there any connection?

• Today this situation has broken down and people feel marginalised and no longer respected as the original owners
Kiobo 3

• An enclaved village – isolate - is deprived of services inc. clean water, market access, medical care, schools

• As a result people are gradually leaving and the population declining

• Illegal logging by outsiders is not controlled and even people who have been arrested are coming back

• There is illegal hunting right near village

• The people are expected to keep the road open but are not paid

• Bridge is in disrepair
Kiobo 4

- WWF has had a project which has brought agricultural development within enclave

- A successful pilot with seeds, seedling and veterinary help is now being extended to the wider village
  - Although only 2 people in each village could be included in pilot
  - Question: the pilot was successful and the seeds were available to everyone?

- People have not been told about REDD at all by INERA or WWF
  - only heard of it through ADEV

- The people don’t feel directly involved in management decisions.
  - Reflection: Having local representatives on the Steering Committee is not sufficient to make sure information flow to village
Kiobo 5

• Although they are on the local development committees they are not in the Steering Committee

• Overall the situation has not really been improved by the project

• The villagers directly requested
  – Their needs addressed
  – Better access to schools and clinics
  – Atmosphere of calm and security (no illegal entry)
  – Proper regulation of the Reserve
  – better engagement in projects
  – to build solution from bottom up
Discussion

• Key additional points not in village summaries or TFD handout
  – WWF been there since 2004 supported by Belgian Cooperation and EC. 2\textsuperscript{nd} phase EC now about to start.

  – REDD Readiness project with CBFF been negotiated with AFDB since 2009

  – WWF project established the local community development committees based on Forest Code definition of a community
Discussion cont.

- Project admits to being very overstretched and cannot reach all 100 villages.
- But protection by eco-guards is meant to involve the communities.
- Locals access to NTFPs is encouraged.
- 90% of violations such as illegal cutting is done by outsiders. Forest is vulnerable as only large forest near Boma and Matadi.
- REDD project not yet started so people not yet informed of it.
Discussion cont.

• Outsiders seem to be dominating illegal trades and holding back the communities

• If REDD project is already planned is this FPIC? No free or prior or right to say ‘no’

• Can people feel represented without being part of Steering Committee decisions?

• Why are they not involved in dealing with CBFF and developing REDD project concept?

• Other enclaves are even more cut off.
Discussion cont.

• Long history of dispossession and forces outside project area are hard to address

• Need for wider, more holistic changes in institutions, laws and policies to make FPIC work
  – A reconceptualization of normal operating procedures

• Min Env adviser:
  – Can’t deliver all REDD readiness in pilot projects, FPIC is not obligatory, need to consider national context, FPIC is not indispensable
Final remarks

• WWF: CBFF project will intensify existing initiatives and see if REDD possible: wider governance is a national challenge

• Need to improve involvement in decision-making. Community committees are just a start
  – Ensure information is transferred up and down

• INERA: Agree that wider engagement is needed, 6 on steering committee are now engaging with CLD representative