

**Master's Degree Thesis**  
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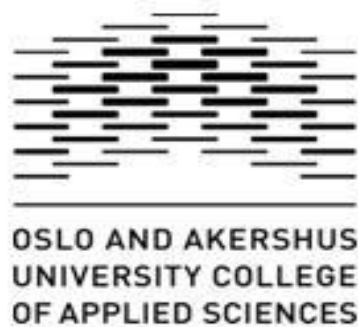
**Understanding the Role of Local Communities in Forest Concessions  
Management: A Participatory Forest Management initiative in South Sudan**



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### **Illustration of cover page pictures and reminders**

The pictures presented on the cover page of this Thesis illustrate the contrasting results which were the negative and positive impacts of the role of local communities in the management of forest concession projects. The local people destroyed the forest reserves through illegal logging in the communities which did not agree with government and the concessionaires.

In contrast, the other communities which were actively involved in the management of forest concession projects chose the construction of school by the company as compensation to their community for the company to use the forests of their locality (more in chapter 4 and 5).

I used pictorial language to make pictures communicate the message they contain in this piece of writing. I would advise the use of the pictures attached as appendix for detailed understanding of experience I acquired in this qualitative research project.

An alarming tune to the reader is that the world is drastically changing with new and appropriate practical research approaches. This is to alert you to reduce your surprise in reading subjective language with first person 'I' instead of objective language of using the third person as may be preferred by conventional Researchers in report writing. This is the reality of Action research with me as part of the changing world.

## Abstract

This research project is a Participatory Forest Management initiative aiming at understanding the role of local communities with emphasis on their participation in the management of forest concession projects. Its long-term goal is Participatory Forest Management practices for the need of sustainable forestry in South Sudan.

The research project was integrated and implemented through South Sudan forest concession work to support the development of South Sudan forest concession guidelines and agreement templates under the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in partnership with the Norwegian Forestry Group, South Sudan Program.

Its data was gathered through qualitative research approaches including the focus groups, use of questionnaires, interviews and observations. It was collaborative and inclusive work in which the local communities, government officials and the concessionaires participated.

The results of this research project answered its guiding questions and produced a comparative data. The role of local communities brought successful achievements in their development and peaceful co-existence of local people and concessionaires in the local communities who were involved through participatory approach in the management of those projects. However, the role of local communities impacted negatively on forest concession projects in which their participation on decision-making process during agreements was neglected.

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## Dedication

This paper is dedicated firstly to my Late Father Kun Gogok Nhial (Nyawjiök); your dream for my education became reality. This is my hearty thank for you. Dad, I also thanked God for you.

The next person is Mama Nyakuan (Töc-nyaan) who sacrificed her mind and physical strength for my study from the beginning to date. Nyadiew (Nyayikä), it is time for you to breath the spirit of joy and thank God for my success in this level education for the rest of your life (there is of course more study still).

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## **Abbreviations and Acronyms**

BARAA-Baptist Aids Response Agency in Africa  
CBNRM- Community Based Natural Resource Management  
CPA- Comprehensive Peace Agreement  
CES- Central Equatoria State  
CETC-Central Equatoria Teak Company  
ETC-Equatoria Teak Company  
FRG-Norwegian Forestry Group  
GADET-Pentagon-Generation Agency for Development and Transformation-Pentagon  
GoNU-Government of National Unity  
GoSS- Government of Southern Sudan  
MAF-Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry  
MDTF-Multi-Donor Trust Fund  
NFC-National Forest Corporation  
NFG-Norwegian Forestry Group  
NFR-National Forest Reserves  
NPA-Norwegian People' Aid  
ODI-Overseas Development Initiative  
RECOFTC- Regional Community Forestry Training Centre  
REDD- Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation  
RSS- Republic of South Sudan  
  
UNEP-United Nation Environment Programme  
  
UNFPA-United Nations Population Fund  
USAID- United States Agency for International Development  
WES-Western Equatoria State

# 1. Background of Research Project

## 1.1 General Introduction

The idea of Participatory Forest Management has been spread in many African countries for more than a decade and experimented in Asia and possibly successful and with promising results (M C Nurse, 1995). “Almost all African countries and many parts of Asia promoted the participation of rural communities in the management and utilisation of natural forests and woodlands through some form of Participatory Forest Management” (Kate Schreckenberg, 2006, p. 1).

The Participatory Forest Management generally embraces a participatory approach of forest resources management. This participatory approach can be characterized by inclusiveness or involvement of forest stakeholders without the distinct criteria of being remote or urbanized community, powerful party or marginalized group (Wily, 2002).

Participatory Forest Management as presented by Kate Schreckenberg et; al (Kate Schreckenberg, 2006) in some concepts include wide range of initiatives such as Community forestry, adaptive co-management or Community Based-Natural Resources Management (CBNRM). As briefly explained in the above paragraph, the basic understanding of Participatory Forest Management takes its form on key issues such as involvement of key stakeholders in forest management with central idea of local communities adjacent to forests.

This qualitative Action Research project focuses on the understanding of the role of local communities in forest concession management with emphasis on encouragement of Participatory Forest Management practice in South Sudan. The research project emphasizes Participatory Forest Management because it is the long-term goal it aims to achieve.

I tried to understand the role of the local communities in forest concessions management in order to generate relevant data from the immediate forest users who have the experience on how the local people contributed in the management of previous forest concession projects in South Sudan. I used their experiences as basis in the process of initiating Participatory Forest Management approach during implementation of this research project.

### 1.1.2 The Theme of this research

This research initiative was based on assessment of existing forest concession projects under contractual agreement by concessionaires and the South Sudan government. Its assessment part was on the basis of understanding the role played by local people adjacent to contracted forest reserves (being negative or positive).

During my planning for this research project, I had an idea of Participatory Forest Management approach with long-term goal aiming at sustainable forestry in South Sudan. The approach however, demands wider-range of stakeholders as its participants who can make it possible for me to implement my idea through their collaborative work. This was the

challenge I encountered during the planning phase of this project. But with positive response from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in partnership with Norwegian Forestry Group South Sudan Program, my research project was accepted and implemented through the South Sudan forest concession project.

The result of my collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in partnership with Norwegian Forestry Group was integration of my initiative into the development process of forest concession guidelines and agreement templates. I was serving as a member of South Sudan concession work group. My project was taken as socio-economic component of forest concession process. This part was given to me to contribute the experience of local communities on existing forest concession projects.

The target of this initiative in the development of guidelines was to ensure the inclusion of element of Participatory Forest Management in the forest concession guidelines document with emphasis on participation local communities in the management of forest concessions. As an outcome of this initiative, the consultation with local communities before any kind of agreement on local forests was stipulated in the developed forest concession guideline document which was developed as part of this research work.

The role of local communities in the management of forest concessions was considered based on the experience of local communities on existing forest concession projects which I assessed and presented to forest concession work group while formulating the guidelines. The data provided through consultation with local communities was invaluable source of information in the process of developing forest concession guidelines and agreement templates.

The data for this research project was gathered from communities adjacent to contracted forest reserves, government staff attached to those projects and forest concessionaires. The case studies or targeted companies considered during assessment in the research process were Blue Lakes Limited and Equatoria Teak Company in Western Equatoria state and the Central Equatoria Teak Company in Central Equatoria state. The field data collection period was June-December, 2011. The historical timeline of assessment was based on concession agreements signed under autonomous Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement Era (2005-2011).

The key stakeholders of this research were the National Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Norwegian Forestry Group and Norwegian People' Aid at national government level. At states level, the involved key stakeholders were Central and Western Equatoria States Directorates of Forestry and staff of the above mentioned companies. The project in special way targeted local communities adjacent to contracted forest reserves. Its key informants at local level include: county administrations, chiefs of local communities and their fellow members. The diagram below illustrates the administrative hierarchy of involved institutions both at national and local level. Use the following abbreviations for easy understanding of acronyms used in the diagram.

\*CES-Central Equatoria State, \* CETC-Central Equatoria Teak Company, \*ETC-Equatoria Teak Company, \*MAF-Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, \*MAFAF-Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Animal Resources and Fisheries, \*MAEC-Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Cooperatives, \*NFG-Norwegian Forestry Group, \*NPA-Norwegian People’s Aid \*WES-Western Equatoria State.

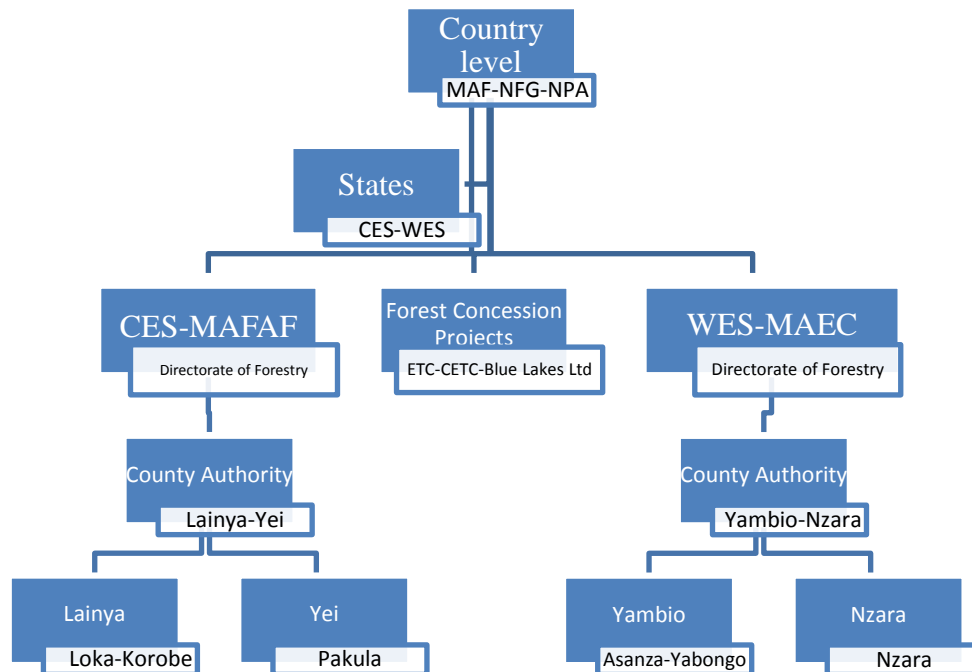


Figure 1-1 Hierarchy of stakeholders involved in research work

### 1.1.2.1 Emphasis on the theme and its justification

As knowledge-based initiative, this research project based information provided by informants contributed in South Sudan forest concession work. It was helpful in the process of developing forest concession guidelines and agreement templates. The developed forest concession guidelines and agreement templates will be used in any formal forest concession agreement in the country. This will safeguard the rights of all forest stakeholders during contracts for concession purposes.

As initiative for innovative improvement in the institution which hosted the research work, the community component appeared to be one of the key elements addressed in the developed forest concession guidelines & agreement templates. The voice of local people would possibly be heard in any agreement process according to proposed articles in the guidelines document (appendix 3.2). To justify this statement, it was not prioritised by concession work group to conduct assessment on local community experiences and views about existing concession agreements along with forest resource inventory process.

However, after integration of this participatory forest management initiative into forest concession work, the concession work group committee proposed and adopted a system of carrying out inventory and socio-economic assessment (community component) simultaneously. Previously, the data for concession guidelines used to be generated through inventory process without consideration of local communities’ views. Therefore,

the study did not benefit only the concession work group, but also me as an answer to my claim to knowledge.

The research results answered my claim to knowledge. My claim to knowledge was that *‘Encouragement of participation of local communities in the management of forest concession projects may be very low in South Sudan’*. Consequently, the outcomes of forest concession projects in which local communities were involved were successful. However, the projects which were done with inadequate consultation with local communities failed to operate in those local communities (Chapter 4 and 5 for details).

## **1.2 The importance of Participatory Forest Management in this research**

Participatory Forestry is referred as “The processes and mechanisms that enable those people who have a direct stake in forest resources to be part of decision-making in all aspects of forest management, from managing resources to formulating and implementing institutional frameworks”(Kate Schreckenber, 2006, p. 1). Kate later narrowed this concept into community forestry as a component of participatory forestry that focuses on local communities as key stakeholders for sustainability. However, the values attached to Participatory Forestry by individual researcher, community or an entity, based on the contextual meanings can make this definition vary.

Participatory Forest Management (PFM) as a focus in this research project calls for the government of South Sudan, local communities, forest investors, other groups or individuals who are interested or already took part in forest resources to have harmonized set of relationship. I prefer Participatory Forest Management as a relevant tool among other forest management development approaches because:

- It creates sense of ownership rights by partners involved. From negotiation to implementation stages of a project run in participatory manner, stakeholders define their roles, obligations and understand their benefits in light of their input.
- “Involvement of the community forestry sub-sector should be supported. Community forest management could help alleviate government’s responsibility for forest management and enforcement, and build community advocates for sustainable management of forests. This would help address the limited number of forest guards available for enforcement.” (USAID, 2007, p. 54). Participatory Forest Management brings safe conservation which minimises fear of illegal destruction by communities living in proximity with forests. Instead for government or investors to employ forest rangers for protection, the local people adjacent to forests indirectly protect. It therefore, costs less for protection purposes from the government when such approach is practiced.
- The Participatory Forest Management like Action Research has an element of democracy (Wilmsen, 2005) and (McNiff, 2011). One of the key features of participatory forest management is involvement of all stakeholders through voluntary participation. There may be positive attitude when local people understand the

regulatory role of government as governing body instead of owning the resources without the recognition of other stakeholders' rights.

- Participatory Forest Management has positive impact in term of sustainability of forests (Wadley, 1996). Local people besides natural disasters destroy forests drastically when perceive investment on forests negatively. To focus on sustainable forestry, there is need for identification of key stakeholders who are the direct beneficiaries of forest resources to voluntarily involve in management process. The need for sustainable forestry in South Sudan will be wise idea and achievable if local people are made responsible through Participatory Forest Management approach to appropriately use forest resources.

Other benefits which cannot be determined before implementation of such initiative are also invaluable. One of useful ways of protecting forests is creation of positive awareness of local people on values of forests in all aspects and particularly in the context of their local development. This is where they practically reflect on its real benefit. Dennis Keller (Tropenbos International, 2009) argued on having community participation in forest management as better way of achieving goals of forest conservation. This argument was tight with application of effective policies that focus on wide stakeholders' involvement in collaborations and through actions and programs that seek the advice from the local communities.

In addition to the above benefits and useful functions of Participatory forest Management practice, there was tension for conflict of interests to occur due to high commercial value of forest resources and mainly the Teak (*Tectona grandis*) in South Sudan (Tropenbos International, 2009). This conflict of interest was not expected only within forest owning communities but also among woodlots<sup>1</sup> owning individuals, large-scale investors, government or other concerned bodies.

The local land use conflict among different actors in South Sudan was found out in some studies such as forests and Climate Change (Tropenbos International, 2009) which was conducted through consultations with multi-stakeholders on Landscape Management Planning and Training for the Environment in South Sudan (LAMPTESS) in Renk County, Upper Nile State.

Local conflict on forest resources was also predicted in Sudan's Post-conflict Environment Assessment in 2006. The prediction was focusing on unsustainable management of forest resources to be the cause of conflict at local level. For instance, the charcoal industries were identified as major practices which accelerated the rate of deforestation and caused conflicts in some local communities in north-south Sudan borders (UNEP, 2007). There was also evidence based on the results of this research which showed misunderstandings on forest

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<sup>1</sup> **Woodlot**- refers to a segment of a woodland or forest capable of small-scale production of forest products

concession project of Central Equatoria Teak Company as threat from local communities to government and concessionaires (See Chapter 4 sub-section 4.1.3 for details).

Another complement was from United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Southern Sudan Environmental Threats and Opportunities Assessment which clearly spelled the exploitation of forest plantations by concessionaires in Central Equatoria during the South-North Sudan civil war. “The teak trade caused tension and conflict between those involved - concessionaires, local communities, local authorities, Forestry authorities and the SPLA/M” (USAID, 2007, p. 26). According to United States Agency for International Development (USAID) assessment, there was lack of public confidence in term of regulation of the concessions and collaboration among the stakeholders during the civil war.

My typical fear based on negative impacts in absence of Participatory Forest Management (PFM) and the existence of misunderstandings among forest stakeholders is degradation of forest lands. The loss of forest cover basically has negative impact on social, economic and environmental dimension. Therefore, to minimise those problems on forest resources in South Sudan, Participatory Forest Management (PFM) approaches are needed.

## **1.3 My Professional Background**

### **1.3.1 Education and works**

This is a brief introduction about me as a writer of this paper. The educational profile I presented here focused only at Undergraduate level (excluding Primary-secondary school) in which my vocational trade as production forester started. The chronological order of my professional background in this writing starts from past to present. The build-up of my professional interest, knowledge and experience in forestry began after successful work in the Ethiopian Higher Education Entrance Qualification Certificate (EHEEQC) at Gambella Senior Secondary School in the year 2004. This marked the end of 2 years (2003-2004) preparatory program (Class 11-12<sup>th</sup>) towards the University level.

After completed the preparatory program, I was enrolled for undergraduate studies at Hawassa University- Wondo Genet College of Forestry & Natural resources in the Department of Production Forestry in 2005 academic year. I have earned my Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.), Degree in Production Forestry in July, 2008 at Hawassa University, Ethiopia. During this study, I built up scientific understanding of forestry as discipline thus, engaged my mind on opportunities and the challenges related to use of forest resources at regional and the global level.

It was interesting for me to understand the plausible roles forests play socially, economically and on environmental dimension in human life and in the survival of other diversity. This was the mean time for me to develop professional thinking on possible ways of handling forests related challenges in order to fight for sustainable forestry. However, this thinking was drawn



from the taught and the read theories, not through practical experience at my undergraduate studies.

In September, 2008 I was employed as Researcher of natural resources in Gambella Agricultural Research Institute, Ethiopia. In this institute, I found one of the very important initiatives which developed the capacity of local communities and encouraged their active participation in agricultural production for their livelihood and the local development. The initiative was Farmers' Research Groups (FRG). I experienced how important it is when local people's active participation is encouraged. However, for the sake of repatriation of South Sudanese Refugee in Ethiopia, I resigned from this institute in February, 2009 for the purpose of returning home (South Sudan) during the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA 2005-2011). However, I kept this idea of Farmers' Research Groups initiative in mind for adoption if acceptable in South Sudan wherever it may be possible to implement in my work institution.

In March, 2009, I had a consultancy partnership with Baptist Aids Response Agency in Africa (BARAA<sup>2</sup>-Sudan) in Upper Nile State, Malakal. I served as Project Officer and a co-founder of Comprehensive Afforestation Project which was implemented in Renk County, Upper Nile State. This project was funded through Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) and implemented by Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) in partnership with South Sudan Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF).

The project had two objectives. The first objective from the donor side was the engagement of the local communities to participate in rehabilitation of forest lands degraded during the civil war. This also aims at bringing their attention and enhances the community to understand environmental, social and economic values of forests through that project.

The project was implemented through tree planting in order for local people to make use of it and contribute in restoration of forest cover in the area. The second objective was the research purpose where I personally wanted to know about the extent to which this area was devastated and what could be possible means to improve it. It never eroded from my memory that all this approach would have positive impact through engagement of local people in the process.

We proposed Renk County in Upper Nile state for its being one among the areas whose forests were severely damaged during the civil war. Very special case in this area is being situated in the extreme northern part of South-North Sudan border. In this area, charcoal production and transportation of timber to Sudan capital city (Khartoum) were unsustainably practiced. These practices were among the forest resource business which accelerated the rate of deforestation in the area.

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<sup>2</sup> **Baptist Aids Response Agency in Africa** is an indigenous Non-Governmental Organization with branch in South Sudan which supports local development in Agriculture, Forestry, Education and small scale business for Women groups and gives care for vulnerable Orphans at local community level

Based on the feedback from the local community which hosted the project, and in accordance with proposed activities as indicators of its achievements, the participation of the local community was positive. The experience from this collaboration with support from stakeholders' recommendations on the project helped me to learn how community involvement leads to successful participatory work. I still have intention to proceed in this kind of initiative. The picture below shows above mentioned mal practices in Renk County, Upper Nile State.



Figure 2-1 Timber bound for sale to Khartoum

This timber (figure 2-1) bound for sale in Khartoum comes from 500 km south; near Renk in Upper Nile state (UNEP, 2007, p. 213)

While serving in a consultancy basis with Baptist Aids Response Agency in Africa (BARAA-Sudan), I was provisionally appointed as Assistant Inspector of Environment in October, 2009 in the National Ministry of Environment-the Republic of South Sudan which based in Juba. In this assignment, I was a member of Environmental Taskforce<sup>3</sup>. One of my lessons in this particular task was shortcoming due to lack of primary data gathered in the meantime while developing the Bill<sup>4</sup>. The drafting of the Bill had much of secondary sources from the environmental Bills of selected neighbouring countries.

I negatively reflected and doubt the relevance of this work and contrast it with lesson I learnt during the presentation of Professor Jostin Kleivlend (Kleivland, March 10 ,2011) on curriculum development at Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, Norway. In the discussion, the importance of involvement of stakeholders was elaborated. It is important to have views of stakeholders who will influence, or will be affected by the application of the policies designed. It may also be necessary for the policy to meet their needs. With this experience, it rings to my mind that designation of any development project if it is for public benefit needs the involvement and active participation of its stakeholders or beneficiaries.

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<sup>3</sup> **Environmental Taskforce** was a team which was drafting the South Sudan Environmental Bill in 2009-2010

<sup>4</sup> **Bill**- means in this context the Environmental Bill of South Sudan

In September, 2010, I joined Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences in Norway to pursue a 2 years Master's Degree in Technical Vocational Pedagogy (2010-2012). The study program was scholarship under the Norwegian Quota Scheme from Norwegian Government to build the educational capacity of South Sudanese and particularly on Technical & Vocational Education.

The program was a research-based study in which I used to develop my project works with concentration on innovative improvements with aim of bringing productive and sustainable development in forestry. Throughout the study program, I kept tracing back my memory to reflect on my experience and possibly put effort on introducing Participatory Forest Management (PFM) approach for practice in South Sudan. All the projects done in this study program focused on this approach which was finally implemented through this initiative as part of forest concessions work in South Sudan.

This research project was implemented in participatory approach which made it a collaborative work in which I and the stakeholders involved learnt from its positive outcomes. I realized in this research work that change is possible to happen if worked out, and to be trustworthy, with stakeholders' voluntary participation.

#### **1.4 Pre-ceding projects as foundation of this research work**

The initial phase of my action research<sup>5</sup> dated back to the beginning of my Master's study program at Oslo & Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, Norway. It was research based study in which the learning process was conducted through development of research projects. The projects I have done with their timeline are as follows.

*The first project: My Professional Technical Practical Experience* (September 06-October 01, 2010). This project was a documentation of my practical professional experience. Among different practical experiences gained during my former work positions, the focus in my study was much based on Afforestation Project in which I implemented concrete practical task of my profession. The documentation helped me to reflect on my roles, achievements, challenges encountered and methodologies and coping mechanisms used. The results of this study led to the recommendations which paved way forward to create and develop the exceeding project. One among the recommendations of my first project was 'government to establish a community-based forest management and adapt bottom up approach for farmers to actively participate in the forest development sector in the Republic of South Sudan.'

*Project 2- The Needs of my Society Related to Roles of my Professional Technical Vocational Practice* (October 04-December 14, 2010). The intention in this project was to explore the relations between my profession and the national professional technical and vocational plans, ideologies, practices and needs of the society in my profession. The study targeted the

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<sup>5</sup> Action Research Project- A research which generates knowledge through actions and active participation of its stakeholders in order to bring social change (Levin, 1998)

following as key issues to understand and search for reasonable answers for my research guiding questions set-forth. These were: main causes of deforestation in Sudan (before South Sudan independence or separation from the Sudan government of Khartoum) and challenges facing forest development agents or agencies. The research project also considered forest practices or approaches needed to promote local community participation in forest resources management in the country.

In the process, I conducted practical observation and online assessment on learning and teaching process of forestry subject areas, forest management practices in Norway and referred various forest policies internationally published. I did this for the purpose of building my understanding better in the process of identifying the gap which needs improvement in the respected areas of my profession in my country, South Sudan.

One of the results in that project as answer to research guiding questions was large population of returnees which accelerated the rate of deforestation (the case of Upper Nile State-Malakal and Juba, South Sudan). The project ended with many lessons I learnt from it, but emphasized ‘the need for Comprehensive Reforestation in Participatory Forest Management (PFM) approach’. In this approach, the local communities, government forestry institutions, private sectors and forestry schools could work in harmony with guidance of forest policies of the country. Thus, to rehabilitate the degraded forest lands for the need of sustainable forest management and to meet the socio-economic needs of the people on forests in South Sudan. The focal point of the third project was derived from this particular recommendation.

*Project 3-Analysis of forest management options for planning innovative improvement against deforestation in South Sudan (06, 2010-May 27, 2011): the further discussion of the needed improvements in my profession in relation to the needs of the society.* I submitted this project to Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences in May 2011 acceptance of my research proposal for internship by Senior Management of Norwegian Forestry Group South Sudan Programme in Oslo in March, 2011. That particular study project was a preparation or planning phase of this Master’s research work. Its focus was to identify, analyse, discuss and document options for innovative improvement based on recommendations made in the second project (above).

The aim of my third project was to have priority areas for forest management projects being implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in the Republic of South Sudan in the year 2011. Based on the requests I forwarded to the Norwegian Forestry Group to find out about forest management options they have in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, one of the priority areas in which I based my planning was ‘Preparation of forest concession agreements (framework, contract templates)’. This was how the theme of this research project was derived from that particular option for implementation.

## 1.5 Description of Research Project areas

### 1.5.1 Geographical locations of Central & Western Equatoria States

#### 1.5.1.1 Central Equatoria State

*The Land size:* All this information about Central Equatoria state was adopted from United Nations Mission in Sudan report (2010). Central Equatoria State (CES) with total area of 22,956 km<sup>2</sup> and estimated population of 1,103,592 was initially part of Greater Equatoria Province (UNMIS, 2010).

*Geography:* Central Equatoria State borders Eastern Equatoria State to the east; Western Equatoria State to the west; Jonglei State to the northeast; Lakes State to the northwest, Uganda to the south and the Democratic Republic of Congo to the southwest. The capital of Central Equatoria State is Juba, which enjoys a unique status as state capital for both the Government of South Sudan and the administration of Central Equatoria State. This strategic location has some political land ownership issues which need to be resolved. The state consists of six counties, namely Juba, Lainya, Morobo, Kajo- Keji, Terekeka and Yei counties (UNMIS, 2010).

*Forest Cover:* the forest cover in Central Equatoria State was 29.8% in 1973, but declined to 19.3% in 2006 (UNEP, 2007). The most common commercial tree species in this state is Teak (*Tectona grandis*). The Teak plantations are mostly found in Lainya and Yei counties. Prior to the conflict, the largest and best managed plantations were located in Kagelu, 8 km south-west of the town of Yei in Central Equatoria State (UNEP, 2007).

#### 1.5.1.2 Western Equatoria State

*The Land size:* This information is adopted from the official website of Western Equatoria state. The state covers an area of 79,343km<sup>2</sup> with estimated population of 1,470,625 carved out from Equatoria region after signing of CPA on January 09, 2005. Before division of Greater Equatoria province into Central, Western & Eastern Equatoria States, Western Equatoria was composed of five counties of Maridi, Mundri, Ezo, Tambura and Yambio that were later subdivided into ten counties (<http://www.westate.org>).

*Geography:* Western Equatoria state, Yambio is geographically located in the south-western part of South Sudan, near the international borders with the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic. This location lies approximately 355 kilometres (221 mi) from the capital city of South Sudan (Juba).

*Forest Cover:* Western Equatoria state in South Sudan has the closest forest and wooded grassland amongst other states. It was the least altered area for deforestation during the South-North Sudan civil war due to inaccessibility by tree loggers. The forest in this state covered 80.2% in 1973 with annual deforestation rate of 1.12% until 2006 (UNEP, 2007).

The most common tree species in this state are *Chrysophyllum albidum* and *Celtis zenkeri*, with *Holoptelea grandis* in Azza forest in Maridi in Western Equatoria state. A number of

valuable timber trees are also found, including *Khaya grandifolia* (mahogany), *Chlorophora excelsa*, and *Entandrophragma angolense*, *Tectona grandis* in other small areas on the Aloma plateau and near Yambio. Species occurring in these tropical forests are similar to those found in the drier parts of the forests of West Africa (UNEP, 2007).

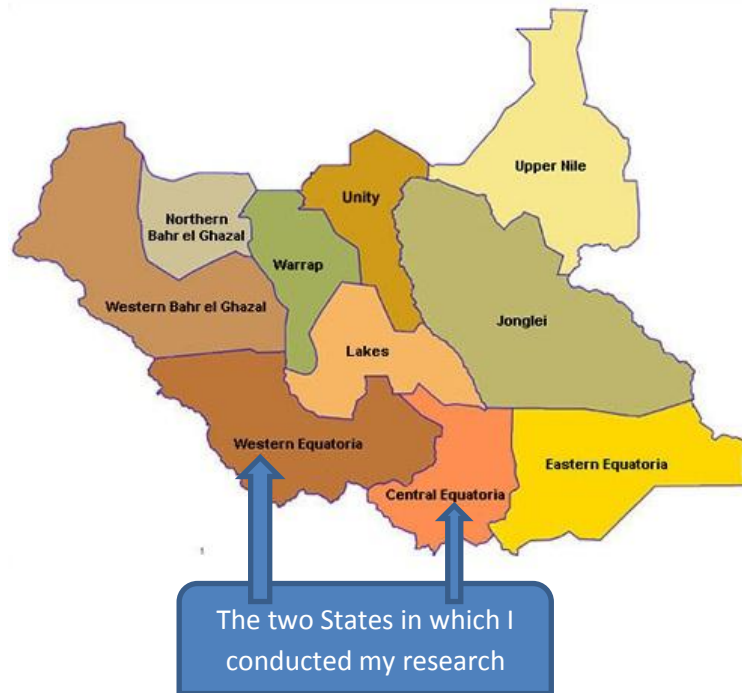


Figure 3-1 South Sudan Political Map

### 1.5.2 The Political Structure of the Government

The States government structure and the system are in accordance with government system in the Republic of South Sudan which came to independence on July 09, 2011 after an overwhelming vote of South Sudanese which resulted in 98.8% of the electorate voting in favor of secession in referendum on January 9-14, 2011. South Sudanese ended the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) autonomous Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS, 2005-2011) in peaceful voting for separation from Sudan Government (North). But the country retains its ten states proposed before and maintained during the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). Central and Western Equatoria States are among these ten states. The ten states were split from the three historical provinces namely Greater Upper Nile, Greater Bahr el Ghazal and Greater Equatoria.

The political structure starts with Central Government headed by the elected President of the Republic. The State Governments are headed by elected Governors who are accountable to the President of the Republic. The government has National Legislative Assembly at central and States Legislative Assemblies at states level. The parliament at both the national and states level were formed through democratic elections.

Other administrative units are: County headed by Commissioner, Payam headed by Administrator, and Boma which Leaders are primarily the Chiefs. The Heads of counties and Payams are appointees and not elected. The county Commissioner is appointed by the state Governor and the Payam Administrator is appointed by the County Commissioner. The county authority and Payam Council represent the parliament under County level.

In Boma level, the non-Kingship communities elect their Chiefs. However, in the Kingship communities, the local people propose the Chief, but must undergo the endorsement by the King. The rejection of the community proposal by the King may require another proposal by the community members.

The pyramid shape-diagram below illustrates the above discussed government political hierarchies with administrative units in the Republic of South Sudan. It shows hierarchical relationships with the highest authority (largest component) on the top and narrowing down to the lowest administrative unit.

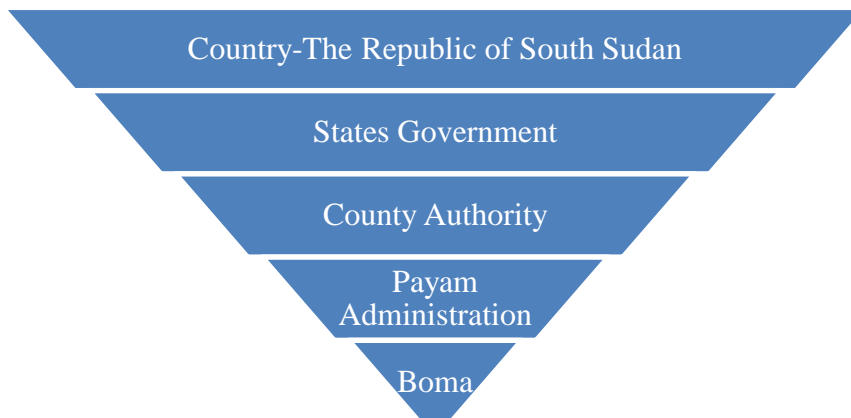


Figure 4-1 Political Structure of South Sudan Government

#### 1.5.4 Forest ownership

The forest ownership is not clearly stipulated in the draft forest policy of South Sudan (2007). I had information only from South Sudan Land Act 2009 which follows the ownership classification of Land and not forests separately. These classifications are Public land, community land and private land. **Public land** according to South Sudan Land Act 2009 (MLCD, 2009, p. 15) (MLCD, 2009) is the land owned collectively by all people of South Sudan and held in trust by the appropriate level of government. **Community land** is held by communities identified on the basis of ethnicity, residence or interest. This in current situation is under the customary law. **Private land** is the land includes any registered land held by any person under freehold tenure, any person under leased tenure or other land that may be declared private by law.

Despite the fact that South Sudan Land Act 2009 spelled out the above listed land classifications, the land of South Sudan still under pressure. The land is being used without awareness on this land act 2009. Its dissemination to local communities was recently

implemented by Norwegian People's Aid in 2011 and yet, never reached all stakeholders especially the rural communities who own large size of land. "Communities are by far the largest landowners in the sense that they retain the right to regulate the usage of community land under customary law" (Deng, 2011) Deng also stated that the three-levels of government also own a considerable amount of land in the form of protected areas (e.g. national parks, game reserves, forest reserves) and pre-war agro-industrial complexes.

The Republic of South Sudan has not yet gazette new category but retains those National Parks, Game Reserves, and Forest Reserves gazette during the British colony and those which might have been done by the central government in Khartoum. Privately held leaseholds are mostly found in and around urban areas. However, in recent years, foreign and domestic companies have acquired large amounts of rural land through leases with government institutions (Deng, 2011).

### 1.5.5 Some Commercial Forest Resources in Central and Western Equatoria States

South Sudan is endowed with abundance natural resources among which forest resources are the vital concern for the needs of the society. The country has extensive and diverse forest and woodland resources that provide food, oils, medicines, timber, poles and firewood, as well as habitat for much of Southern Sudan's wildlife (USAID, 2007).

Central and Western Equatoria States are located at the green belt of South Sudan where the dense forests are situated. Western Equatoria with estimated forest cover of 80.2% to 51.5% from 1973 to 2006 ranks the first and the Central Equatoria state with 29.8% to 19.3% from 1973 to 2006 ranks the third in South Sudan according to United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP, 2007, p. 205).

Commercial forest plantations, mainly Teak which is the top priority for concessions in South Sudan is available in these states. This valuable tree species is also abundance in Western Bahr & Northern el Ghazal and Eastern Equatoria states, but the focus here are the two research areas of this research project. It was also mentioned in Southern Sudan Environmental Threats and Opportunities Assessment (USAID, 2007) that plantations of softwoods in the Imatong Mountains of unknown extent and smaller areas of other species planted as green belts around major towns but these have mostly disappeared during the war.

The teak plantations in Central Equatoria and that of Northern Bahr El Ghazal were exploited during the war, but the Western Equatoria Teak plantations were not accessible and relatively untouched. In general, none of the plantation forests received proper management or silvicultural<sup>6</sup> treatment during the war. See the sample pictures I captured from forest reserves in the Central and Western Equatoria States during the data collection (Appendix 2.1a and 2.1L).

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<sup>6</sup> **Silviculture** is a practice or care for trees especially treatments such as thinning, tending or other management techniques on trees to grow vigorously and healthy



### 1.6.1 Forest Concessions during the Sudan's Civil War

South Sudan forests since independence of Sudan in 1956 were under the supervision of Sudan government in Khartoum. They were managed under the National Forest Corporation (NFC) according to Forest Policy and Act (1986; 1989) of Sudan (Lomuro, 2007). An amendment of the forestry legislation was again strengthened and significantly modernized by the Forests and Renewable Resources Act of 2002. "All National Forest Reserves (NFR) were under direct responsibility of the National Forest Corporation" (UNEP, 2007, p. 215).

According to Forest Policy Framework of Southern Sudan 2009, the National Forest Corporation (NFC) had little control over National Forest Reserves (NFR) of South Sudan during the civil war between South and the Sudan government of Khartoum-North. However, the Sudan's Post-conflict Environment Assessment (UNEP, 2007) has shown that Wau in Western Bahr el Ghazal was a centre for the logging and regional export of teak during the north-South conflict.

Other evidences that there were concessions run during the Civil war are the following:

Between independence and the second civil war, the teak plantations in Yei County were managed by the Sudan German Forestry Team, funded by GTZ (German Technical Aid), but the project was shut down in 1987 due to the intensification of the conflict. During the war, all of the teak plantations were subject to uncontrolled felling and export to Uganda. The entire process was managed on the black market by foreign-owned logging companies, and royalties from the timber went to the SPLA. The community living around the plantation, the Kakwa ethnic group, mainly practises subsistence agriculture, though some members also plant their own woodlots for cash income and construction materials. Before the war, the community benefited from the infrastructure provided by the government forest plantation project in terms of employment, education, health services and improved road access. Other benefits included extension services, fuel wood and other forest products from the reserve (UNEP, 2007, p. 199).

In relation to statement above that 'royalties from forest timber went to Sudan People's Liberation Army during the war concurred with draft policy of Forest Concessions in South Sudan (Kwaje, 2009). Kwaje stated that the forest concessions were awarded in form of provisional contracts<sup>7</sup>. According to him, forest concession agreements were issued to interested companies under the Sudan People's Liberation Army or Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLA/SPLM) Secretariat of Agriculture for the purpose of supporting its war effort during the last phase (1983-2005) of Sudan's civil war (Kwaje, 2009).

In my understanding, the extent to which the National Forest Corporation controlled or might not have controlled some forest reserves in South Sudan as stated in Forest Policy Framework of Southern Sudan during the civil war (Lomuro, 2007) may be determined by inaccessibility or serious insecurity. This because the above presented forest concession projects with specific locations and the concessionaires mentioned were evidences for South Sudan forests being regulated in the government system in the North.

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<sup>7</sup> **Provisional Contract** is a contract which serves under an emergency permit or time being permit.

The Norwegian Forestry Group-Land Resources Survey & Information Center (LRSIC) report (October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2009) presented that Imilai Forest Reserve in Eastern Equatoria was managed under the British Overseas Development Initiative (ODI) between 1970 and 1985. As stated in Land Resources Survey & Information Center (LRSIC) report, the Forest Reserve was later turned into the commercial Imatong Mountains Forest Development Company. According to the preliminary overview of forest resources report of Norwegian Forestry Group (NFG)-Land Resource Survey and Information Center (LRSIC-9<sup>th</sup> October 2009), there was no written document of the resources or history of the area available apart from the annual report of 1978 from the British development company.

There was limited information on how timber business took place in South Sudan during the war especially on how the concession process undertaken involved the host communities around the plantation forests.

### **1.6.2 Forest Concessions during the Comprehensive Peace Agreement**

All the provisional contracts were terminated after signing of Comprehensive Peace Agreement<sup>8</sup> in 2005 (Kwaje, 2009). The termination of contract was soon followed by temporary banning of timber exportation in January 2006. According to United Nations Environment Programme, “The Government of Southern Sudan Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry declared this banning with intention of revising timber sales procedures to reduce corruption and illegal logging” (UNEP, 2007, p. 214). This ban resulted into new initiatives for foreign logging concessionaires who used to export Teak (*Tectona grandis*) previously to acquire new concession agreements. This statement indicates that the logging was done without official provisions by government to concessionaires previously.

In the interim Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS), the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) developed Southern Sudan Forest Policy. This draft policy was approved by Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly, the current South Sudan National Legislative Assembly in 2007.

There were no guiding principles clearly stipulated in South Sudan Forest Policy Framework (2007) on forest resource concession process and yet, there was no other forest concession policy document produced or came to effect until 2011. There were forest concession management document which was proposed in 2009, but remained as a draft. It was not endorsed in the parliament or disseminated to forest stakeholders for public use. However, unavailability of forest concession policy document or guidelines did not prevent the Ministry to lease the commercial plantation forests to interested concessionaires during the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in collaboration (to some extend) with Central and Western Equatoria state governments awarded forest concession agreements to Blue Lakes

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<sup>8</sup> The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) period (December 09, 2005-July 09, 2011) was an era in which the people of South Sudan administered themselves in semi-autonomous government called the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS).

Limited (2009) and Equatoria Teak Company (2006) in Western Equatoria state and the Central Equatoria Teak Company (2007) in Central Equatoria state. These forest concession agreements were not processed under standard or approved guidelines at National Legislative Assembly. The forest concession guidelines were at formulation stage (in 2011), which the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry was hardly working on and was actually the project in which my research initiative was integrated and implemented through.

## **1.7 The Purpose of Research Project**

The overall aim of this research project is to understand the role of local communities in the management of forest concession projects from agreements to implementation stage while encouraging the practice of Participatory Forest Management in South Sudan.

The statement of this purpose encompasses the: understanding of role of local communities in forest concession management process and encouragement of Participatory Forest Management approach to the stakeholders of this research project. In the research process, I tried to initiate the adoption of Participatory Forest Management in the process of developing forest concession guidelines and agreement templates. The assessment results of this research during the data collection contributed in the development process of guidelines which made this initiative useful to its participants and will still have sustainable contribution to key stakeholders of forest resources in the country through application of those guidelines.

### **1.7.1 Specific objectives**

The specific objectives are to:

1. Understand the concession agreement and implementation process in the context of participation local communities
2. Learn how the role of local communities influenced the management of forest concession projects outcomes
3. Encourage the practice of Participatory Forest Management in South Sudan for the need of sustainable forestry

## **1.8 Problem Statement and Justification**

How can I understand the role of local communities with help of Action Research in order to contribute the idea of Participatory Forest Management as framework in the management of forest concession projects in South Sudan?

Before starting my research project work, I had many questions in mind about what could really be the problem in agreements or implementation process of forest concession projects (already existing ones). The second question was why it might be problem to be investigated. The third was how to approach the situation or the way of finding out about the problem. And the biggest question which led me struggle very hard in search for internship with many institutions during planning stage was ‘what will be the use of my research project result and ‘who’ will use it.

It was my professional development plan to introduce Participatory Forest Management approach in my country for its being inclusive, but my fear was how I may have an opportunity to do so. Other challenge was the way the message could reach local people who own the local forests and who would be the target in such approach in case my research project is accepted by the government.

Nevertheless, with support from other scholars' views on Action Research, the following definition brought an insight-understanding to challenge the dilemma I had in my thinking. "An approach to socio-economic research is participatory and action-oriented" (Ward, 2007, p. 1). I therefore, realized that I need to do something and learnt from its outcome, no matter what kind of challenges may be encountered. Ward also furthered the explanation that it is underpinned by a strong belief that research should help can effect change.

As stated above, research can of course effect change, but the role of each stakeholder in the Action Research process and perception of its direct beneficiaries with help of tools used may determine the change desired to effect. In the context of this research project, voluntary participation and transparency in the process for change to effect was crucial. I also strengthened my confident when realized the positive impact of my initiative was contributing in my country's forest concessions work. John Dewey's statement made it more interesting that "to find out what one is fitted to do and to secure an opportunity to do it is the key to happiness" (Dewey, 2007, p. 155).

## 1.9 Research Guiding Questions

1. What are the key roles of local communities in the management forest concession projects?
2. How can the role of local communities influence the outcomes of forest concession projects?
3. Can the practice of Participatory Forest Management lead to achievement of successful forest concessions management?

## 1.10 My concern

My concern is to contribute in forest management strategies which may improve the future forestry in my country. My approach which I think could mutually benefit its stakeholders is Participatory Forest Management with local people as target group to co-operate with government and forest concessionaires.

Dynamism and complexity that characterise natural forests and their inhabitants, co-operation among all stakeholders in an on-going dialogue is probably the only way that sustainable forest management can in fact occur. We urge researchers to continue the search for simple, inexpensive and reliable tools for assessing the issue we have called participation in forest management (Wadley, 1996, p. 1).

In reference to the above statement, it is my concern in my profession to work for improvement in forest management in my country. To achieve my goal, I used collaborative method in the process of initiating the Participatory Forest Management approach in order for

different forest stakeholders at community and government level to participate in and use the outcome of this research project.

Another driving force was that the Republic of South Sudan in July 2011 became the world's youngest nation and one among the poor countries. It was my challenge to think about how to begin to contribute in the building of the nation with my professional capacity as initial point. It is of course a nationwide challenge being new nation emerging from 'no system to have system.'

South Sudan despite the fact of being blessed with abundant natural resources experienced unsustainable management of these resources due to lack of sound forest policy developed through key stakeholders' active participation after the long ravaged post-civil war of Sudan. Therefore, there is need relevant information through researches in which interest of key forest-stakeholders is identified prior to formulation of forest policies in order to ensure sustainable forest management in the Country.

### **1.11 Scope of Research Project**

This research project focused only on forest concession agreements signed under the autonomous Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS). It focused on the Comprehensive Peace Agreement era (CPA December 09, 2005-July 09, 2011) between Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/SPLA) and the Sudan Government in the North Sudan. I purposely limited my study to this period because the local people who were the respondents and the target group in this research project may not have concrete information or experience on concessions signed before Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Some of the people were in exile before Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

I also tried to limit my collaborative work to the National Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the Norwegian Forestry Group and the Norwegian People's Aid at national government level. At states level, the involved key stakeholders were Central and Western Equatoria States Directorates of Forestry. My criterion of choice for those stakeholders was based on institutions or agencies with functional roles which relate to my research initiative.

The target companies in the research process were Blue Lakes Limited and Equatoria Teak Company in Western Equatoria state and the Central Equatoria Teak Company in Central Equatoria state. The project in special way targeted local communities of adjacent contracted forest reserves. Its key informants at local level were county administrations, chiefs of visited communities and their fellow members.

Its timeframe with data collection as starting point was from June to December, 2011. Analysis of its data and organization of the whole Thesis was done in January to May, 2012.

### 1.12 Significance of Research project

The Participatory Forest Management concept applied in this research project significantly yielded positive result as answer to research questions proposed. The following points are indicators of this research as initiative for innovative improvement at the level of host institution, communities and its participants including me as Researcher of the theme.

- It was an opportunity for me to learn what kind of forest concessions management approaches used and the experiences which local communities developed in those forest concession projects
- The research project helped me to identify the successful and failed forest concession projects. According to the results of this research, some forest concession projects encountered difficulties in implementation stage due to lack of participatory approach used at negotiation stage (chapter 4 sub-section 4.1.3 for details). This particularly answered my research claim to knowledge. My research claim to knowledge was that *'Encouragement of participation of local communities in the management of forest concession projects may be very low in South Sudan*
- Through this Action Research project, there was opportunity for local communities which host the assessed forest concession projects to deliver their views to the government about their interaction with concessionaires in the management of those concession projects. The assessment reports I produced during data collection were means for communities' experiences and views to the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry through forest concession work group. Those assessment reports did not benefit policy-makers alone but also the local communities to share experiences gathered from different forest concession projects in different communities.
- In the last period of research data collection, I filed a combined report for both the Central and Western Equatoria States with 8 copies fairly distributed to communities involved in research process. Those target communities were the ones provided the data and some requested the report for their own documentation. I agreed with idea of sharing the assessment report not only that they requested it, but it was also opportunity for them to share experiences from each other through the report. This kind of experience sharing was not through dialogue, but for other communities to be aware of what was done in other communities by using that report. It is chance I never expected and may be those communities too. I think it was helpful especially for communities which were not successful in implementation of concession projects to learn how others managed to succeed.
- This research was collaborative work and its results were directly used by South Sudan Forest Concession work group in the development of forest concession guidelines and agreement templates. In concession guidelines document, the community views is priority in any concession agreement between government and investors (appendix 3.2)

- This research project exposed me to my environment and my environment to me. In my observation, I practically experienced the reaction of local people either positive or negative towards particular concession projects in areas visited. I have the pictorial records of all development facilities established as compensation to communities adjacent to forest reserves contracted for verification of results of this research data.

The following relevant provisions complement the significant outcomes of this research project and justified it with reflection of the goals set-forth by South Sudan government and its technical supporting agencies. In this experience, I characterized this initiative as one of the tools to achieve the goals set in the Draft Forest Policy (2007) by the National Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry whose statements are as follows:

Communities' participation and benefit from forest management and protection is the key plank...the country will take early opportunity to learnt lessons from the great wealth of collaborative forest management experience in many countries promoting suitable models of community participation in forest management and protection. Communities will be encouraged to be major players in Afforestation efforts throughout the country (Lomuro, 2007, p. 38).

#### *1.12.1 Projected Sustainability outcomes*

The Participatory Forest Management approach used in this research project will probably be used in South Sudan forest concession management strategies. The indicator for this statement can be justified through articles drafted in concession templates (appendix 3.2) in which the three pillars<sup>9</sup> addressed.

Local communities are the host party of local forest resources compared to government and forest concessionaires. Therefore, they play vital roles when issue of sustainable forestry arises. Based on the steps reached by forest concession work group, the initiative is not any longer valuable for my research purpose to benefit me in term of knowledge, but remained as national forest strategic plan which will be disseminated to forest stakeholders when applying the developed forest concession guidelines.

However, this is not enough for me to leave it as task of South Sudan forest concession work group. It still in my future professional development plans to propose similar project or related project to let the hidden voices of local communities heard thorough such approach. It was my experience in this research work that the role of local communities and gender issue are neglected in South Sudan forest concession management. This statement is justified by number of forest concession policy work group whose none of them represents women.

Hundreds of Women are being found in the forests collecting fire wood, foddors and other non-timber forest products in South Sudan. This indicates their being the direct beneficiaries who need to be involved in the policy formulation stage in order for the policy to address

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<sup>9</sup> **Three pillars** as defined in South Sudan Forest Concession Guidelines & agreement templates are Social Economic, and Environmental services which the developed concession guidelines address

their needs presented by them instead of men assuming that they know the forest issues related to women's needs.

My plans to achieve the sustainability of my initiative of introducing Participatory Forest Management approach includes: proposing the development projects and integrate it into government projects as happened in this study. In case of opportunity for future career, I wish to use similar approach to propose Action Research and development project with policy idea and target group of local communities or gender related initiative in the development of forest sector in in South Sudan.

### **1.13 Organization of the report**

This research report has six (6) chapters which I also called sections. There are also sub-sections under each chapter. The chapters are as follows.

#### **1. Background of Research Project**

This chapter encompasses the general introduction of the research project, The theme: its emphasis of the theme of this research and its justification, the importance of Participatory Forest Management, my professional background and pre-ceding projects as foundation of this research work. It also contains the description of research project areas which include geographical locations, the political Structure of the government, forest ownership, some commercial forest resources and historical background of forest concessions in South Sudan. Its last part is composed of the purpose of research project, specific objectives, problem statement, and research guiding questions, my concern, the scope of research project, the significance of research project and some projected sustainability outcomes.

#### **2. Theoretical Framework**

This chapter is composed of 3 major concepts which are the concept of Participatory Forest Management, Theories and Practice of Action Research and Participatory Forest Management in the Perspective of Vocational Pedagogy.

#### **3. Research Methodologies**

This part contains the field work plan, systematic selection of research participants or stakeholders and approaches used for internship purpose, data collection techniques such as interviews, focus groups, and observations, analysis, presentations and materials used. Ethical Consideration during interviews and consultative meetings and validity in the use of research data were also presented in this chapter.

#### **4. Research Results**

In this chapter, I presented the results based on the data gathered from the three concession projects taken as samples for assessments in this research work. The three of forest concession projects were: Equatoria Teak Company Limited, Blue Lakes Limited and Central Equatoria Teak Company

#### **5. General Discussion**

This was the chapter in which I generally discussed the general experience gained from the methods used, theories and on the three concession projects assessed. This was followed by comparative analysis of results, impacts due to approaches used during agreements and implementation of those concession projects, description of forest stakeholders' relational model, challenges which impacted on the outcomes of the concession projects, some



limitations and personally encountered challenges. The last was achievements brought by this research initiative.

## **6. Reflections, Conclusion and Recommendations**

This last chapter encompasses the reflections on lessons learnt in this research work, summing up of experience in the whole research and recommendations for further researches and options to the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in the Republic of South Sudan and the local communities to think about. The recommended options may help in the management of forest concessions projects and may create peaceful co-existence amongst the forest stakeholders in the country.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

This chapter covers the discussion of contents I proposed and some ideas developed in selected literatures which are relevant in the concept of Participatory Forest Management and also with reflection of methodologies used in this research work. I presented the secondary ideas in form of discussion by presenting some practical experiences in relation to the theories used. I did not choose a single theory, but ideas from different theories which relate to the concept of this research theme.

There are three major sub-sections presented in this chapter. The first sub-section covers: the concept of Participatory Forest Management which includes: Participatory Forest Management as concern in this research, policy implication of Participatory Forest Management approach in South Sudan and particularly in forest concession work, sustainable forestry for sustainable social and economic development, indigenous knowledge & experiences as basis for sustainable forestry, Indigenous knowledge and experiences as basis for sustainable forestry and Gender perspective in Participatory Forest Management approach.

The second part is composed of Theories and Practice of Action Research: Action Research in the context of Participatory Forest Management and participation as element of Action Research.

The last sub-section is the Perspective of Vocational Pedagogy in Participatory Forest Management approach which I presented by discussing learning by doing and the work-based learning in the context of Participatory Forest Management.

Briefly, the typical idea in this chapter is to discuss the above listed concepts with reference of different authors' views and experiences in order for me to build my theoretical understanding in the related thematic areas of my research and create scientific integrity to other scholar works. I discussed the chapter's relevant contents with literatures in a reflective way by presenting my practical experience during data collection and the rest of my professional life. Some comparative ideas and practical examples were discussed in relation to other commentators' concepts in the selected ideas.

### 2.1 The concept of Participatory Forest Management

As reflected on the heading of this sub-section on the word 'participatory', the term Participation as defined by the World Bank (1994) is " A processes through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them" (Narayan, 1998, p. 4). In relation to goal of this research project, Participatory Forest Management concept emphasizes the devolution of power by central government to local forest resources users.

My analytical understanding in this concept is that the idea of Participatory Forest Management generally embraces a participatory approach of forest resources management. This participatory approach can be characterized by inclusiveness or involvement of forest

stakeholders without the distinct criteria of being remote or urbanized community, powerful party or marginalized group (Wily, 2002). Whoever adjacent to forests with customary right or leasehold right is legible to participate in management process. The involvement of different stakeholders is important because with idea of Participatory Forest Management, the sustainability of forests is crucial.

The achievement of sustainability status could be difficult to be met if there are different groups or individuals who may appear with illegal encroachment to forests with reasons of being underprivileged from the use of forest resources. On top of this, creation of knowledge through interaction of participants from different backgrounds is an ample incentive (see section 2.1.4). This reflects one of the most central functions of forests being sources for education.

SAKANO (SAKANO, 2004) characterized the concept of Participatory Forest Management as a mean of creating incentives by a fair or democratic distribution of benefits. However, I understood it as far beyond the fair distribution of forest resource revenues. The fair distribution of revenues may not impact on knowledge of local communities if benefit only the return from government in term of revenue. The key terms to enhance insight understanding of Participatory Forest Management include: Involvement of stakeholders with share control over development initiatives, in decision-making process, collaborative work and experience sharing through active participation. These words evoke visions of a well-functioning democracy in which informed citizens, scientists, and other forest stakeholders cooperate convivially and share decision-making authority over matters important to the lives of the people involved in the process (Wadley, 1996).

In my understanding, the concept of Participatory Forest Management is not limited to income in term of financial benefits, but more in peaceful co-existence of involved stakeholders with goals of managing the forest resources sustainably. The outcomes of Participatory Forest Management initiatives lead to reflective understanding by local people based on the direct benefits plus other social services and the appreciation of knowledge created in the process (Pretty, 1995).

In summary, the wholeness of this kind of forest management system is creation of integrated traditional knowledge and experience with scientific knowledge in the use of appropriate tools to meet the needs of forest stakeholders involved. In this study, the claim for descent of power by central government to regional or local authorities simply means creating a transparency process of managing the forest concession projects by South Sudan government, local people adjacent to contracted forest reserves and the concessionaires. It may help to minimize conflicts due to ownership, administrative roles and issues related to benefits from forest resources.

### 2.1.1 Participatory Forest Management as area of concern in this study

The long-term goal of this study initiative is Participatory Forest Management practices for the need of sustainable forestry in the country in South Sudan. The achievement of this goal requires provision of relevant information and realization of the situation from the immediate forest users. For this reason, I prioritized the local people as the target group in this research. The local communities seem to be the passive group among the parties in the agreement process of forest concessions in South Sudan (Chapter 4 and 5). My experience in this research with support of observation and responses from local people during data collection were evidences to argue on the local people being passive in decision making process of forest concessions management.

The goal of this research and my claim to knowledge which I put forward in the planning stage of this research project served as driving force in the research process. My claim was that *the encouragement of participation of local communities in the management of forest concession projects may be very low in South Sudan*. This claim concurred the survey results of the study conducted by Liz Alden Wily (Wily, 2002) which overviewed the progress and issues of African Participatory Forest Management. In Wily's survey, Sudan or South Sudan had never appeared in the list of African countries which previously tried to adopt or practice the Participatory Forest Management. This was also evidence which may led to prediction of low Participatory Forest Management practice in South Sudan because during his assessment Sudan and South Sudan were under the Government of National Unity (GoNU<sup>10</sup>). My field work experience was also the point of argument in favour of Wily's findings despite the fact that his study dated back in the year 2002.

Paul Guthiga (Guthiga, 2008) argued the understanding of local community perceptions on the management of forests as prior issues in local forest resources management. Guthiga further added the consideration of other factors that may influence the perceptions of local community before designing forest management policies sensitive to their needs. The statement pointed key issues in my research especially the development of forest concession guidelines and agreement templates. The experience of local people from the previous concession agreements and implementation process was pre-requirement during my research process in the development of guidelines.

The argument of Paul Guthiga (Guthiga, 2008) brought some reflections to me on failure of Central Equatoria Teak Company's concession project. The reasons given by respondents during consultative meetings were dominated by lack of community consultation during the agreement process of the project. The two parties: The government and the Concessionaires did not consider the involvement of local communities adjacent to contracted forest reserves at agreement stage, but to some extend at handing over state of the forest reserves to concessionaires.

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<sup>10</sup> Government of National Unity is the previous Sudan government before independence of South Sudan/separation in 2011

With reference from the above statements, the concession management process also contradicted with Forest Policy statement by the National Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry in the Republic of South Sudan. The policy statement is as follows “Support will be given for capacity building for communities to manage their own forests” (Lomuro, 2007, p. 38). My prediction based on experience I had from the above discussed project is ‘negative impact’ in this forest reserves. Therefore, it would be wise idea if such experiences could lead to the Republic of South Sudan as new nation to begin the development of forest management strategies which may take care of such experiences from the implemented projects in the five (5) years autonomous government (CPA-2005-2011). It will be more beneficial if those strategies or policies could emphasize Participatory Forest Management approaches.

Without doubt, it is not easy task to design sound forest policies based on the needs of the society, but Participatory process with consultation to key stakeholders and also with taking into account the experiences from existing forest development projects can help. This research actually tried to emphasise such issues and purposely meant to create awareness about the active participation of local communities in the management of forest concession projects.

Local people’s participation in forest management is an indicator for sustainable forestry (Wadley, 1996). To refer an example given about Central Equatoria Teak Company, there was negative impact on this concession project due to absence of communities’ consultation who claimed the customary rights. Because of reluctance and poor collaboration among the government, concessionaires and the local communities, there was no comprehensive action taken. The three parties had separate approaches which were not transparent to each other (See chapter 4 & 5 for details). This led to dilemma in which either of the parties points fingers to other party without real understanding on the situation that led to failure of project. This was one of the practical experiences which made me and the participants of this study realized the relevance of carrying out this research initiative.

As an evidence of the agreement given as an example, the following statements were published by member of community and an official in the government. This backs up the reactions of local people during consultative meetings in this research work. It also helps to confirm the bitterness of local people and other parties as consequence of lack of transparency in the agreement process of Central Equatoria Teak Company’s concession project.

The GoSS Ministry of Agriculture and forestry staff chased away State employees from Loka forestry Reserve claiming it was a national project hence under the GoSS. With inadequate consultation a company called Central Equatoria Teak Plantation was to manage Loka, Korobe and Kajiko North plantations. However, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forest, Animal Resources and Fisheries in Central Equatoria State has not accepted the company pending further consultation and the possible involvement of the State Legislative Assembly. The main problem may be that there is poor consultation between the State and the GoSS Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry for clarification of

issues. We are optimistic that with consultation statements that seem confusing can be refined for an amicable resolution (Lupai, 2009).

The first bullet under the introductory part of this report (sub-section 1.2) under the importance of Participatory Forest Management was ‘creation of sense of ownership rights.’ This is a contradictory point which brought the failure of the above discussed concession project. This study of course revealed how hard it could be to achieve the goal of sustainable forestry in absence of the concern forest resource stakeholders. Nonetheless, this initiative created awareness and considerable step through contribution in the development of forest concession guidelines and agreement templates. In the developed guidelines document, community’s consultation was given more emphasis and their roles were spelled out in all the stages of forest concession management (appendix 3.2 for some information).

## **2.1.2 Policy implication of Participatory Forest Management in South Sudan**

### **2.1.2.1 The need for Participatory Forest Management in South Sudan**

As a new nation with new beginnings, the Republic of South Sudan can also begin by encouraging the need for Participatory Forest Management initiatives like any other development priorities. The participation of different stakeholders is stipulated in the draft Forest Policy Framework of South Sudan with specific roles described for each key role players of the selected institutions on forest resources. Some of the key roles mentioned are as follows:

The Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry- Directorate of Forestry provides regulation, co-ordination and operational standards for a vibrant forest sector; the Ministry of Commerce has a regulatory role with respect to forest products and the Ministry of Education could give Trainings and creation of public awareness on forest resources as sources for educating people. The Ministry of Environment, Wildlife Conservation and Tourism assists in Forest Conservation. The Ministry of Water Resources & Irrigation can assist in water catchment areas and protection of riparian forest vegetation cover. Private sectors and communities are as far key stakeholders according to this policy framework (Lomuro, 2007, p. 37).

The purpose of presenting the above paragraph is to show how the government outlined the involvement of different stakeholders in forest resources management in the country. The above listed Ministries in the context of South Sudan are termed Line Ministries<sup>11</sup>. My focal point with this list of stakeholders is to argue the practicality of their involvement in forest management as noted in the description of roles given to each partner.

Based on the experience on current situation, the relatively strong cooperation is seen only with that of the Ministry of Environment, Wildlife Conservation and Tourism. My evidence is the merging of the section of environment with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry at states level. In other words, the Environment is part of Forestry at states level, but at National level it is independent Ministry.

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<sup>11</sup> Line Ministries are the Ministries which have functional relationship with the Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry.

To sum up the above explained point of collaboration by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry with other Line Ministries in South Sudan, the involvement of different stakeholders as mentioned above shows the interest of government in Participatory work. However, the practical experiences on implementation of participation of the proposed stakeholders (Line Ministries) including local communities showed lack of transparency process in five years term of government of Southern Sudan (CPA 2005-2011, GoSS).

The following is the point of argument as evidence of claim for the lack of cooperation by the National Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry with states forest sectors. The agreement of Central Equatoria Teak Company was the case in my research work. “The main problem may be that there is poor consultation between the State and the GoSS Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry for clarification of issues” (Lupai, 2009).

Despite the fact that the policy statements clearly spelled specific roles of the above mentioned institutions, there are complaints on the lack of cooperation with transparent process to the Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry with States forest sectors. When relating the forest policy statements with practices in South Sudan, Participatory Forest Management is needed and seems to be prioritized, but controversial in practice. This is what inspired me to propose the Participatory Forest Management initiative with emphasis on local communities before South Sudan started new forest management strategies after independence (July 2011).

#### ***2.1.2.2 Policy implication of Participatory approach in forest concession work***

Secondary sources United Nations Environment Programme for example, (UNEP, 2007, p. 213) presented lack of improved forest governance and lack of sound forest policy as challenges which discourages forest investors in South Sudan. The study also emphasized the low attitude on commercial timber industries. Furthermore, it recommended the need for radical reformation of the commercial timber industries. These statements are also justifiable due to their association with findings in the study of Forests and Climate Change. Roope Husgafvel (Tropenbos International, 2009, p. 73) claimed institutional and market failures and lack of environmental governance structures as current trend increasing environmental threats in South Sudan. These sources were evidences showing the need for either strengthening the existing draft forest policies through implementation of the responsibilities stipulated in the policy documents or develop new policies.

My intention to collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry was to contribute in approaches which may help minimize the forest policy related challenges as presented above. With long-term goal of this research project (Participatory Forest Management practices for the need of sustainable forestry in the country in South Sudan), I proposed the implementation of my research project to be collaborative work which could be integrated with government project. This was achieved. The research project was part of government project and implemented with forest concession work group from the Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry and the Norwegian Forestry Group. The assignment I ran with this team was the development of forest concession guidelines and agreement templates as discussed in the

introductory part. The central role of this research in the collaboration process was to provide data for the development of the guidelines. As the result of the assessment reports I presented to concession work group, the experiences of local people in the management of previous forest concession projects paved the way forward for the next concession process.

There is need still for collaborative effort from national government, states governments and communities to formulate fundamental forest development strategies. To pinpoint the word ‘governance structure’ presented by Roope Husgafvel (Tropenbos International, 2009), my reflection on his statement is that it simply implies the need for fair distribution of responsibilities among key stakeholders<sup>12</sup> and possibly followed by monitoring of implementation of the proposed initiatives in a comprehensive manner.

The contribution of local communities may not be considered relevant, but significantly impact on implementation of policies. Sheona Shackleton et; al (Sheona Shackleton, 2002) argued the important of strengthening the local organisational capacity and political capital to enhance the policy outcomes. Concurrently, this research project my pointed the encouragement of local populations to participate in decision-making process, the control and use of local resources. This could be opportunities for underprivileged groups to participate and may positively influence the policies if the issue is really to meet the need of the society. The most important issue which this research project advocated is engagement of local people in the agreement, implementation and monitoring stage of forest concession or investment projects to make them motivated and self-guidance in the process.

Though the active participation of local communities was key issue in this research, the development of concession guidelines did not of course practically involve them as active party. However, they were indirectly involved. The formulation of the proposed articles in concession guidelines was done with reference from experiences of local communities on existing forest concession projects. I conducted assessments through consultations (interviews and group meetings and observations) with local people for the purpose of generating supportive data to show the stance of local communities on forest concession management. Their voices was heard and considered. In the forest concession guidelines, the articles proposed clearly spelled the role of government, concessionaires and the local communities. It was realized in this process by the concession work group committee that the negative attitude the local people developed in some concession projects would lead to lose of confident by the communities to central government as experienced in Central Equatoria Teak Company concession project.

To add more on indirect participation done with local communities during the development process of concession guidelines, Jules N Pretty (Pretty, 1995, p. 31) described different types of Participations by categorized as typologies of participation. These include passive participation, participation in information giving, participation by consultation, participation

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<sup>12</sup> **Key stakeholders**-in this study means government, communities and investors/concessionaires



for material incentives, functional participation, interactive participation, and self-mobilisation. As I mentioned in my case about how local communities contributed in my research project and not actively in the development of concession guidelines, the choice for use of each or mixed types of participation depends on kind of projects or the conditions in the implementation of a development or research project.

Though the local communities were not part in the development of South Sudan forest concession guidelines as discussed earlier, I argue the relevance of their contribution despite the fact that it was only through consultation and more of giving information than taking part in the process of formulation of concession guidelines. My choice for use of consultations was influenced by programs set by the host institution of my research project. The development of forest concession guidelines was a project implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry. It was of course proposed to address issues concerning concession management as a need of all the forest stakeholders. The only effort required as contribution of my research initiative was to ensure the government is aware on importance of Participatory Forest Management and consider the participation of local communities by defining their roles in forest concession guidelines. I had no capacity to bring local people on board than to stand on their side with all information they provided.

In summary, it was good lesson for me and the concession work group when analysing the contrasting results of my assessment reports whose data was generated from Central Equatoria Teak Company, Equatorira Teak Company and Blue Lakes Limited. In the two Concession projects (Equatoria Teak Company & Blue Lakes Limited), the participatory approach with involvement of state government, the local people and concessionaires resulted in success of implementation of the projects. Unfortunately, the Central Equatoria Teak Company whose host community was negatively perceived it felt in a failed status at implementation stage (See 4.1.3). This lesson created awareness (on community involvement) for the forest concession work group committee in the development process of concession guidelines. Therefore, Participatory Forest Management was recognized as one of the forest development strategies needed in country.

### **2.1.3 Sustainable forestry for sustainable Social and Economic Development**

#### ***2.1.3.1 Sustainable forestry for sustainable Social Development***

One among the lessons learnt as a challenge in Integrated Rural Development (IRD) was the facilitation and institutionalization of process through which rural communities themselves would establish local organizations to satisfy their own local needs (USAID, 2011). My reflection on the above statement in the context of Participatory Forest Management is that local communities need to be made responsible to organize and manage their own development initiatives, while the government agencies which are in control of these communities take the supervisory role with respect of national development strategies. The central government may fall short to define or diagnose the need of local communities. It may also be challenge for government to assume that the needs of local communities are known without the local communities involved in the process of identifying what they really need.

The study on Integrated Rural Development suggested the establishment of a collaborative partnership with governmental institutions and community organizations as better cater to local needs (USAID, 2011). The study also suggested that the collaboration process could involve all management phases from planning, allocation of resources, implementation and monitoring of development activities.

In this research project, the related example as an experience was realized from Yabongo, Nzara and Asanza communities which were satisfied by their own plans in their local development without any order, rather than some supportive approaches from the Western Equatoria State government. Local communities know what they need. Their choices were schools, Boreholes and Health facilities. These local communities established the development facilities immediately after received social development funds as compensation from forest concession projects which contracted the forest reserves of their locality. This was my lesson learnt as the result of decentralization of power to local community and implementation of community's active participation.

To wind up the discussion in this sub-section, the relationship of man and environment, and forests in particular is indistinguishable and explanatory through social services the forests provide. Due to the plausible role the forests play amongst other environmental components, more attention on the immediate communities around them is quite important for the promotion of local development.

#### ***2.1.3.2 Sustainable Forestry for Economic Development***

In economic context, a well-managed forest pays itself and the community of its origin (Forestry, 2009). ANJA Nygren (Nygren, 2005) in the analysis of Community-Based Forest Management argued the importance of equitable distribution of benefits among forest stakeholders. Within the context of institutional decentralization, he put forward the provision of local revenue through transparency process by governments as appropriate method to strength the financial capacity of local institutions.

In economic aspect, the goal of this Action Research project is associated with notion from the objectives of South Sudan Forest Revenue System. The notion stated as follow:

“Sustainable forest management should pay for itself in Southern Sudan with its wealth of forest resources if forest products and services are properly charged and the revenue collected ploughed back to forest management. To promote private sector and individual farmers participation in forestry development through product pricing policy and through regulation of taxes and other charges” (Forestry, 2009, p. 2 & 3).

The practicality and the relevance of the above mentioned policy statement with support of Participatory Forest Management practice will could be an answer for the question of compensation policy in South Sudan to affected communities. It is South Sudan policy that 2% oil revenue is a return to oil producing states. As this system may benefit only some states which produce oil in the country, there may possibly be question from non-oil producing

states on how they could fairly benefit from revenues coming from central government. It would therefore, be benefit for non-oil producing states if forests are managed with concern on economic development of host communities. Probably, the practice of Participatory Forest Management approaches can be one of strategies to achieve the objective of forest revenue system in the country. This may lead to sustainable forestry which could also be alternative source of income for the forest rich states and for the country in general.

Too much oil revenue dependency is also another disaster if other natural resources are not prioritized for boosting of country's economy. This is disaster in a sense that oil is non-renewable (cannot be recycled) resource which can be depleted once and loss forever. This kind of valuable-economic resource (oil) for South Sudanese which is 98% national income-revenue will not be replenished when the rate of consumption exceeds its available volume in the land of South Sudan. This is my professional normative statement based on my experience on how national economy is being threatened by issue of oil while the country does not have clear strategies to generate income from forest or other natural resources. Other natural resources such as forests (with their all biological diversity), aquatic and wildlife resources also need to be given consideration in the country's economy.

As noticed in Integrated Rural Development (USAID, 2011), local forest investments encourage economic growth and relieve poverty at a higher pace because both the investing firms, the workers and suppliers gain financial incentives. Forest investments through Participatory Forest Management initiatives pay the local people directly in term of employment opportunities and indirectly through local revenues to their administrative units for community development in general. Therefore, South Sudan needs to encourage the use of other natural resources and especially forests as means of local and government income sources, but with environmentally wise investments. An environmentally wise investment means the use of forest resources with conservation strategies by replanting trees as much as the harvested forest areas or more.

#### **2.1.4 Indigenous knowledge and experiences as basis for sustainable forestry**

“Despite the pressures that increasingly undermine local systems of knowledge and management, protected area management plans should start with what people know and do well already, so as to secure their livelihoods and sustain the diversity of natural resources on which they depend” (Pretty, 1995, p. 38). In reference to the above argument, my professional experience also proofs it to me that local communities have their traditional knowledge, experiences on use of resources in their local environment.

Jules N Pretty (Pretty, 1995) prioritized the understanding of historical set up and management strategies known to local people as means of creating new knowledge by the involved parties in forest management. Pretty argued that the historical importance of local people as conservers was recognised in the new conservation science. Pretty presented the ignorance of local knowledge and skills in development initiatives and projects as short comings and causes of their failure.

My perception with concept of Participatory Forest Management (PFM) is that the success of a development initiative is achievable in existence of collaborative work with local people. The participatory process of collaborations normally starts with network through existing formal and informal local institutions. I would suggest as follows: to have peaceful co-existence in the implementation of Participatory Forest Management (PFM) development project, the initial point of departure could start from plans existing at local level and not from what the external parties might have for the local people. However, the plans from external parties could later be integrated in the process with clear understanding by local stakeholders why they are important and how they would impact positively in their local development.

Marilyn Headly (Headley, 2004) with supportive idea argued the community participation as fundamental strategy in developing and implementing both the national and regional forest management plans. Concurrently, my practical experience with Central Equatoria Teak Company (see sub-section 2.1.3) in South Sudan revealed how disaster it was for local communities to negatively perceive a development initiative.

Some writers such as Wadley argued the increased participation of people or different parties in forest management as both the benefit and cause of conflicts. “In other contexts, increased participation seemed to involve increased conflict” (Wadley, 1996, p. 1). In contrast, it was also argued by the same scholars that it provides forest people with a sense of ownership, or a defined “stake”, in forest management. In my comparative analysis of these two statements, this argument ended supportive to collaborative work of forest stakeholders.

In collaborative works, conflict in the development of ideas leads to creation of new knowledge and development of new strategies. Integration of different experience and culture of work by itself is conflict. In the context of Participatory Forest Management, I consider this kind of conflict which leads to clear definition and analysis of stakeholders’ roles as a tool for improvement of forest management practices for sustainable forestry.

To elaborate my understanding on what the term conflict means in this particular discussion, conflicts of interest exist as long as the sense of ownership goes with interest on forest resources. Nevertheless, it does not necessarily result in destruction. It rather creates new knowledge about indigenous experience on the local forest management practices in combination with scientific strategies the researchers or forest development activists might try to introduce. This may result in the development of new conflict mitigation techniques and improved way of forest management practices by those stakeholders if value the conflict in ideas as way of creating better understanding. I also have hints in reading related sources such as Theory and Practice of Action Research (McArdle, 2004) which explained how better understanding of the processes of organizational settings and organizational change lead to effective work practices.

To recap the issue of conflict as discussed above, it is expectable to happen when different groups define their next journey which may be guided by some interest or goal to achieve. Differences in opinions can be taken normal in the daily life, but not always cause problem. I am very concern in this point because it doesn't convince me that it should be an issue to discourage initiation or the practice of Participatory Forest Management which requires wide-range of stakeholders due to fear of conflict of ideas. It could rather create new ways of learning and make innovations more efficient. In my view, increasing number of participants in Participatory Forest Management (PFM) initiatives is a progression. It could rather be appreciated than being discouraged or perceived negatively.

Understanding of David Kolb's description of learning can also help. Kolb stated as follows: "All learning is relearning, learning is a holistic process of adaptation to the world, learning is the process of creating knowledge, and learning requires the resolution of conflicts between dialectically opposed modes of adaptation to the world" (Kolb, 2005, p. 2).

In contrast to conflicts due to involvement of local communities perceived to be cause of conflict (Wadley, 1996), it is rare in my experience to find a productive kind of forest without an entity or given community to claim ownership over it. If such forests do not have traditional authority claiming an ownership right over, it is to be defined as open land. In this case, the government has right over these resources. Therefore, there is always ownership issue in forest resources despite its being near to a kind of set up community or far with characteristics of an open land. There might be possibilities for other interested users to negotiate with government and therefore, the issue of stakeholders of different systems would possibly come up. For this reason, carefulness on ownership issue can be awareness which can lead to creation of better forest management strategies instead of being a cause of conflict.

The Participatory Forest Management approach does not strictly focus only on people adjacent to forests. But the target issue is social justice to those who have 'a stake' on given forest resources at a particular period of time. In general understanding, the local community are emphasis in Participatory Forest Management because they are in most cases the marginalized group when collaborating with either government agencies or investors (See 4.1.3). Writers for example, Rima Afifi (Afifi, 2011) focused on equitable involvement of community members, organizational representatives, researchers and academicians with local communities as priority.

To briefly restate the point discussed above, indigenous people's knowledge and experience which is influenced by their interest matters in the achievement of goal of Participatory Forest Management initiative. Participatory Forest Management development initiatives need to take consideration of already existing management systems of forests at local communities. A shared local knowledge and expertise experience enhances the capacity building and easily strengthens the understanding of participants to structure the next phases of the development initiative.

### 2.1.5 Gender Mainstreaming in Participatory Forest Management Perspective

The term gender mainstreaming as defined by United Nations Economic and Social Council is a “Process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality” (Council, 1997, p. 2).

Kristin Bingeman (Bingeman, 2003) discussed the relevance of gender perspective with concern on access, usage and resources management which are linked to prescribed gender roles. She also suggested careful watch on policy implications for different groups of women and men.

Gender balance in forest management is very sensitive issue in general and particularly in South Sudan as concern in relation to this research. In case of South Sudan, women's participation in forest management activities is crucial, but it is not even mentioned as special concern in South Sudan's Forest Policy Framework of 2007. There are associated factors which let me gave focus on women in this case. These factors include culture of most ethnic groups and high rate of illiteracy which are severe on women. The percentage of South Sudanese women who can read and write is very low. Only 92 percent of women are illiterate in South Sudan (Women, 2011). This figure is also one of the indicators of women's vulnerability in the country. It is also culture of some South Sudanese ethnic groups to leave most of household activities for women and with low attention on women's participation in public issues.

As cited by Kristin Bingeman (Bingeman, 2003), Agarwal (1992, 1997b) argued the need to concentrate on the material realities of men's and women's environmental dependence and recognise issues of gender that influence participation in environmental management. In my view, the ignorance of women participation in forest management activities would be very controversial to the reality of life the women face in South Sudan. In South Sudan, the number of women who daily suffer from fetching drinking water from distances, collecting fire wood from forests, fodders, fruits, nuts and other non-timber forest products cannot be compared to that of men. All the services which women suffer from can be provided with easy access by forests if sustainably managed.

To reduce the severity of burdens on women, Participatory Forest Management development initiatives which mainstream gender issue with involvement of reasonable number of women and concern in decision making process are needed. This in a very short period of time can reverse the situation of women being the vulnerable compared to men. The pictures (Appendix 2.2e and f) illustrated the benefits of forest investment which considers the local people's needs with women in the centre of the services provided as alternatives of direct use

of timber in order to promote local development with women in the centre of the services provided as alternatives of direct use of timber in order to promote local development.

I quoted the following statements from The Citizen News Paper published on Sunday September, 2011 Vol.6 Issue 247 pp. 7 titled: *Are women rights respected and promoted in the Republic of South Sudan?* The writer presented many important issues on women related challenges in South Sudan, but I selected only the following key statements relevant to the point of discussion in my analysis of gender issue in this research project.

Most of men works against them always press them hard against the wall hence undermining their gender equality. The entire decision to help women in South Sudan is to encourage and continue implementing affirmative action policy to ensure and increase participation and representation of women in public life and decision making instruments. Government should ensure that women and their aspiration be at the centre of all development initiatives and interventions. Women should be the primary stakeholders in post conflict reconstruction (Manyang, 2011).

In my understanding, participation in forest management does not address only the issue of three major stakeholders' groups such as government, the community and investors which were the key partners in South Sudan forest concession projects. It also needs to go deeper considering other aspects of life including gender issue and discourage challenges related to top down approach in forest management initiatives. Participatory Forest Management approach targets all the marginalized groups. Kathy Baker (Baker, 2009, p. 3) suggested the flexibility on sensitive development initiatives to be coupled with wider structural change. She also suggested the provision of opportunities for women to develop and use their agro-ecological knowledge.

Margreet Zwarteveen<sup>1</sup> (Zwarteveen1, 1997, p. 1) also put their point on women's participation as tool to strengthen women's bargaining<sup>13</sup> position as resource users within households and communities. "Greater involvement of women can also strengthen the effectiveness of the organization by improving women's compliance with rules and maintenance contributions".

In my study, I witnessed lack of concern on gender mainstreaming in policy workshops I conducted with the Concession work group committee from South Sudan National Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry. There were no women involved in the team which developed the forest concession guidelines and agreement templates. This was also my evidence that the government to some extent has low attitude on women's participation in public interventions. Nevertheless, some institutions especially the Ministry of Gender, Child & Social Welfare in the Republic of South Sudan had shown awareness on gender equality.

My participation on gender mainstreaming workshop (October, 2011, Juba) which was organized by the Ministry of Gender, Child & Social Welfare with support from United

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<sup>13</sup> Bargaining- Part with something after negotiation but get little or nothing in return

Nations Populations Fund (UNFPA) gave me hope for improvement of South Sudan women's vulnerability in the near future. The objective of this workshop was to build the capacity of senior government and civil society organizations' officials at states level on gender mainstreaming (Jato, 2011). One can see from the pictures below how fair it could be if South Sudan encourages equal participation of both women and men.

I also witnessed gender mainstreaming concern with fair and full participation of women in another workshop with Norwegian People's Aid on dissemination of South Sudan Land Act 2009 (October, 2011). See the picture below.



**Figure 5-2 Gender Balance and active participation of Women in Dissemination of Land Act 2009**

In summary, the involvement of women in the development especially in forest development initiatives is very crucial and sensitive issue. Women among others are the ones severely affected by poverty and high rate of illiteracy in South Sudan. They are also amongst direct beneficiaries of local forest resources for their livelihoods on daily basis. Though the gender mainstreaming still a challenge in South Sudan, the workshops discussed above inspired me and gave me hope which reduced my tension from burdens on South Sudan women with thought of improved system in time to come. One can see (pictures above) how gender is equally represented.

## **2.2 Theories and Practices of Action Research**

My point of focus on the concept of Action Research in this section takes more concern in application of Action Research as relevant method in facilitating Participatory Forest Management initiatives. The use of concept of Action Research in this chapter is more in practice than in principle. In other words, the study does not aim at discussing about Action Research in its boarder sense or as a discipline, but discusses how it positively impacted in this research project. The focus is more on its relationship with concept of Participatory Forest Management because the research project by itself is an Action Research. I learnt more about Action Research by conducting this research project than I read Action Research. Therefore, as I repeatedly said in this paragraph, the emphasis in this discussion is that the



research tries to bring the concept of Action Research into that of Participatory Forest Management.

Neil Ward in the descriptive definition of Action Research termed it as “Action-oriented, a participatory and thus, involves researchers working *with* and *for* research subjects” (Ward, 2007, p. 2). The key words used in this definition: action, participatory and the involvement of the researcher in the process with participants are the characteristics which make Action Research a relevant method to develop Participatory Forest Management initiatives. The terms also outlined the area of the relationship of Participatory Forest Management and Action Research as interconnected disciplines/approaches.

To explain this in other words, the involvement of researcher into Action Research group as a member reflects the Participatory Forest Management claim which is the participation of all stakeholders. In principle of Participation Forest Management, respect of each stakeholder’s rights, equal opportunity in term of knowledge and responsibilities, collaboration, voluntary participation and many more are conditions (Kate Schreckenber, 2006). These conditions are also applicable in Action Research.

Like Participatory Forest Management, Action Research focuses on respect of participants’ views, experiences and self-defined roles. Jean McNiff pointed the need for ‘justice and democracy’ as principles in which Action Research communities agree on (McNiff, 2011). Briefly, the ideas developed through Action Research concept made it easy for me to understand with reflective practical experience in light of foreseen questions in mind as justified in the problem statement of this report.

Action Research in its complexity in working life is defined as:

A participatory, democratic process concerned with developed practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purpose, grounded in a participatory worldview which we believe is emerging at this historical moment. It seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and their communities (McArdle, 2004, p. 1) cited in Reason & Bradbury (2001:1).

In relation to the concept of Participatory Forest Management which is the focal idea in this research project, Action Research also has another area with focus on participation which specifically termed as Participatory Action Research (PAR). This particular area of Action Research according to Maclure and Bassey (1991) emerged in the majority world in order to “Make development assistance more responsive to the needs and opinions of the local people” (Ward, 2007, p. 6). They further explained this concept by giving examples on involvement of workers of Agriculture and Industries in decision making process as fertile area for development of Action Research.

Participatory Action Research as suggested by Maclure and Bassey (1991) is differentiated from more traditional research strategies by the three distinguished characteristics including: “Shared ownership of research, a method of community-based learning and aims to stimulate

a community initiated action” (Ward, 2007, p. 10). These attributes tightly emphasize the relationship between Participatory Action Research and Participatory Forest Management concept.

### 2.2.2 Action Research in the context of Participatory Forest Management

The aim of this research project initiative is to understanding the role of local communities in Forest Concessions Management with emphasis on the participation of local communities in the management of forest concession projects and the long-term goal is Participatory Forest Management practices for the need of sustainable forestry in the country. In order for me to achieve this goal, the methods I used during data collection were collaborative in practice.

The intention was originally to work with local communities, but the research work later felt in government project. It was not of course easy task to approach key stakeholders at government and local communities to participate in the project. In my consultation process with selected institutions when approached them for collaboration in my project work, I was not actually well informed about the conditions which Neil ward (Ward, 2007) called the characteristics of Action Research. But I thought to be obliged in the concept of Participatory Forest Management to get stakeholders involved and collaborate in the implementation process of my research initiative.

However, I realized in the process that the initiative was combining both the requirement of Action Research and Participatory Forest Management. “Action Research is a participatory, undertaken *by* and *with* insider, but never by an outside expert.” (Ward, 2007, p. 7). Ward also described Action Research as collaborative process which involves all those who have an interest in the outcome of the research (stakeholders), involves democratization of research, emergent and flexible process, to effect change or action which is agreed or desired by the participants.

In my original plan, the local communities were the priority. The next was the government forestry sectors at local level and thirdly the forest concessionaires. It was hardship for me to try to initiate collaboration on my research work with them. It was quite challenging task and took time for me to achieve, but lastly succeed by joining the forest concession work group under the Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry. I did this inclusive approach not only for the purpose of searching for wide-range of stakeholders to have quality data, but also for awareness creation on the importance of Participatory Forest Management practice to those stakeholders.

I lately realized during the analysis of the research process based on experience I acquired that I was in partially fulfilling some requirements of Action Research which are also the characteristics of Participatory Forest Management. Based on similarities of Action Research and Participatory Forest Management, my understanding on Action Research in relation to concept of Participatory Forest Management is that they are relatively similar in approach. Based on such experience, it is hard to differentiate Participatory Forest Management initiatives from Action Researches implemented through ‘Action projects’. The two can be

indistinguishable if the aim of Participatory Forest Management is knowledge-based initiative. Some Participatory Forest Management initiatives are ran for learning purposes especially when forest experts and the local community are in a position to establish a capacity building for local institutions through forestry development initiatives.

What makes Action Research different from the mainstream social research as Neil Ward argued is that researchers make distinctions between ‘research’ and ‘action’. “Research and action tend to take place separately, with researcher taking less involved in linking research and action”(Ward, 2007, p. 8). In this case, I would like to bring special contrasting traits to that of mainstreaming social researches which are similar in Action Research and Participatory Forest Management approach. What I learnt from Action Research is that research and actions go hand in hand. Likewise, Participatory Forest Management has these key features with Action Research in common because Participants in Participatory Forest Management learnt as they take actions in the development process of projects.

The only minor difference I would see might be scientific procedures the researchers may apply to intensively investigate about the initiative as the research component is concerned (in case of AR). But in case of Participatory Forest Management, there may be less care for data by participants, but may target the outcomes in term of benefits achieved.

In comparison, Action Research project engaged me as researcher in recording events for further analysis of data gathered during the process, which may not be exactly the same in Participatory Forest Management if taken as development project with less concern on research part of it. However, based on lessons I learnt in this research project, Action Research in knowledge-oriented community is appropriate method of implementing Participatory Forest Management initiatives.

Despite the minor difference between Action Research and Participatory Forest Management approach, participants keep gaining new strategies which are usually the results of collective experiences from involved stakeholders in Participatory Forest Management development projects. In this case, Participatory Forest Management can be both the development initiative and a method of creating new knowledge through experiences. Below is the table of features which Action Research and Participatory Forest Management have in common.

**Table 1-2 Some Common Features of Action Research & Participatory Forest Management**

| <b>Action Research</b>  | <b>Participatory Forest Management</b>   |
|---|--|
| -Collaboration among participants, participatory in process with shared ownership (Levin, 1998) of activities and results/products by research and participants, actively involves the ‘subjects’ of the researcher in the research process (Ward, 2007)<br>-Justice and Democratic process (McNiff, 2011). Seeking together for practical solution, act and reflect together | -Collaboration among participants, a participatory in process. All stakeholder/groups having interest actively involve, all stakeholders influence and share control over the development initiative (Headley, 2004)<br>-Justice, democrat, no distinctive classes of being poor or rich, illiterate or educated (Wily, 2002). There is an equitable sharing of benefits (Wilmsen, 2005) |
| -Emphasize on social change-directed at effecting change that improves the lives of the people engaged in the research (McArdle, 2004).   | -Participatory Forest Management initiatives aim at active involvement of all stakeholders and improvement of livelihood of local people through improved existing local forest management strategies is initial point better forest management at local community level (Wadley, 1996)  |

### **2.2.3 Participation as the element of Action Research**

As mentioned in the introductory part of this chapter, the discussion focuses on key points from different theories which I considered relevant and reflects the practical nature of this research project. The three elements (Research, Action & Participation) discussed here are not the only important components of Action Research, but influenced greatly during this research process. Davydd J. Greenwood and Morten Levin argued on absence of one of the balance of three elements: Research, Participation and Action to disqualify a research from being considered as Action Research (Levin, 1998, p. 7). In this argument, they further differentiated Action Research from other kind of social researches by adding values the Action Research emphasizes.

Nevertheless, they acknowledged the claim of other kinds of research to generate knowledge with aims of promoting social changes and social analysis. “Action Research aims to increase the ability of the involved community or organization members to control their own destinies more effectively and to keep improving their capacity to do so”(Levin, 1998, p. 6).

Similarly, it is a claim of Participatory Forest Management for each party to take care of its opportunities, privileges and obligations in the process. In this concept with help of reflecting how my collaboration process went during the research data collection in South Sudan, I considered the three elements of Action Research as inter connected bonds. To refer the work plan and diagram showing the collaboration process (chapter 3 Methodologies) during the

implementation of this research project, these three elements worked without clear distinction on what should be given more consideration in the research process.

I planned with high expectations to implement all things as planned, but rarely meet or managed the occurrence of activities especially what action to take-when and who is the right stakeholder to participate in. All these happened simultaneously as the process continued which made my work a back and forth in planning, acting and reflecting on the process (chapter three for details). The process was situational determinant. However, I took care not to be diverted from the goal of my research.

The research process partially reflected the following cycle.

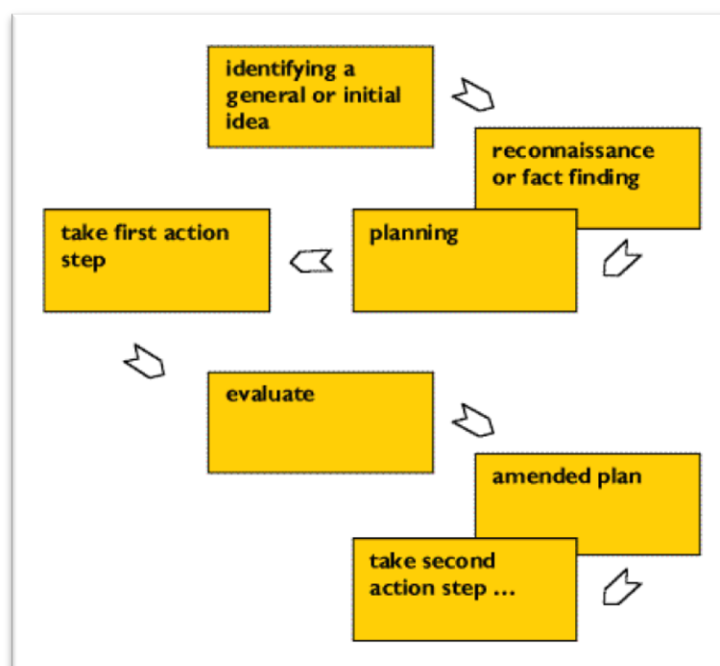


Figure 6-2 Kurt Lewin's Action Research Cycle

## 2.3 Participatory Forest Management in the Perspective of Vocational Pedagogy

### 2.3.1 Learning by Doing in the context of Participatory Forest Management

“There is really only one way to learn how to do something and that is to do it” ([www.engines4ed.org](http://www.engines4ed.org)). To support this statement, I would begin with narrative of my traditional experience in local forest farming system. This can also be referred to section 2.1.7 above which discussed the importance of local people’s experiences in the development of new knowledge in Participatory Forest Management initiatives. To relate this with reality of traditional practices in the management and use of forest resources, a child starts to learn how tree is cut, furnished or used as pole in local housings from father or mother. All this learning is by doing.

Most of these activities especially furnishing timber chairs, tables and many other useful materials can be practiced without prior knowledge from formal schools. This is in the concept of Vocational Pedagogy (VP) can be referred as vocational task from such experienced person from self-generated ability to do things. Children also can learn what ownership of forest resources is about before attending formal education schools. They are acquainted with knowledge on hectares of forest lands (in some cases), their parents have. In this case, they start feeling the ownership right before leaning at schools what the rights of land resources are. Participatory Forest Management (PFM) takes care of this useful knowledge to pave the way forward in the development initiatives which aim to make a society knowledgeable. It must be trusted that there is knowledge already existing with local people about forests and their traditional management systems in any society (Houle, 1980).

“Participatory Forest Management demonstrates increasingly sound development process that goes well beyond the fact that its focus is upon some of the poorest and most remote rural poor. It embodies an unusually high level of praxis of policy and practice, and steady maturation through learning by doing” (Wily, 2002, p. 3). To me, it could be contradiction if forest experts or other forest development agents assume that local communities may lack knowledge or should be the only ones to benefit from outcomes of forest management initiatives in term of knowledge. It may be proposition if the (Foresters-theorists) could have thoughts that knowledge can be transferred to local communities without expectation on existing knowledge to support forest development initiatives. Local people have traditional knowledge on techniques of management, usage and might possibly have sustainable measures which they learnt through their practical experiences.

“Learning is not the work of something ready-made called mind, but that mind itself is an organization of original capacities into activities having significance”. (Dewey, 2007, p. 158). Based on this concept, I could restate it as learning is not something inherited, but practiced. Therefore, to develop the capacity of participants in Participatory Forest Management work, prior experiences can best suit their way of participating as tangible result may be desired. Such approach could help the learners to realize the relationship between theory and practices. Working with respect of diverse experiences could help the learners/participants to explain their learning based on reflections in their own learning that may possibly influence the learning of others in the real working life (Jack Whitehead, 2008).

David Kolb (David Kolb, 1971) developed the model of experiential learning which stated that the learning process begins with concrete experience followed by reflective observation. The next is reformulation of abstract conceptualization and finally, the test of new situations which he called active experimentation. This kind of recurring cycle could work best in Participatory Forest Management projects in which experiences are considered as foundation of participants’ learning.

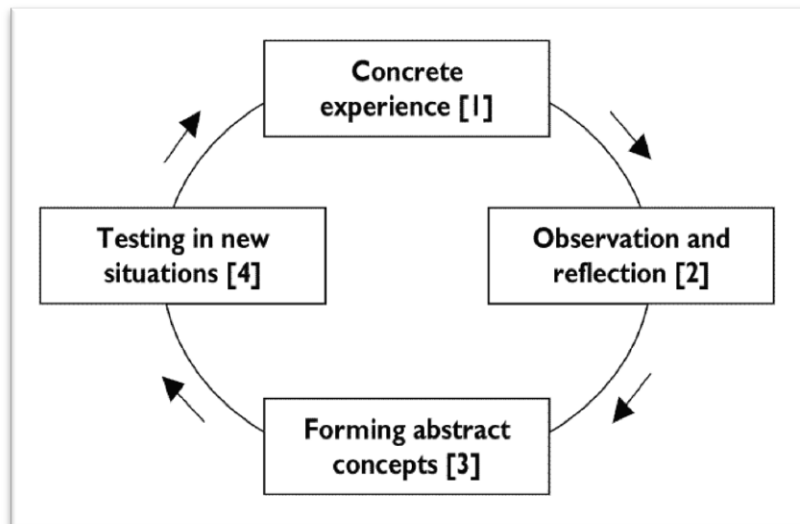


Figure 7-2 David Kolb's Learning Cycles

Boud, Cohen and Walker (1993) described the experience in learning as, “The foundation of, and the stimulus for learning, learners actively construct their own experience, learning is a holistic process, socially and culturally constructed, influenced by the socio-emotional context in which it occurs”, cited in (Lee Andresen, 1998).

Let me summarize it here by presenting the importance of personal experiences from daily life practices with idea from Houle Cyril O. “Experiential learning is education that occurs as a direct participation in the events of life” (Houle, 1980, p. 221). Most kinds of management practices in forestry except the mechanized ones are already known to farmers who cannot read or write (refer section 2.3.1 paragraph 2). This shows the reality of learning as something that is not sponsored by some formal educational institution but by people themselves, it is achieved through reflection upon everyday experience and is the way that most of people learn as Houle suggested.

### 2.3.2 Work-based learning/Learning at work places

Learning at work place was my area of interest for discussion in this section because Participatory Forest Management projects take the form of being a work place or an organization which has different structures. Let me first present the general understanding about learning at work places with support on views from different commentators.

Boud Deun (1998) defined workplace learning as a site of intersecting interests, contested ideas, multiple forms of writing and rapidly evolving practice, cited in (Tracey Lee, 2004).

Other authors as listed below put their views and understanding on work places in different perspectives:

Workplaces are in fact highly structured environments for learning Billet (1991a), participants learn their vocational activities through work at work places, work activities act to reinforce, refine or generate new forms of knowledge (Billett, 1999). As cited by Tracey Lee et al; from Fuller & Unwin (2002, p. 95), it sits at the juncture of new thinking

concerning the nature of learning about new forms of knowledge, about the transformation of the nature of work and about the modern enterprise in a globalized economy (Tracey Lee, 2004). Boud and Garrick argued that workplaces are linking learning to the requirements of people's jobs, learning for, at and through work. The workplace has become a site of learning associated with purposes such as the development of the enterprise through contributing to production, effectiveness and innovation; and the development of individuals through contributing to knowledge, skills and the capacity to further their own learning both as employees and citizens in the wider society (Garrick, 1999).

Stephen Billett in his argument objected the idea of placing learning at work places as informal learning. Unlike many authors for example, (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Beckett and Hager, 2002; Hager, 2004a, 2004b), who gave distinction between formal and informal learning, Billett asserted his viewpoint that it is formal. He further explained the existence of intentions for work practice in workplaces and the structured goal directed activities. "Describing learning through work as being "informal" is incorrect" (Billett, 1999, p. 56).

The following are combination of statements put together by Stephen Billett for description of workplaces that it provides opportunities for learners to participate by engaging oneself. Learning at work place is the source of contestation between: 'newcomers' or 'old-timers' Wenger (1991) full- or part-time workers (Bernhardt 1999); teams with different roles and standing in the workplace Darrah & Hull (1996; 1997); individuals' personal and vocational goals Darrah (1997); or among institutionalised arrangements such as those representing workers, supervisors or management Danford (1998) cited in (Billett, 1999, p. 2). Paul Hirst (1983) argued on understanding of educational theory to be developed from immediate practical experience and co-terminus with everyday understanding, cited by Jack Whitehead (Whitehead, 2008)

In my view, to make use of the learning at workplaces would be one of the best ways for South Sudanese to educate the majority of adults and engaged youth in forest development projects in South Sudan. South Sudan has a population with highest proportion of illiterates. To make it a learning and a productive society, the work-based learning or task oriented- (Vocational kind of training) through work would help in the improvement of management of forest resources. Some options may include the engagement of local people to work in local forest industries.

To give practical example, the employees of forest companies in Western Equatoria State (Blue Lakes Limited and Equatoria Teak Company) were from the local communities in which these companies operate. In my interaction with them during data collection, it was interesting experience told by the workers who were benefiting from their own work while learning how to process timber with sawmill. It is opportunity for them to learn and earn money at the same time.



Therefore, Participatory Forest Management development projects could help the society to have additional benefit out of environmental sustainability, return in term of revenue or other social benefits and discussed in this chapter. No matter what category the learning at work places may fall in (formal or informal), it is a kind of learning which in the context of Participatory Forest Management would help to create or improve skills and diverse experiences from different stakeholders in the process of implementing forest development projects.

As cited by Michael Simon from Retallick (1993) and Stephen Billett (1994, 1996a), learning at work places is described as learning through work and is integrated into doing the job. In this case, the argument was based on being “A task focused; occurs in a social context where status differences can exist between workers, often grows out of an experience such as a problem, crisis or novel event; occurs in an environment where people receive remuneration for their work; and entails different cognitive processes from those used in an off-site environment” (Michele Simons, 1999 p. 1). Learning is long-term process of re-finishing the objects, tools and structures of the workplace (Alison Fuller, 2003). “Learning communities facilitated through adult and community education are a powerful tool for social cohesion, community capacity building and social, cultural and economic development” (Sue Kilpatrick, 2003, p. 2).

### 3. Research Methodologies

This chapter contains the sketch of my field work plan which I proposed before starting the real activities in South Sudan. That was the plan following the submission of project three which was the planning phase of research project work for this Master's Thesis. I included some changes that happened in the plan during implementation in this chapter. It also contains communication means I tried before conducting the field work (use of emails, telephone calls), consultative meetings with management of government institutions and Non-Governmental Organizations within South Sudan.

I also presented in this chapter some specific techniques such as interviews, focus group meetings, use of questionnaires, observations and the materials used during the data collection and analysis. The stakeholders who were contributors in the research planning during the field work and those who contributed through provision of the research data were also mentioned in this chapter. The last part is the technique I used for analysis of the data and how the data presented in this report, and ethical considerations and validity in the use of research data.

#### 3.1 Research Design

This is a qualitative kind of research in which I conducted data collection through questionnaire and interviews, group discussions, consultative meetings and workshops. Free flow of ideas based on informant's experience made the process interactive and eased the understanding of the process from agreement to implementation stage of assessed forest concession projects. Carrie Williams presented description of action based research in relation to grounded theory which as method of doing actions and people's interactions (Williams, 2007). Carrie furthered his argument by explaining methods of grounded theory to obtain its data from sources including interviews, review of historical videotapes or records and observations on the site.

“Methodology refers to a theory of how we do things. It refers to the process of generating theoretical understandings through research” (Grande, 2010, p. 18). In my understanding of Action Research, the appropriate method depends on the theme of action, the participants' interest or existing situation influenced by possible options to reach the goal and the research tools available. The term methodology in this particular research project work meant the way I approached my research stakeholders, how I used different techniques to gather the research data and the way of analysing and presenting the data, and how we as collaborative partners during the field work implemented what the activities required.

Concurrently, “There are no better methods than those provided by Participatory Action Research (PAR). Deep and respectful observation in localities are deemed essential.” (Bradbury, 2001, p. 33). In this sub-content, my way of presenting methods used during data collection included how the procedures followed and also ‘who’ have done ‘what’ in the process of implementing the research project. My action research was possible with help of participants who voluntarily involved based on their own interest with theme as the concern in societal context. My methodology may or may not be the traditional way of structuring

items under research methodologies, but it reflects the nature of events and goes with situation during the implementation of my research project activities.

I understood in this concept that it is hard to have strict steps in conducting Action Research. It was my lesson to fight to catch-up time and meet informants on proposed dates, but never happened as projected; I planned to do all I can, but the events and the situations changed. Therefore, the only possible option was flexibility to re-plan, but I kept in mind the goals set forth in accordance with research objectives. Action Research also has an element of participation (Levin, 1998). Moreover, the core value of Participatory Forest Management approach is participation (SAKANO, 2004). Due to the fact that participation is a free will of participants, their time, programs, interest and the culture and their working habits also influenced my approaches and initial plans for me to have the data I needed.

### **3.1.1 Field Work Plan**

This plan covers the entire field work for data collection, documentation, analysis, writing, submission (to the University College's Academic Affairs) and the defence of Thesis. Its timeframe was June, 2011-May, 2012. Below is the table of my field work plan.

The table below presented sketch, but not detailed events undertaken during the research project process. The documentation of field activities was continuous process throughout the research data collection period. I presented all the steps taken in the field work logs which are not in this table because it was my plan before implementation and does not reflect the changes occurred later.

This work plan had undergone many changes during the implementation of field work. I presented the changes happened after this table of work plan. The detailed work plan with specified dates and weeks and all the activities implemented is a separate book. I prepared it for use as reference to this sketch plan and evaluation of the work as whole.

#### **Abbreviations used in the table below:**

CES-Central Equatoria State, GADET-Pentagon- Generation Agency for Development & Transformation, HQ-Head Quarter, MAF-Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry,

NPA-Norwegian People's Aid, NFG-Norwegian Forestry Group, Participatory Forest Management, WES-Western Equatoria State.

Table 2-2 Field Work Plan

| Time Frame              | Activities   |
|-------------------------|--|
| June - July, 2011       | <b>Situational Analysis Phase</b><br>- Consultation/Meetings with NFG NPA, RSS-MAF, State MAF and Civil Society Groups<br>-Identification of key stakeholders at local community level<br>-Planning for research methods, sites and timeframe of activities<br>-Interviews/Dialogue with stakeholders at local community level |
| August-October, 2011    | <b>Experiential Phase</b><br>-Mobilization of participants<br>-Workshops with participants/Stakeholders<br>-Documentation and development of working logs  |
| November-December, 2011 | <b>Evaluation Phase</b><br>- Partial analysis of data<br>-Evaluation of data collection process -Writing of the combined logs for further analysis while working with Thesis Report  |
| January-May, 2012       | Analysis, writing, submission and the defence Thesis   |

### 3.1.2 Planning and Re-planning

As mentioned earlier, the research process had undergone several changes from planning phase to implementation stage due to changes occurred in the data collection process. Several factors and particularly the plans of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in the Republic of South Sudan for forest concession work hindered the process to implement the activities in accordance with my initial plan.

I realized from my first consultation with staff of Norwegian Forestry Group that plans from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry for concession work had changed. The priority state for concession work was Eastern Equatoria State, but finally changed to Central and Western Equatoria States. Therefore, my research work complied with goals of stakeholders participated and run according to their priorities (Bradbury, 2001).

I also put into consideration the following: the proposed initiative of Participatory Forest Management requires an action project to implement it through. It also requires participants to run it with; according to the way I intended to implement it. These factors therefore, made it difficult to follow the plan I did in project 3. The Norwegian Forestry Group, which accepted the project proposal, still needs to have order from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry to comment on integration of my research project as part of forest concession work. Unfortunately, the Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry on due time did not have clear plan

about the state in which concession work could begin and when to start. There was no full answer whether the project could be integrated into concession work or not.

Therefore, the next step for me was to approach the Norwegian People's Aid to host my research work. The Norwegian People's Aid positively responded my research internship request and integrated the initiative into Land and Natural Resources Rights Project in Civil Society Development Program. The collaboration with Norwegian People's Aid was interactive, but I faced the challenge of editing my project proposal which was prepared for the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and the Norwegian Forestry Group. This was to edit my proposal and relate it with objectives of Land and Natural Resources Rights Project so that it becomes part of Land and Natural Resources Rights Project and its results will be achievements of this project. What made the edition easier was that it was edited with help of the project staff of Land and Natural Resources Rights Project.

While working with Norwegian People's Aid, I still follow up the concession work with Norwegian Forestry Group and the Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry. The purpose of doing this while in collaboration with Norwegian People's Aid was the need to engage my work with government project so that it may get room in the policies the National Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry was developing.

The National Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) is the highest institution of forest resources in the country. All forest agencies, Ministries of Agriculture & Forestry at states level are under the National Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF). Therefore, it has many possible ways to disseminate the message about Participatory Forest Management if adopted. This statement refers 'what will be the use of my research result and who will use it' as discussed under justification of the problem statement in chapter one. For these reasons, I withdrew the proposal from Norwegian People's Aid after positive acceptance by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry to use my research project in forest concession work.

“Action Research is an open ended. It does not begin with a fixed hypothesis. It begins with an idea that you develop. A developmental process of following through the idea, seeing how it goes, and continually checking whether it is in line with what you wish to happen” (McNiff, 2011, p. 8). In the research process, what I did was to consider all the events that make changes happen in the process, but stick to the aim of my research project.

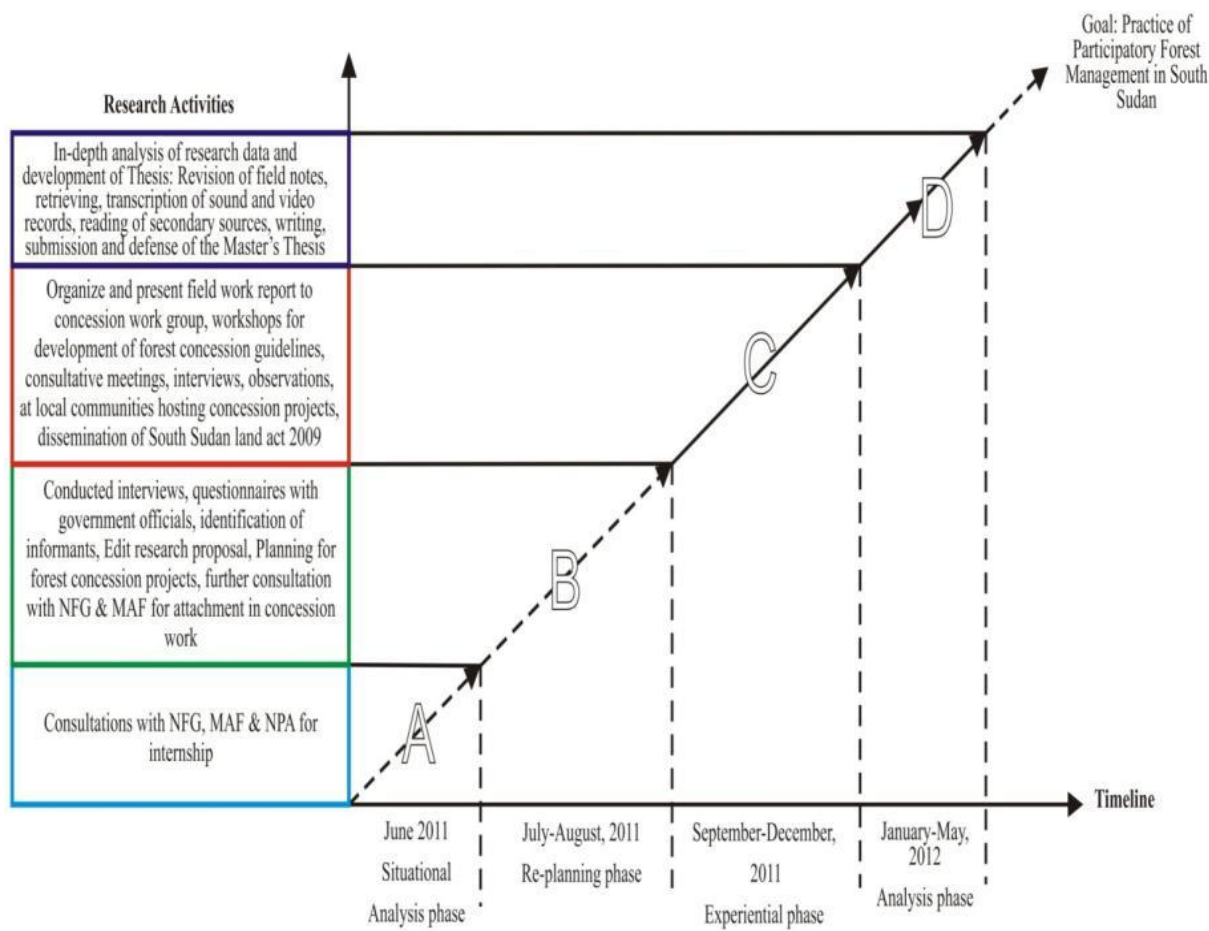


Figure 8-3 Research activities and the timeline

### 3.1.3 Systematic selection of research participants or stakeholders

During the planning of this research project I approached the Ministry of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the Norwegian Forestry Group and the Norwegian People's Aid. I did this while working with project three as partial planning for this project the (Master's Thesis research project). The purpose was to prepare the ground for internship to work with one of them or collaborate with all of them. I started this before leaving for South Sudan in May, 2011.

What I based my request on it was their plans/programs and kind of action projects to be implemented from June 2011 to December 2011. I wanted to know these because I can select the project which may be relevant to my initiative to implement it through (in case accepted). The selection of those which I approached based on who have a stake in the management of forest resources in the country and who run the development projects of forests which may be relevant to my research initiative.

What I did was communication through emails, phone and consultative meetings for example with senior management of Norwegian Forestry Group at Lilleaker, Oslo on March 17, 2011. The use of email exchange and phone calls as means of communication was because of the distance from Norway to South Sudan.

In the communication process, I used to present my project objectives and how I intended to do it. The approach created opportunity for my initiative to be integrated into government project. Example of some feed backs given during this process by the Norwegian Forestry Group in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry was provision of the following plans for implementation:

- Mapping and forest inventory in plantations
- Forest management planning
- Preparing concession agreements (framework and contract templates)
- Use of Geographic Information System for forest management and land use applications

#### **3.1.4.1 Collaboration with stakeholders**

The internship process has undergone several stages with many consultative meetings with senior government officials and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). The consultation meant to approach the management of the National Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF), the Norwegian Forestry Group (NFG) and the Norwegian People's Aid (NPA). The purpose of consultation was to approach them to integrate my research initiative into action projects (which might be under implementation process).

I also intentionally made a systematic way of selling the idea of participatory forest management for adoption as part of forest management strategies in South Sudan. This approach lastly yielded positive result which led to integration of this research project as part of South Sudan forest concession work.

I did this by consulting the management of above mentioned institutions. I used to present the idea of the initiative and drop my proposal to them, then follow in another time.

### **3.2. Focus Group Samples**

Informants who contributed (some worked with especially forest concession work group) the research data were from the above listed stakeholders (3.1.4.1). I presented here the specific groups who involved and not generally in the context of institution.

The first group was forest concession work group committee. The size of this group ranges from 9-13 members which was composed of the concession team (5), but sometimes more than five (from the Directorate of Forestry in the National Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry), the Norwegian Forestry Group (NFG) Local forest coordinator from the Norwegian Forestry Group (1) and consultants (2) Directors of forestry in Western (1), Central (1) and Eastern (1) Equatoria States, and Western Bar el Ghazal State (1) and me as intern for research. This group used to meet during workshops for forest concession work. Directors of Forestry from the four mentioned states were not regular in forest concession workshops, but in some workshops.

The task of this group on my research project was to plan the field work with me, discuss/analyse the assessment reports I conducted at local community level. As mentioned earlier, the purpose of the data to forest concession work was to improve the process of developing the guidelines & agreement templates.

In addition to the experience I gained during group works, I also used to have dialogues, (some used to fill questionnaire for me before visiting the local communities) with members with in group as informants about the agreement, implementation and some impacts experienced in forest concession projects. I used to do this after or before the general group sessions.

I had interviews with Managers of the Blue Lakes Limited, Equatoria Teak Company in Western Equatoria State, but I did not meet the concessionaires of Central Equatoria Teak Company who withdrew soon after agreement.

The second group was the Central Equatoria and Western Equatoria States Directors of Forestry and forest plantations managing staff. The number of participants I met differed in every plantation site. It depended on how many of them were present during the assessment periods. Some key members were not present sometimes during assessment. Therefore, I conducted separate interview with them through another appointments with in the of assessments periods at plantation areas. What we did in discussions was group dialogue with agendas on their experience about concession agreements, implementations and current situations with local communities.

The third category was local community groups. I considered County Authorities in this group because they were serving as Heads of local communities at their local areas in which the forest concession projects located. My meetings with County authorities were not only to contribute the research data, but also to take permission from them and meet the local communities. I had consultative meeting with Nzara County Administration on their experience on Equatoria Teak Company in term of local community participation, agreement initial agreement process and the current situation of the concession project. We conducted this meeting within county Head Quarter and had dialogue of office staff and the Director of Forestry in Western Equatoria States.

The following were the local communities I met: Yabongo community, Asanza community in Yambio County and Nzara community in Nzara County in Western Equatoria State. These were the host communities of Blue Lakes Limited and Equatoria Teak Company Limited

The consultation process was done through the local chiefs with supervision of Director of Forestry in Western Equatoria State. During planning with his help, we tried to identify some key members starting from the local chiefs and some informed members who took part in the process of forest concessions agreements. But the experience during implementation process was left for any member in the community to give information about.

In Central Equatoria State were: Loka and Korobe communities under Lainya County Administration and Pakula Boma in Yei County. These were the host communities of Central Equatoria Teak Company. My approach to those localities was supervised by the Head of Nursery Unit in Lainya County, Central equatorial State.



Other local community members of contracted forest reserves including Members of Parliament (MPs) in both Central (1) and Western (1) Equatoria States were also consulted.

The number of participants I discussed in group with them at local communities varies greatly from village to village. Some participants were not met at community meeting, but at facility sites where I went for observation. The least group was 4 participants in Korobe Boma and the largest group I met at local communities meeting had 21 participants in Pakula Boma-Yei County in Central Equatoria State. This was special and had many people as such because it was a day (December 02, 2011) of their general meeting about the situation of Korobe forest plantation which was severely damaged for illegal logging by some individuals within local community. The plantation was at that time controlled by South Sudan Army Forces and no entry into plantation for any activity due to illegal logging. Before our meeting they were in discussion with Commanders of these Forces on how the situation could be minimized with in local community level.

In summary, I shared the planning for field work to consult those local communities initially with concession work group and the Director of Forestry in Western Equatoria State. The data I used to gather from those informants was also used at the same time by forest concession work group for the development of forest concession guidelines and agreement templates. Therefore, the choice of site to visit first and the key informants to target was considered by me and the concession work group in the planning stage.

### **3.3 Procedures in consultative meetings with research participants**

In my meetings with senior government officials and Non-Governmental Organizations, what I did was to introduce my project (what it is, how it can be implemented and how it may be relevant if integrated into a given forestry development project). We used to conduct those meetings in offices because I visit them in working hours. We then continue to discuss in possibilities on how it may or may not be accepted. I used to drop my research project proposal in the offices of managing staff I consulted and follow up the case until some solution is worked out.

With local communities, what used to happen was that I firstly consult the Chief or the Chairperson person of local community. If the Head of a given community is not at the Head Quarter (if somewhere or at home), I request him/her to allow to discuss with local community members including him/her. But if they are in community centre like the case of Pakula Boma in Central Equatoria state whom I met in community forum discussing about the agenda of illegal logging in Korobe Teak plantation, I simply request the Head if other members could joint us. However, in both situations, I introduce what my agenda is, and why it needs the concern of other people in the community and not the Head alone.

What use to happen in our meetings at local communities was that I introduce myself, my agenda; what I need from them, how the information they contribute could be relevant in my research and how the results of my research work could benefit the community if such data is

used by the government. The key issues I used as guiding agendas for discussion with local communities were the following:

- The procedures followed when the forest concession agreement made and how it was conducted
- Who were involved in either agreement or implementation process
- Opportunities/achievements or failure in term of development in host communities of these companies
- Challenges faced by both parties or either of the parties in implementation process
- Measures taken in case of disputes/Coping mechanisms for challenges faced
- Strategic plans for the next faces of the projects
- In general, the status of the project in term of community involvement and participation
- Community recommendations on agreements based on their experience during implementation
- What they think is important for me to know

What normally came after my introduction is briefing about the concession project by the Head (Local Chief or Chairperson) and the dialogue among the participants follows. In the discussion process, the local community members exhaust more information than the items I figured.

### 3.4 Use of Questionnaire

The purpose of the first questionnaires I prepared was to identify forest concession projects to choose and base my research work on. What I targeted was kind of project, its location and with emphasis on issues related to the participation of the local communities. In this stage (Figure 8-3 Phase 'B'), I did not have specific project through which I could run my research work or local community to visit. Therefore, I was about to prioritize the projects to consider for assessment. This was to gather information based on the experience from government officials who might have some information about forest concession projects granted leases by the government.

In the process of working with questionnaires, brief introduction on the purpose of research and the reason of using this method takes place before delivery of question papers. I used the questionnaires in a flexible manner. Some participants fill the questions and sometimes I do in form of interview where the interaction follows interview process. I forward the question and fill the sheet while the respondent explaining. Some people fill questions themselves in my presence and ask if any need for clarification. The discussion continues and more information was gathered in this process. I proposed this technique to help me in preparation for field visits; to know what is taking place in project sites from government officials. The use of questionnaires provided hints and guided me before meeting the local communities and the visitation of concession project sites.

I did the first distribution of questionnaires before attachment and integration of the initiative by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in partnership with Norwegian Forestry Group. Key participants were the Central Equatoria State Directorate of Forestry staff and Forestry

concession staff in the National Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry. In this case, the focus was on identification of forest concession projects to choose for assessment.

After integration of my research project initiative in the development of forest concession guidelines, I again prepared another questionnaire especially for forest concession team members for me to learn about the status of Central Equatoria Teak Company. The purpose was to equip myself with some details about the Central Equatoria Teak Company before conducting field assessment on Loka and Korobe forest reserves in Central Equatoria State which were the host communities of this company.

### **3.5 Interview procedures**

The interaction process throughout the data collection period was dominated by group discussions as mentioned earlier. However, special consideration was given to selected government officials, company staff and key individuals at community level. I gave extra time and special consideration for some individuals whom I did not have chance to have them in the focus groups. For the case of local community members and forest plantation staff, some of them were not present in group meetings. Therefore, I allocated extra time to meet them.

In the case of government officials, there was special information I expected from them about concession process. Some participants whom I interviewed were eye witnesses during negotiation stage of contracted forest reserves in Central and Western Equatoria State, South Sudan, but were not members of forest concession team I worked in group with them.

The interview process was flexible and not restricted to follow only the proposed questions on the interview guide. The process was determined by the way the interviewee prefers to present his/her experience on forwarded question. Some informants gave information as narrative and some accepted the dialogue to follow specific questions in accordance with my interview guide.

The interview procedures followed with different interviewees was technically different during interview events. This situation concurred with argument of Leedy and Ormrod (2001) cited by Currie Williams (Williams, 2007) who described the interview process in qualitative research as less structured and a semi-structured way of conversation with most of questions left free-flow of words based on respondents' experience and the way they prefer.

With those key informants, I experienced that some individuals have confidential information about the concession project

### **3.6 Ethical Consideration during interviews and consultative meetings**

The ethical issue presented here implies the consent given by participants especially their being willing and volunteer to take part in this research work, confidentiality of their names and use of their responses in the report, some consequences they may expect when involved on the work and the way they may prefer to be approached or to communicate with them.

From the initial stage of this research project, I used official requests which included introduction letter I took from Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences to government institutions and Non-Governmental Organizations in South Sudan. All the approaches I used during the meetings were in accordance with bureaucratic formalities of approached institutions. I tried in every request I made to consider the right office to meet first and that office or management requests the subordinating office through referral procedures. That worked in my cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry, the Norwegian Forestry Group and also with Norwegian People's Aid.

With States forest sectors, I also followed the chain of commands by getting other informants through the Directorates of Forestry.

The most honoured and feared group in my collaborative work with my research participants during consultative meetings and interviews were the local community groups where traditional ways of approaches were strongly exercised. I used to meet the local chiefs or Chair persons of any community I visited for data collection before telling anyone what I need to do. The participation of other community members comes through their local leaders.

I also took videos or photographs through permission from the participants. Not only the use of sound or visual recorders, but also the method of interview was done according to participants' preferable ways.

I firstly made appointments with government officials and conduct interviews or discussions in places they may feel safe and free to deliberate the information they have about the concession projects. I presented the participants in the discussion part of this report symbolically by using codes instead of the names of participants. This is because of ethical issues which may make the respondent feel embarrassed if later read what he/she contributed and which may have some negative impact on person's job or exposure in the community.

*Consent.* The discussions with informants initially went as process of selling the idea of participatory forest management. My research approaches were participatory in which the participants were motivated by its content and the outcomes as the work aim at sustainable forestry in the country. Participants voluntarily contributed and never felt obliged to take part in this research work. The only thing I tried to emphasize was kind request with good approach in order for my research project to be accepted. I used my research proposal and kept on pointing its relevance if implemented under the government institutions and with voluntary participation of forest stakeholders such as local communities who host the concession projects.

*Confidentiality.* The interview process, consultative meetings and presentation of the respondents in this research was confidential in some information especially those which touched the political aspect of forest concessions in South Sudan. I used to request the participant whether he/she wishes or not for his/her name to be used where the direct quote of statements may apply. Some informants who accepted the use their names when quoting some strong statements they contributed were presented directly, but for those who did not accept the use of sound records, photography and videos during interaction process applied

were presented symbolically. There was confidential information especially in the case of Central Equatoria Teak Company which was politicized from its agreement initial stage (See 4.1.3).

*Fear for consequences by participants.* I experienced after making some consultations, interviews and the use of questionnaires that some informants especially the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry that any information can be given though unless authorised by the management of the Ministry. Staff feared to give information because they think to be accused for violation of the regulations. Therefore, I formalized my collaborative work by strong commitment to conduct my research under internship with the Ministry in order for me to access the required data through legally accepted procedures in the Ministry. That was possible; officials accepted to provide information after attachment of my research in forest concession work by the Ministry.

### 3.7 Observations

In addition to group discussions, use of questionnaires and interviews, I acquired practical experience in this research work through observations. I supported my understanding about experiences on the role of local communities in working with forest concessionaires and the government with thorough observations of development facilities installed in the case of successful concession projects and the conditions in the local communities of unimplemented forest concession projects.

I based my observation on what was established by the local communities as the outcome of the concession project in term of the local development for example; primary health care centres, schools, boreholes and carpentry unit established through concession projects of Blue Lakes Limited and Equatoria Teak Company Limited in Western Equatoria state. I also wanted to see how the companies operate and interact with local staff employed; as happened in case of Blue Lakes Limited in Western Equatoria state.

The same method was followed in Loka, Korobe and Pakula communities, Central Equatoria state in which Central Equatoria Teak Company contracted forest reserves are located.

Field observations enabled me to experience unexpected and untold things by participants; I recorded live videos and captured photographs for verification of findings. Such experiences let me developed better understanding based on observed events in forest concession projects and what was exactly in the host communities of those projects.

I conducted some interviews and observations at development facility sites. I was there looking for what was established by local communities with the fund given by the concessionaires as community compensation for contracted local forest reserves (Appendix 2.1h, 2.2e and 2.2f).

### 3.8 Materials Used

I used the above mentioned approaches with application of the following materials for documentary purpose. They include interview Guide, camera for visual records and photographing, notebooks and other stationary materials. I used my personal Computer for documentation of information gathered through those different kinds of data collection techniques in the form of logs.<sup>14</sup> The documented log, pictures captured, videos recorded and field notebooks were the final documents made use for further analysis of gathered information in writing of this Thesis.

The work had also made use of secondary sources. The secondary sources I presented as materials used during the data collection in the context of my work with these sources is different from the way I used other literatures for backing up my understanding on different theories I read.

The purpose of using Action Research books was to guide my work as Action Research practitioner and to use some topic relevant books which have some specific information about forest concession/investment projects in the case of South Sudan. I had in hand these books throughout my data collection work.

I categorized these sources as Regional and International research guiding sources. Regional research guiding sources include: South Sudan Forestry Journals, South Sudan forest assessment and policy workshop reports, draft policy documents and other relevant sources. Some, but not limited to South Sudan forest policy Framework (2007), Forest concession management in Southern Sudan (2009), Southern Sudan Forest Revenue System (2009), Baseline survey of large scale land-based investment in Southern Sudan (2009-2011) and The Law of Southern Sudan Land Act 2009.

International research guiding sources were: Doing and Writing Action Research (McNiff, 2011), Inquiry & Participation Search of a World Worthy of Human Aspiration (Bradbury, 2001), Introduction to Action Research: Social Research for Social Change (Levin, 1998) and Systems Thinking/Practice and Social Complexity Seminars (McKenzie, May 2005).

Other sources were updates from web links for example on Regional Community Forestry Training Centre (RECOFTC) E-News. The RECOFTC E-News in particulars was useful in my research work which used to update me on the prevailing challenges being encountered in working with community forests.

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<sup>14</sup> **Log-** in the context of this study means a record sheet created for documentation of events, experience gained in the event and reflective text on the lessons learnt

### 3.9 Method of data analysis and interpretations

While working with research data gathered from various respondents with use of different materials, I kept cross-checking the fieldwork notes, questionnaire papers and rewind sound and video records. I interpreted the information in the pictures captured by matching them with my observations and what respondents said to create a communicative way of presenting to the reader the messages they contain (appendix 2.0).

I again tried to compare and contrast both the hard and the soft copy records for the purpose of testing the validity of the data they bear in relation to the purpose of this research and the kind of data required.

With sound records or videos and photographs, I used transcription<sup>15</sup> of data into written text with support of retrieving<sup>16</sup>. While writing this report, I used to play the recorded sound and videos to listen several times; back and forward it while taking note of the key words in relation to questions I asked during interviews or discussions.

I start partial analysis with support of forest concession team when I was preparing the final report to forest concession work group. However, I furthered my critical analysis to fieldwork logs<sup>17</sup> and the final field report I submitted to the concession work group in the writing of the Thesis.

I once more applied another treatment of the data starting from the logical order of events, insight understanding of recorded voices for what the respondent may mean and what I need to learn or to communicate to others through this report. In this stage, the use of field log and final report submitted to forest concession work group were very crucial<sup>18</sup>. This part demanded critical reflection on events during interaction with informants, careful listening of recorded voices and further reading of research secondary sources for scientific integrity<sup>19</sup>. This process brought a lot of updates from the field work. I feel like understanding it more currently than the time I gathered the data; it was learning itself.

The whole analysis process went through qualitative process which constituted the descriptions, explanations, and interpretation of collected data with critical and reflective thinking on interactions with respondents during the fieldwork. Currie Williams (Williams, 2007) described such techniques as purposeful use of qualitative research data.

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<sup>15</sup> **Transcription**-converting speeches into electronic or written text

<sup>16</sup> **Retrieving**-to get back or regain

<sup>17</sup> **Log**- in the context of this study means a record sheet created for documentation of events, experience gained in the event and reflective text on the lessons learnt

<sup>18</sup> **Crucial** - something important or essential

<sup>19</sup> **Integrity**-consistence of actions, values, methods, measure, principles, expectations, and outcomes

### 3.10 Presentation of Research Data

I presented the results of this research project in form of pictures captured during data collection, diagrams (either created or adopted), tables and the texts/words based on interpretations of meanings attached to each attribute or concept. As discussed earlier, the methods used were qualitative in nature and therefore embedded in experiences drawn through interaction with respondents and observations. For this reason, I presented some sensitive statements as direct speeches from original words exhausted by informants.

The purpose of doing this is to ease the understanding and also present the original message which I think to be useful in term of strength of information provided and truly reflects the reactions of informants during the interaction process without modification. This also increases authenticity<sup>20</sup> on the research results. Both the tangible and intangible products of this research are made understandable in this data presentation technique. For more details, refer the appendix 2.0 where I systematically used the pictorial language. I used the technique of presenting the qualitative data pictorially because I felt it may help the reader to understand the situation with help of tangible-supporting evidences.

### 3.11 Validity in the use of research data

De Vaus D. (De Vaus, 2002) argue the validity in social research as on the extent to which the indicators measure the different aspects of the concepts. I work in this research with concept of Participatory Forest Management as my tool to base my understanding on the role the local communities play in the management of forest concession projects in South Sudan. In this case, I tried to be practical in my initiative to implement it in a participatory way and as a collaborative work. As an Action Research project, I also intended to conduct my research work by working with people in order for us to have some realistic outcomes which can make it reasonable that the participatory approach I claimed (research guiding question 3) may bring improvements and successful management of forest concession projects.

Gall et al; (M. D. Gall, 2007) argued the consideration of validity as essential for the quality of the research in theoretical and practical context.

Validity in the interpretation of the data was ensured in this research project. This research was partially a collaborative work. The forest concession team with me used to analyse the primary data gathered from local communities for use in the development process of concession guidelines (appendix 3.2 and 3.2). I presented the field assessment reports to forest concession work group more in direct words in order for all the members in work group to put their analytical understanding and relate the experience with reality of conditions of concession projects that were the focus. I also shared my assessment reports with informants in which all the events and experiences were presented.

*Descriptive validity.* The pictorial presentation of the research data in this report eases the understanding of what had actually happened, achievements and short comings of the

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<sup>20</sup> **Authenticity**-truthfulness of origins, attributions, commitments, sincerity, devotion, and intention



concession projects as answer to research question 2. As a qualitative research, the analysis used in this research considered the relationship of participants' reactions for example the presentation of recommendations they suggest as possible options for concession work, what they really meant in the expressions when answered the questions during interviews or focus groups.

*Theoretical validity.* This research was developed on the basis of theoretical concepts for example the concept of participation as stipulated by the World Bank (Narayan, 1998), the concept of Participatory Forest Management (Kate Schreckenber, 2006), involvement of key stakeholders in forest management with central idea of local communities adjacent to forests (SAKANO, 2004) and Participatory Forest Management as tool for fair or democratic distribution of forest resources benefits (Wilmsen, 2005).

In relation to context of institutional framework with emphasis on forest resources governance in South Sudan, this research made use of the Post-conflict Environmental Assessment by United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP, 2007) and the Forest Policy document of South Sudan (Lomuro, 2007).

It also considered the concept of Action Research used in works of scholars for example, Generating change through research (Ward, 2007), Action Research for professional development (McNiff, 2011), Inquiry and Participation Search of a World Worthy of Human Aspiration (Bradbury, 2001) and Theory and practice of Action Research (McArdle, 2004) cited in Reason & Bradbury (2001) and Introduction to Action Research: Social Research for Social Change (Levin, 1998).

## 4. Research Results

This chapter presents the data gathered from the Equatoria Teak Company Limited, Blue Lakes Limited and Central Equatoria Teak Company. These were the three projects which I use as cases to understand the roles played by the local communities in the management of forest concession projects in South Sudan.

I presented the agreement process concession project, approaches used, how the local communities with government and the concessionaires interacted, what was agreed and what was implemented or not implemented and the outcomes of the project with consideration of recommendations of the host communities of each project based on their experience. The projects are as follows. The practical experience of this research project was generated from these forest concession projects.

### 4.1.1 The Case of Equatoria Teak Company Limited

The forest concession agreement process in Western Equatoria State undergone legal processes under the responsibility of the National Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in collaboration with state government of Western Equatoria State. The agreement involved the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in the Republic of South Sudan-the former Government of Southern Sudan (on one party), State government of Western Equatoria (principal partner), and Equatoria Teak Company Limited (on other party). The company was offered a contract for 32 years to operate.

The terms in brackets were used in that agreement document titled: Concession agreement between the Government of Southern Sudan and Equatoria Teak Company Limited (appendix 1.1). I selected from that agreement document some important articles which were actually the terms of agreement and relevant in the discussion of this concession project. The terms also served as reference in the discussion of other concession projects presented after this particular case.

All the discussions which resulted into acceptance of concessionaires to operate were done at highest authority of state government without consultation with local communities at negotiation to agreement stage of the project. An indicator which supports the evidence that the local communities were not involved at agreement stage as reflected on the names of stakeholders (appendix 1.1) is that the main signatories and witnesses of the document do not include either a representative of communities to State Legislative Assembly or local leaders such as Local Chiefs or Chairpersons of local community Associations (appendix 1.4).

However, the agreement document clearly spelled out the rights of local communities and their benefits in the project. Some articles in agreement document which showed the consideration of local communities are as follows: “Involvement of stakeholders including the private sectors and communities” (appendix 1.1b); employment of local staff (appendix 1.1d); a further social fund will be paid by the concessionaire into a community fund (appendix 1.3vi); and concessionaire have due regard to wishes of village communities living adjacent to the plantation and their customary dependence on the plantation with respect to forest products (appendix 1.3; 6.1.1).”

In addition to those rights given to local communities, the steps followed when the project was implemented at community level were inclusive where the local communities actively participated. Indicators were stakeholders meetings conducted at local community level which involved the representative of Nzara County to State Legislative Assembly, the county administration and the local chiefs with some of their village members in presence of Concessionaires.

The following were outcomes of their collaboration and some actions taken in the implementation of the project.

- The local community of Nzara County nominated their Member of Parliament to State Legislative Assembly as a Chairperson of their local Association to administer the concession implementation process
- The local people chose the establishment of Boreholes, construction of schools and local bridges within local area as compensation priorities
- Out of United States Dollar (US\$) One hundred thousand (\$ 100,000) agreed as social fund to community (appendix 1.3), seventy one thousand United States Dollar (US\$ 71, 000) was paid by the concessionaire directly to local community's Association account.
- In the construction process of Nzara secondary school which was proposed by the local community, there was gap to complete the construction because the company paid only UDS 71,000 while the construction of school and Boreholes was calculated within total amount of UDS100, 000. Therefore, the community sat down and agreed to top-up the remaining balance which was twenty nine thousand United States Dollar (US\$ 29, 000,-refer the above figure) from their constituency development fund<sup>21</sup>.

During the research data collection, I met and discussed with Nzara County administration, the local people including their representative in the parliament, the managing staff of the concession project and the Directorate of Forestry in state government who was my field supervisor in all the consultation meetings conducted with stakeholders.

According to experience I had through my interaction with those stakeholders which were also involved in the implementation process of this particular concession project, the concessionaires of this project implemented the promises they made during agreement. There was no case forwarded as a grievance from the local communities against the company against.

However, the company has some grievance directed to state government. During the agreement process between the Western Equatoria State government and Equatoria Teak Company Limited, the company was obliged to deposit some amount of money as grantee before implementation of the project. The following was agreement the term stated in the document signed during agreement for the concession project to operate.

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<sup>21</sup> **Constituency Development Fund** is the fund provided by parliament to develop the local community

“Government of Western Equatoria requires surety for the development project for an amount of United States Dollar (US\$) 300,000. This surety will be repaid to the concessionaire when the concessionaire has invested an amount of 200,000 into the Yambio County project” (appendix 1.2c); A royalty of US\$ 100 per cubic meter (\$100/m<sup>3</sup>) of sawn board exported (appendix 1.3ii).” Unfortunately, this amount was not refunded after the concessionaire fulfilled this terms of agreement.

Recently, the company stopped operating without clear information to local community. My consultation time (November, 2011) with Nzara community was the eleventh month after the company stopped working. According to information provided, but was not disclosed to me by the company staff, the issue of this surety (US\$ 200,000) may probably be one of the reasons that made the company to stop.

The Nzara County authority with the company’s managing staff started to approach the state government, but the issue is not resolved still. The County authority had this concern because the local community, especially the employees were on inquiry for what caused the break of the company’s operation. Actually the market which the company brought to this locality collapsed. That was worrying the local community.

Despite the fact that the agreement process went through the right Ministries, it was top-down approach. It lacked the community consultation before agreement and did not involve them at negotiation stage in which they might have contributed and get aware of their responsibilities in the implementation of the project. This shows that the process lacked the Participatory Forest Management approach from the beginning.

The Participatory Forest Management can be any kind of forestry development initiative and may have different names at different places given by the implementing agency (Kate Schreckenber, 2006). But it can be characterized by distinctive features such as involvement of stakeholders with share control over development initiative, in decision-making process, collaborative work with collective ideas through active participation at all stages of development project (Wilmsen, 2005).

However, the state Ministry of Agriculture, Environment Cooperatives in partnership with the company reversed the top down approach and actively involved local communities in the implementation of projects. In general, the project was successful and contributed in the local development of Nzara community. The photos of installed development facilities (appendix 2.2b & c) and the feedback from local people with support of my own observation were evidences.

#### **4.1.2 The Case of Blue Lakes Limited**

The forest concession agreement of Blue Lakes Limited with the Republic of South Sudan relatively followed the same procedures with Equatoria Teak Company at government level (sub-section 4.1.1). The company contracted the forest reserves of local areas called Yabongo and Asanza in Yambio, Western Equatoria State for 32 years. I have seen the agreement document, but I did not take a record of any statement or a single term in the document. The document was kept confidential and I was not allowed to make use of it by the Ministry of

Agriculture and Forestry though the research project was conducted in concession work and hosted by the Ministry itself.

However, the issue of agreement document did not restrict me from getting relevant data about this agreement. To me, it was less important to know about what was agreed and who signed the document by reading the paper than asking people about it and how the project was implemented. I proceeded with my research initiative to reach its target group (the local community). The experience I gained based on my interaction with local people, government officials and the company staff with support of my observation in the project sites helped me to learn more than I could learnt by seeing the agreement document.

According to information provided in the consultation meetings and in the interviews, the process at local community level, there were stakeholder forums conducted before implementation of the project. The collaboration process involved representatives from the Directorate of Forestry in Western Equatoria State Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Cooperatives, the local Chiefs, Yambio County authority, other representatives from villages, opinion leaders and the company staff.

The forums aimed to bring awareness and understanding among the stakeholders in the implementation of the concession project. One of the key issues those forums addressed was “to clear the air in order to avoid the negative perception from the local people that the forest is sold”, said informant. In those forums, the terms of agreements signed by the government and the concessionaires were made clear to the local communities. The management of the agreed funds and recruitment of company workers from the local community were also important agendas in the forums.

The local communities in the forums also presented their expectations from the project. The following were outcomes and steps taken due to the forums.

- The local communities forwarded their local development priorities to the company and government representatives. The priorities for Yabongo community were: Schools and Boreholes and Asanza community chose Primary Health Care facilities and establishment of Carpentry Unit.
- The local communities formed Forest Associations. They opened bank accounts with the names of those Associations.
- The agreement made by the government and concessionaires to pay an amount of hundred thousand United States Dollars (\$100,000) as compensation to each local community (Yabongo & Asanza) adjacent to contracted forest reserve was revisited and agreed by the local communities. The total amount was \$200,000 paid for the two communities as a compensation fund.
- There was also agreed royalty of one hundred and ten United States Dollars (\$110/m<sup>3</sup>) out of the \$ 200,000. One hundred United States Dollars (\$ 100) was for the state government and ten United States Dollars (\$10) was put a side as social fund for local communities. This amount (\$10) is the charge for every cubic meter of sawn board

exported (\$10/m<sup>3</sup>). This fund (\$10) was directly paid to local communities' Association accounts.

- The local communities were aware of their obligations and privileges. The forums also allowed the stakeholders to deliberate on responsibilities and rights of local people including the rights of entry to contracted plantation forests for controlled use of fuel wood, house construction materials, thatching grass and the use of other non-timber forest products.

The general understanding on this particular concession project had no negative impact experienced amongst the parties involved so far. Only that the local communities requested further discussions with technical support from the Directorate of Forestry in Western Equatoria State Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Cooperatives with company staff to see whether the amount (\$10) for every cubic meter of sawn board exported is fair when matched with the loss incurred due to this investment in the local forests.

This further discussions proposed by the local communities do not imply grievances against the company, but it is part of evaluation based on changes in the local market, assessment of the impact of the concession project on local environment and to see benefits it returned to the local community. The Company's managing staff during my interview with them also reported that it was in their plan to call stakeholders' forum to see how the interaction among them with the local communities progressed.

In summary, the Blue Lakes Limited contributed to the local development of Yabongo and Asanza communities in Yambio, Western Equatoria State. The success of this forest concession project was the result of participatory process done by Western Equatoria State Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Cooperatives and the concessionaires in collaboration with local communities adjacent to forest reserves contracted.

According to feedback form the local communities during our consultative meetings, there was peaceful-co-existence between the concessionaires and the local communities. I captured pictures of development facilities as evidences which support the information provided by informants. See the attachments of some development facilities established (Yabongo community-appendix 2.2e) and Asanza community-appendix 2.1d & 2.2f).

The Map below shows the two counties in which I conducted the research work. Something to notice is that it is an adopted Map which might have already been used by the Western Equatoria State government for different purposes. The use of the map in this report is to show the research areas. Please ignore all the boxes shown at left hand side and consider only the pointed locations with arrows.

### 4.1.3 The Case of Central Equatoria Teak Company

The most complicated forest concession project among the three forest concessions considered in this research project was contractual agreement between Central Equatoria Teak Company with the National Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in the Republic of South Sudan. The complexity of agreement process made this case very interesting to discuss as comparative data with other concession agreements discussed earlier. Like other cases discussed above, this company started the negotiation process at the central government level (National Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry). This company contracted Loka, Korobe and Kajiko North plantation reserves in Central Equatoria State for 32 years.

I was not allowed to access the agreement document, but I had some agreement terms and conditions from the people consulted at government and local community level. Unfortunately, I did not have any contact with concessionaires of this company because they withdrew at early stage of implementation of the project.

The National Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry during the agreement process of this concession project tried to consult the Central Equatoria State Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Animal Resources & Fisheries, but they did not agree on the issue. “The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Animal Resources and Fisheries in Central Equatoria has not accepted the company pending further consultation and the possible involvement of the State Legislative Assembly” (Lupai, 2009). There was very limited concrete data on steps taken when those Ministries at central government and state government negotiated the issue. The negotiation of agreement was the stage in which the process was complex for me to clearly understand what actually happened.

In my interaction with government staff who were witnesses during the agreement process, I prepared questionnaires to investigate how the process went. The respondents contributed some answers to question stated as: *Anything to add or comment based on your experience on the agreement and the implementation of the project?* I presented the contributors symbolically because of some ethical issues. The data was gathered only for research purpose, but this case touched the local or institutional politics. Therefore, I kept the names of participants confidential. The following were the answers contributed:

**Participant A.** “The Company is not interested to implement the contract for reasons known to them; or otherwise conserving the plantation on REDD+<sup>22</sup> programme. Something not exposed to government. There was some confusion among the elites of the communities within those plantations (local politics entered into this contract). Thus the contractors might have found it difficult to take off. There was also confusion between GoSS/MAF<sup>23</sup> and the state on ownership of plantations (forest policy not properly understood by state authorities).”

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<sup>22</sup> REDD+ is abbreviated as Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries.

<sup>23</sup> GoSS/MAF is abbreviated as Government of Southern Sudan Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry

**Participant B.** “The agreement was not on the concessions standard. It was like up-down sort of deal. The down people were first called to witness the signing event. While for implementation of the project, the agreements went right with involvement of the stakeholders and the community members.”

**Participant C.** “The agreement was made without a granted amount of money paid before signing the agreement and handover of the plantation to safeguard in case the company fails to perform as it has now happened where it is difficult to recover the damage made to the forests.”

As mentioned by respondent ‘A’, the National Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry classified those forest plantations under national projects, but the Central Equatoria State government had argument on this proposal. This misunderstanding later resulted in local politics where the local communities were influenced by some politicians who called the agreement as fake and not inclusive.

However, the National Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry proceeded with concessionaires to complete the contract and sent its staff for consultation with local communities when preparing for the implementation of the project. The local community stakeholder meetings finally came to acceptance of the agreement by the local authorities. The consultation with local communities as stated by respondent ‘B’ and with support of information during my consultative meetings with local communities which hosted this project was done after the National Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry already agreed with the concessionaires.

The handing over of the plantation reserves to the concessionaires was done at local community level in presence of the concessionaire, government officials from the National Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and the local people themselves. The local people witnessed and celebrated the handing over, but they were not signatory and do not even have the agreement document. The following were some agreement terms presented to me by respondents who were present during stakeholder meetings and handing over of the plantation reserves.

- Management of plantations in 32 years, but will be evaluated yearly
- Infrastructure/ Opening up access roads with in communities
- Establishment of Schools, Boreholes, Health Facilities and recruitment of company staff from local communities adjacent to contracted plantation reserves
- The company was supposed to deposit the amount of two hundred thousand United States Dollars (\$200,000) to government account before the handing over of the plantations. This is to serve as grantee in case of failure of the company on agreed terms, while might have caused some damages to the plantation forests
- A royalty of one hundred and fifty United States Dollars (\$150) was also agreed as social fund which was supposed to be used for local development. This \$150 is a charge against every cubic meter ( $\$150/m^3$ ) of sawn timber exported

At the implementation stage, after handing over the plantations to Central Equatoria Teak Company, the only thing came to effect was recruitment of local staff. “They pledged to



construct feeder roads, establish new plantations and many other thing but nothing was done” (DATA, 2012) The company tried to show up in the beginning by making some assessments in the sites and engaged some local community members to serve as their staff. However, the concessionaires disappeared without clear information to local people and no official letter written to withdraw the agreement from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. Consequently, the recruited staff also quitted out from work. Those staffs were not of course paid from the beginning.

Later on, the local communities turned to destructive action by illegally encroaching into plantations with irresponsible mood and called the forest reserves ‘foreigners property; forests sold to foreigners.’ Among the contracted plantation reserves (Loka, Korobe and Kajiko North), Korobe and Kajiko North were almost in the depletion stage by local people in illegal ways. But, the Loka forest reserve was under the control of Lainya County authority through the use of South Sudan Wildlife Forces to protect it from the local people. For more details of this case and other associated factors, see section chapter 5.

I planned to take observation in the plantation site, but I was not allowed to enter Korobe forest plantation. But, I conducted consultation with both Korobe and Pakula Bomas communities which the Korobe forest plantation is located. It was the time when South Sudan Army Forces/Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) controlled the plantation site by saying protecting it from illegal logging which was actually severe in this plantation forest

#### *4.1.3.1 The root causes of conflicts in Central Equatoria Teak Company concession project*

The root cause of conflicts in the agreement process was not centred at the local community level, but their actions spoke louder than political allegations against the agreement which was the cause of all the problems related to Central Equatoria Teak Company’ forest concession project. Based on information provided, the operations of Central Equatoria Teak Company’s forest concession project were hit by the following:

- Misunderstanding between the National Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and the Central Equatoria State Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Animal Resources & Fisheries at negotiation stage of the contract
- Local politics due to ownership of plantations
- Lack of standard guidelines followed and
- Probably the top down approach from the used by the National Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

There was allegation that the local people were negatively influenced by politicians who are members of the localities of the contracted forest reserves. The misunderstanding between National Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and state government of central Equatoria majorly contributed in complication of this concession project at local community level.

There were evidences that the National Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry did not properly agree with Central Equatoria State Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Animal Resources and Fisheries. “The GoSS Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry staff also chased away State employees from Loka Forest Reserve claiming it was a national project hence under the

GoSS. With inadequate consultation a company called Central Equatoria Teak Plantation was to manage Loka, Korobe and Kajiko North plantations. The main problem may be that there is poor consultation between the State and the GoSS Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry for clarification of issues” (Lupai, 2009).

In speaking to New Nations, the government official presented following conflicting statement which shows his blame to local communities and disagreement as the National Ministry’s stance on issue of ownership of those plantation reserves. “Decentralization and community ownership of land are the major causes of the destruction. The communities think the forest belongs to them; the state think the forest belongs to them; the counties think the forest belongs to them. So they utilize the forest even without the knowledge of rangers” (DATA, 2012).

In summary, the complexity of situation with Central Equatoria Teak Company began in the meantime of agreement stage. Currently, the misunderstanding due to ownership of those plantation forests led to illegal logging of Teak trees, either the government or local communities think to be safe from the cause of destruction of plantation forests. This perhaps may be solved if joint effort from the highest government authorities and the local authorities table this issue.

## 5. General Discussion

In this chapter, I generally discussed the experience acquired through this research project with use of qualitative methods as discussed and in reflective way of theories which are supportive to the results of this research project (chapter 2).

The chapter encompasses the general discussion of results of the three concession projects. The discussion started with comparative analysis of results which outlined the similarities and contrasting experiences I learnt from each concession project. Some impacts due to approaches used during agreements and implementation of those concession projects which influenced the outcomes of each concession project followed the analysed data.

Due to experience I had through interaction with the host communities of those concession projects and other participants from government institutions, I drew a diagram which I called 'forest stakeholders' relational model' and presented some approaches which may help in the collaboration of stakeholders through participatory and transparency process. The diagram with explanations I made may help in peaceful co-existence and successful implementation of forest concession projects by the government, the local communities and the forest concessionaires in the Republic of South Sudan.

In this chapter, I tried to pick some challenges which impacted on the outcomes of the concession projects. I categorized these challenges as institutional challenges and inter communal grievances. The institutional challenges included lack of commitment to implement the mandates of forest policies, lack of developed forest concession guidelines and inadequate monitoring of forest concession projects; and the inter communal grievances are the issues of local boundaries and challenges related to insecurities in the area.

I also presented some limitations which I realized through my experience while implementing this research project. Some challenges I personally encountered are also presented in this chapter. The achievements brought by this research initiative to me and other stakeholders especially to the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in the Republic of South Sudan are under this chapter. I discussed not only the achievements, but also presented the key stakeholders who made this research project successful to have such achievements.

### 5.1 Comparative analysis on impacts of role of local communities

The data generated from the above presented cases of forest concession projects brought comparative results which are supportive to objective of this research project. This comparative result can be referred to the first objective of this research project which is developing my understanding on the role of local communities in forest concession management. The role of local communities being negative or positive according to results of this research project helped me to understand how their absence or active participation can affect outcomes of a concession project.

The local communities in the Republic of South Sudan have rights to access natural resources according to South Sudan Interim Constitution of Southern Sudan (Development, 2005), rights to land and its resources-South Sudan Land Act (MLCD, 2009), right to participate in management of forests-Forest Policy Framework (Lomuro, 2007) and rights to benefit from forest revenues-Forest Revenue System (Forestry, 2009). It can also be understood in the agreement terms (appendix 1.1b) that the government spelled out the benefits and contributions of local communities in the implementation of concession projects. But the implementation of their active participation is arguable.

In this part, I tried to analyse the impacts (negative or positive) due to the role of local communities which affected the outcomes of the forest concession project. I called it a comparative because the implementation of those concession projects resulted in different outcomes which help me to see whether the role of local communities had influence in success or might have risked some achievements of the concession projects.

**Table 3-5 Comparative analysis on impacts of roles of local communities in concession projects**

| <b>A. Positive impact</b>  | <b>B. Negative impact</b>   |
|--|---|
| <p>The communities of Yabongo, Asanza and Nzara involved in the protection of forests; no illegal logging reported</p> <p>- The local communities recommended the Blue Lakes Limited and Equatoria Teak Company Limited concession projects positively to invest in their locality. The local people understood forest investment as opportunity development and even wish to have other forest concessionaires. All the ideas presented here are feedbacks from the local people who were participants in this research project</p> <p>-They transparently utilized the funds and fully implemented all the funded facilities, while the fund granted to government is currently an issue subject to negotiation to refund to the concessionaire after implementation of the project (appendix 1.2c).</p> | <p>- The local people themselves destroyed plantation forests of Korobe and Kajiko North (figure 15-5)</p> <p>-The local communities (3 Bomas I met) recommended termination and return of contracted plantations to government.</p> <p>-The local politics threatened the concessionaire of Central Equatoria Teak Company Limited to pull-out from agreement. There was allegations that it is the same company called ‘Central Equatoria Teak Company Limited’ which withdrew from Central Equatoria state due to this local politics created new name ‘Equatoria Teak Company Limited’ and operated in Western Equatoria state.</p> |

The explanation of the message in the table above is that the participation of local communities in the implementation of Blue Lakes Limited and Equatoria Teak Company Limited which positively impacted towards the achievements of the concession projects. My analysis does not focus only on the success of the projects in term of payment of the agreed

amount of money or construction of the development facilities promised, but also on the interaction of project stakeholders following the steps taken during the process of collaboration by the local communities and concessionaires which made it possible to implement the promised services and proposed activities. The local people once presented their expectations and agreed on obligations stood firm in their boundaries to support the peaceful operation of the companies.

As presented in column ‘A’, the local communities helped both the government and concessionaires by reducing the cost for protection of forests from illegal logging (USAID, 2007). This also created good atmosphere among stakeholders and brought hope for sustainable management of forest resources in those localities. The companies also gained confident for continuity in peaceful co-existence with local people.

In contrast, the experience presented in column ‘B’ is not a problem for current situation, but will be worse in the future condition of those plantations if no effective measure will be taken soon by the government. It could also be more difficult to reverse later if the local communities develop negative perception towards the future forest concession projects due to experience from this concession project in which they lost trust in term of their local development. The mistrust among the government, local communities and the concessionaires in those stakeholders is already built in the case of Central Equatoria Teak Company Limited.

The following is table which summarized informants’ key responses on the three forest concession projects discussed above.

CES-Central Equatoria State, CETC –Central Equatoria Teak Company, ETC- Equatoria Teak Company, WES-Western Equatoria State

**Table 4-4 Summarized Recommendations of local communities on forest concession projects**

| Contents  | CES                            | WES                |                        | Remarks  |
|---|--------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|--|
|   | Central Equatoria Teak Company | Blue Lakes Limited | Equatoria Teak Company |  |
| Involvement of local people at agreement stage      | No                             | No                 | No                     | Done by the government and concessionaires   |
| Involvement of local people at implementation stage | Yes                            | Yes                | Yes                    | Central Equatoria Teak company concession project was not implemented, but communities were involved at handover and signing stage of concession |
| Benefits to the host communities                    | Nothing                        | Yes                | Yes                    | Due to confusions on ownership of forest plantations which was fueled by the local politics, the   |

|  |   |  |  |   |
|--|---|--|--|---|
|  |   |  |  | concessionaires quitted from the site. Local communities were mobilized influenced by politicians against the concession project of CETC.   |
| Improvements in term of local development due to investment              | Nothing   | Yes                                      | Yes                                      | There is improvement: schools, primary health cares, boreholes, establishment of carpentry unit in Yambio and organization of social development fund committee are evidences in WES.   |
| Community recommendation on concession project                           | Negative  | positive                                 | positive                                 | Government interference was requested by local community. Participatory approaches may ease the process   |
| New initiatives taken  | SPLA/Wildlife Forces control over forest reserves | Community Forest Association established | Community Forest Association established | Armed Forces protection of forests will never help to achieve sustainable forestry. Local people need awareness to understand their role in conservation of local resources instead of being threatened from their local resources. |
| Encroachment in Teak plantations for illegal logging by the local people | Very severe                                       | No cases                                 | No cases                                 | Local people in Korobe and Kajiko North are the problem of their forest resources. These two plantation reserves are at depletion stage   |
| Current Status   | No evident for implementation                     | success                                  | success                                  | Equatoria Teak Company in Nzara county in WES stopped operation without justified reason, but wish to start soon  |
| Recommended options by informants  | Termination of contract                           | Continuity                               | Continuity                               | Local people were positive for continuity of ETC and Blue Lakes Limited in WES. But in CES, termination of contract with CETC dominated the final words by local people in every discussion we made.                                |

## 5.2 The impact of approaches used during forest concession agreements and implementations

A very important issue, but seems to be ignored in all the initial stages of those concession projects was involvement of local communities in decision-making during in the negotiation phase of contracts of forest concession projects. All the concession agreements at negotiation stage were done in absence of local communities. This made the local communities irresponsible when coming to messy steps like the destruction of plantation forests experienced in Korobe and Kajiko North in Central Equatoria State.

In Korobe and Kajiko North, the local communities were involved at implementation stage, but when the company failed to implement the project, they denied their acceptance of agreement during implementation stage and refer everything to negotiation phase with too much blame on government. That was the disadvantage of top-down approach which made the local communities passive<sup>24</sup> in decision-making and consequently unaccountable to think about the destruction they made on plantations.

To take care of rights of the local communities as stipulated in the Interim Constitution of Southern Sudan (Development, 2005) that the local communities have right to benefit from their local resources may not help practically, but involving them in decision-making process when there is need for use of these resources with active participation may be more beneficial (Sheona Shackleton, 2002).

With support of data gathered from informants and also from the accessed agreement document of Equatoria Teak Company Limited (sub-section 4.1.1), the approach used in agreement of three forest concession projects (Equatoria Teak Company Limited, Central Equatoria Teak Company and Blue Lakes Limited) was top-down. However, that was not the only reason which caused some negative outcomes experienced in some of those concession projects.

Other dynamics might have contributed in success or failure to meet the desired or projected outcomes of these projects. In order to understand the process and not just have the status of failed or success, the table 3-5 (Comparative analysis on impacts of roles of local communities in concession projects) presented some impacts which reflected the role played by the local communities at implementation stage which influenced the situation of those concession projects.

In my interview with managing staff of Blue Lakes Limited, it was reported that one of important issue which was emphasized during stakeholders' forum before implementing the

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<sup>24</sup> **Passive** in my context means accepting or allowing what happens or what others do, without active response or resistance

project was ‘to clear the air in order to avoid the negative perception from the local people that the forest is sold.’

In contrast, one of the key issues which led to negative impact on the case of Central Equatoria Teak Company was on the point of local community awareness because the local communities were complaining their absence during negotiation of the concession project and also called the contractual agreement as ‘forest sold to foreigners.’ This indicates that the local communities were not fully aware that the agreement was management-based contract which does not deny their customary rights and right to ownership of the forest land and use of other non-timber forest products. Therefore, to minimise such grievances, the agreement process needs to be done with transparency steps and active involvement of representatives from local communities, the government and the concessionaires altogether.

If the local communities were party in the negotiation process, they might have learnt some obligations which can make them responsible to take care in case of any dispute in implementation of the project. The local people in Pakula and Loka communities which are the host of Central Equatoria Teak Company according to their feedback in all the meetings we conducted put their blame to government that the government sold the forests.

### **5.3 Other participatory approaches for interactive collaboration of forest stakeholders**

The experience I acquired from local communities through this research project in reference to its first objective enabled me to develop a diagram (below) which represents various administrative units of forest stakeholders. I developed this mind-map model on the basis of vital roles played by the local people through different Headships.

During the discussions with local communities, there were some ideas about approaches suggested which the local people prefer for the development initiatives especially forest concession projects to run successfully within local communities. For this reason, I drew and named the diagram as Forest Stakeholders’ Relational Model (Figure 14-5). The model includes key forest stakeholders starting from the Central government which I represent with National MAF-Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry to local community level represented by Boma.

The purpose of Forest Stakeholders’ Relational Model is to contribute some possible approaches through which the forest concession or other forest development projects can be initiated or implemented in a participatory process that could start with appropriate method of consultation to key stakeholders at either government or local community level. I presented those administrative in accordance with their technical functions in the government system or local community level. However, some of acronyms in the diagram may not exist with the same abbreviations or may not exist with such exact names, but I presented them in a short form technique due to lack of space in the diagram. I drew the structure of the diagram with reflection on the key stakeholders I met during the data collection of this research work and those which were suggested by participants during our discussions to involve in the negotiation of forest concessions for the process to be inclusive.



The stakeholders I presented with acronyms in the diagram are as follows:

\*MAF-Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry

\*MPN-Member of Parliament in the National Legislative Assembly

\*SFS-State Forestry Sector \*MPS- Member of Parliament in State Legislative Assembly

\*CA-County Authority \*CFA- Community Forest Association

\*PA-Payam Administration \*B/C-Boma/Community

The direction of arrows shows the institution or administrative unit to which the initiative is heading to. The five (5) inward arrows in the diagram present the concessionaires/investors to approach relevant bodies when needs to invest in forest resources. A concessionaire may be foreigner or South Sudanese. They are just showing the approaches and not for the end of the process. The negotiation and agreement process still can comply with legal procedures in reference to the responsible institution or given administrative unit.

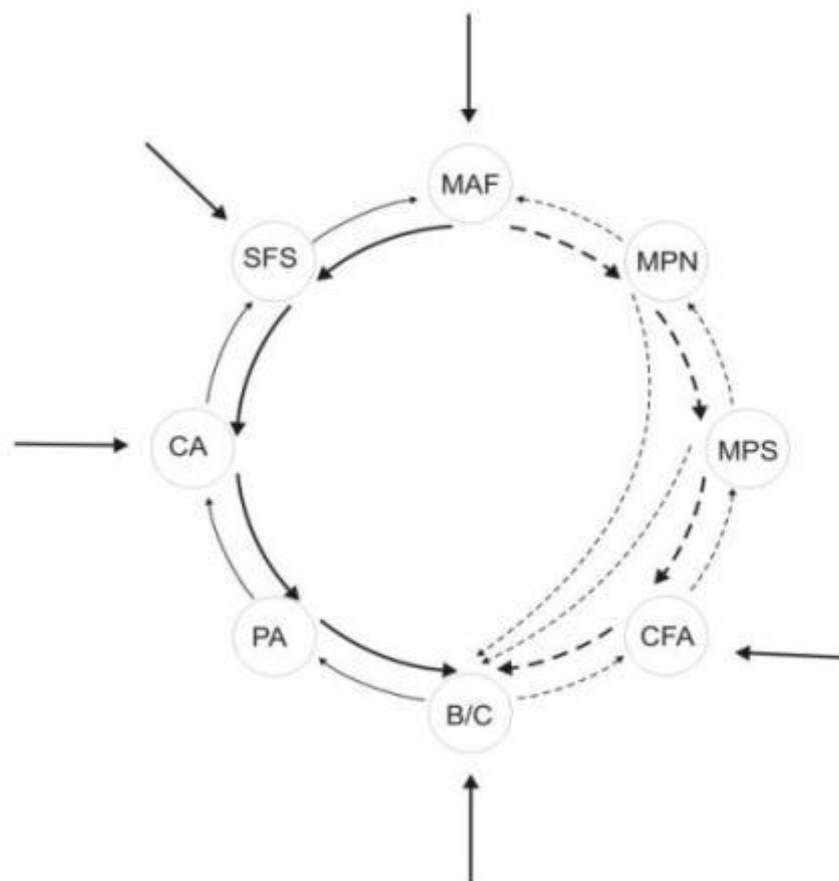


Figure 9-5 Forest Stakeholders' Relational Model

- > -Initiative from government to local community through institutions
- - - - -> -Initiative through politicians connecting the local people with MAF
- > -Bottom up approach from local community to government institutions
- - - - -> -Approaches through the direction of community political representatives

The descriptions of arrows used in diagram above as follows:

The inside and the thickest arrows from MAF-B/C show the strong relationship which follows legal framework of government institutions to local communities.

I characterized this relationship as strong chain because:

- There are professional capabilities with help of scientific knowledge and values which experts can contribute to support the work at implementation process. Foresters do not see only the economic aspect of the process, but also environmental and social implication of any kind of business on forest resources. Therefore, their technical support considers the sustainability issue.
- It is a duty of the Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry with support from state forestry sectors to supervise forest development programs
- It could be Legal procedure and more formal if forest concession projects are run with MAF consultations
- It follows the chain of command with respect of hierarchy of South Sudan government system
- It is relatively non-political approach

The upward arrows from B/C-MAF also follow the criteria of transparency consultation process, but a bottom up approach which may not be as strong as the initiative from central government to local communities. In absence of Participatory Forest Management system or bottom up approach, this approach may be ignored.

The broken lines show an approach with transparency process, but might have some shortcomings when politicized. Politicians verbally fight for welfare of the people, but perhaps have limited implementation of needs of local communities. For this reason the stronger part is MAF-through SFS-B/C compared to MAF through MPN-B/C direction because of the above mentioned reasons (in bullets).

In summary, the transparent process of implementing forest concession management may be successful if follows this chain of authorities. The requisition for concession contract may be directed to central government and start the negotiation. In this case the process starts from the national government-states government-county authority and ends in the specific Boma which the contracted forest reserve is located in its territory.

In some cases, the concessionaire may apply directly to the state government. This can simply be referred to the central government with clear procedures and in accordance with forest concession guidelines, while in other side involved the local communities in the process. It was clear to me that there is percentage given to central government, state government and the local communities (appendix 1.2 & 1.3). It is therefore, important for all the stakeholders to participate whether the process is top-down or bottom up approach. This could minimize the risks in implementation of the projects due to misunderstandings usually results in a complex situations at local community level.

### 5.3.1 Description of acronyms used in forest stakeholders' relational model

The National Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry is the highest body in the management of forest resources in the country with functions which include the development of forest policies and guidance, the national forest sector plans and ensures the proper use of forest resources (Lomuro, 2007). Simply, the National Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry is the principal institution serving as an umbrella to all forest stakeholders and managing agencies in South Sudan.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) is named differently at states level. But, it exists with the same name in Upper Nile State. For instance, it is the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Animal Resources and Fisheries in Central Equatoria State and the Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Cooperatives in Western Equatoria State. Due to these minor differences, I preferred to use State Forest Sector (SFS) to generalize it in the context of state level where the names vary. It could be the Ministry, commission or other body with responsibility to manage forest resources at state level.

At County and Payam level, the relationship with community is tightly closed. The officer in charge at county level is Assistant Commissioner for Forestry. Very interactive approach with help of knowledge on traditional set up is expected in this level.

I also felt like it may be wise idea to involve community representatives in the parliaments (when needed). The MPs are the eye witnesses for the community in the political context. I had good experience during the data collection from Nzara County where the Member of Parliament involved in the implementation of community responsibilities in the management of Equatoria Teak Company concession project in Western Equatoria State. It is from this experience why I presented the Community Forest Association (CFA) in alternative box instead of using the local chief as the chairperson of Community Forest Association (CFA).

Based on my experience in this research work, most of chairpersons of Community Forest Associations (CFA) are the Chiefs of local communities. However, there is no restriction in functional structure. For example the Nzara Community nominated their MP as Chairperson of their Forest Association. Another example was Loka community whose chairperson was not the local Chief. Therefore, the choice of the person to lead the forest development initiative depends on community proposal based on their own criteria.

## 5.4 Challenges influenced the outcomes of forest concession projects

### 5.4.1 Institutional Challenges

#### 5.4.1.1 Forest Policy Related Challenges

The Republic of South Sudan is the world's youngest nation and one among the poor countries. It became an independent country in July, 2011. Therefore, its being a new country brought a lot of challenges encountered in the management of forest resources. Some challenges such as insufficiency of secondary sources of information for example the lack of forest policies or public awareness on those policies as the country was just having independence were available. In fact, there were forest policies existing, but for the whole Sudan. Those policies may not apply in case of South Sudan after the independence (July, 2011) and if could still relevant, they may first undergo amendment process to bring them in the context and the need of South Sudanese.

The current situation of forest concessions in South Sudan can be referred back to Sudan's Post-conflict Environmental Assessment which stated "Lack of governance discourages legitimate investors" (UNEP, 2007, p. 213). It also concurred with "The Ministry is very new and weak, and there are virtually no laws, detailed policies, or operational plans governing the forest resources of Southern Sudan" (UNEP, 2007, p. 216).

Forest policy issue as challenge was presented in several studies for example the United Nations Environment Programme which emphasized lack of proper governance in forest resources management and low capacity to manage commercial timber industries (UNEP, 2007). Lack of secondary sources for study purposes as challenge facing researchers who used to access reports which discuss Sudan as a whole rather than about South Sudan was also an associated factor which shows that there were limited documentary sources about South Sudan independent from that of the whole Sudan (USAID, 2007).

I experienced while working with literatures published internationally that most of secondary sources focus on Sudan and not South Sudan separately. Therefore, I expected this as challenge in my research work before starting the implementation of this research project. In addition to the aim of this research project, such expectation was driving force for me to propose Participatory Forest Management in order for the new nation to have inclusive forest management system. It was my challenge to think about how to contribute in the building up of the nation with my professional capacity as initial point. It is of course the nationwide challenge being a new country emerging from 'no system to have a system.'

Forest Policy issue in this research was a challenge in a sense that it was drafted and being used by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry; however with was not publicly disseminated to all stakeholders of forest resources in the country. Under sub-section 4.1.3 above, the respondent symbolized with 'A' stated that the forest policy was not properly understood by state authorities which are also organs of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. The existence of forest policy in South Sudan and what it said about the local

communities was also questioned during my consultative meeting with Pakula Boma local community by local people. These are evidences that some forest stakeholders may act irresponsibly in the management of forest resources and will not be made accountable as they do not know about the policies available in the country.

#### *5.4.1.2 Lack of commitment to implement the Mandates of existing forest policies*

Some studies such as Forests and Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation (Tropenbos International, 2009) urged South Sudan government through the Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry to take local community development and develop partnership with line Ministries<sup>25</sup>. “The initial experiences in Southern Sudan suggest that the main priorities include training and extension for community-based and sustainable management and governance practices as well as the implementation and enforcement of forest laws and regulations based on public-community partnerships and the provision of adequate resources. The specific tasks required include the clear division of responsibilities between forest officials and local communities, and capacity-building and institutional development within higher education institutions to support field level extension” (Tropenbos International, 2009, p. 75).

I realized during my research work that there were already existing policy documents in South Sudan for example the Interim Constitution of Southern Sudan (Development, 2005), Management in Southern Sudan (Kwaje, 2009), Forest Revenue System (Forestry, 2009) and South Sudan Land Act (MLCD, 2009) which outlined the involvement and delivery of the benefits of local communities in local resources. There also exists the Forest Policy Framework (Lomuro, 2007). Some of listed documents are of course drafts and not endorsed by the South Sudan National Legislative Assembly. However, the problem generally lies in the implementation of the mandates of those policies.

In my analysis, I considered the following statements from informants and some secondary sources which helped me to identify the cause and other factors which were associated with complication of forest concession agreement of Central Equatoria Teak Company. “There was also confusion between Government of South Sudan Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry and the state government on ownership of plantations (forest policy not properly understood by state authorities”, Said informant (sub-section 4.1.3). “The main problem may be that there is poor consultation between the State and the GoSS Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry for clarification of issues” (Lupai, 2009).

The two statements above indicated the existence of local politics which was the cause of misunderstanding on Central Equatoria Teak Company Limited due what the forest policy said about the ownership of Korobe, Loka and Kajiko-North plantations. They also indicated that there was no awareness for key stakeholders about the division of roles and forest ownership related issues previously.

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<sup>25</sup> Line Ministries are the Ministries which have close functional roles among each other. In this case, it means those which have functional roles with the Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry in the Republic of South Sudan

During the consultative meeting with Pakula Boma local community as mentioned earlier, one among participants asked me about what the forest policy of the Republic of South Sudan says about the local communities: rights, benefits or responsibilities. Other participants also asked if there is existing forest concessions guidelines which may be followed in case of any agreement on forest resources in order to minimise the confusions experienced in Korobe and Kajiko-North forest plantations under contractual agreement with Central Equatoria Teak Company Limited. The participants tried to direct their point of questions to me. It was very challenging discussion to me because I do not have relevant answers for such questions while they expect feedback from me.

The only thing which helped me was that I had the Forest Policy Framework with me which stated that “Communities’ participation and benefit from forest management and protection is the key plank...the country will take early opportunity to learnt lessons from the great wealth of collaborative forest management experience in many countries promoting suitable models of community participation in forest management and protection. Communities will be encouraged to be major players in Afforestation efforts throughout the country” (Lomuro, 2007, p. 38).

With help of the above forest policy statements, I felt safe and we all learnt that the problem may lie on dissemination of the policy document to its stakeholders or it might be developed without public consultations if the stakeholders still have question of what the policy said about them. I also tried to contribute the point to participants that the country is new and we all need to begin by bringing together ideas was as we were discussing.

In contrast to the defined roles of local communities according to Forest Policy statements (Lomuro, 2007), none of the local communities of the contracted forest reserves have a concession agreement document signed by concessionaires and the government and they were not a signatory or witness who signed in the agreement document see appendix 1.4 as an example. This is also an indicator of the lack of transparency which also shows passiveness of local communities in decision-making process as they do not know whether the agreement terms were documented in a legal procedure or not.

I tried to request whether the local communities I consulted had the agreement document, but none of all the communities of the three concession projects accessed the agreement document. This reveals that the government is not serious on implementation of the mandates of the policy document.

#### *5.4.1.3 Lack of Forest Concession guidelines*

Despite the fact that the Ministry drafted the Forest Concession Management (Kwaje, 2009), it did not come to effect. There were no forest concession guidelines followed during the agreements of concession projects discussed in this research report and there were no other forest concession guidelines prepared by the Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry during the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA 2005-2011). This also contributed some impacts in

the terms of agreement and the implementation of the concession projects especially on some accountability and responsibility issues stated on agreement document appendix 1.2c.

It was acknowledged by forest concession work committee, States Directors of Forestry and Forest Concession Consultants during the workshop of *Valuation of a forest plantation in the concession context* (November 2-3, 2011) that there was no tool used as guide for forest concession agreements done so far in South Sudan. “The previous concessions agreements were done without guidance”, Said Participant.

In addition to the statement that there was ‘no guidance’, I also noticed the royalty<sup>26</sup> differences in three concession agreements projects assessed in this research work. The royalties estimated for each assessed concession projects varies. There are no differences in the surety agreed to be paid as grantee before implementation of the project in all agreements which was \$200,000 (appendix 1.2c), but the charge for every cubic meter of sawn board exported differs. It was estimated to be \$5/m<sup>3</sup> (appendix 1.3vi) for Equatoria Teak Company Limited, \$10/ m<sup>3</sup> for Blue Lakes Limited and \$50/m<sup>3</sup> for Central Equatoria Teak Company Limited.

I did not have the agreement document for Central Equatoria Teak Company concession project; it was kept confidential, but the figure was disclosed by interviewed government officials who witnessed the agreement process. The local community of Pakula, Loka and Korobe whom I consulted did not have clear information about this figure (\$50/m<sup>3</sup>). As long as the project was not implemented, they did not have experience about this issue, but they remember very well the promises including: Schools, Boreholes, Health Facilities and improvement of the infrastructure in their locality.

For the differences in royalties from concession projects, it would matter if the total area in hectare was used as criteria against surety<sup>27</sup> \$200,000 which was the same in all concession projects, but the royalties differ (appendix 1.2c). I brought this issue to focus because Equatoria Teak Company Limited contracted five (5) forest reserves, Blue Lakes Limited had two (2) forest reserves and Central Equatoria Teak Company Limited contracted three (3) forest reserves, while all have equivalent surety charge of \$200,000. It is arguable to think that the damage caused in these forests can affect the local environment at equivalent rate.

The experience I had through interaction with local communities of these forest concessions made it clear to me that there was no standard guideline followed during the process of concession agreements.

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<sup>26</sup> **Royalty** in accordance with forest concessions agreement documents is an amount of money charged against every cubic meter of sawn board for exportation. This is termed as social fund and it is made for local development

<sup>27</sup> **Surety** according to forest concessions agreement is amount of money paid by the concessionaire as grantee before implementation of the concession project. This meant to be a charge against any damage the project may cause, while failed to implement the terms of agreement.

#### *5.4.1.4 Inadequate monitoring of forest concession projects*

There were evidences to claim the lack of follow up by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. “The state government has little authority over the forests since they fall under the central government. The National Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry should have involved the states and the communities in the management of reserves” (DATA, 2012). In accordance with agreement terms, the Central Equatoria Teak Company (sub-section 4.1.3) was supposed to undergo review process every year. However, since handing over which was soon followed by the withdrawal of concessionaires, there was no monitoring done by the Ministry about the condition of forest plantations and the status of agreement.

The evidence was severe illegal logging in Korobe and Kajiko-North which took place in three years without any effective measures taken by the government through Central Equatoria state Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Animal Resources and Fisheries, or the National Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. “The company was to be reviewed every one year, but not done. No follow up since handing over in November 2009. The concessionaires came for rapid assessment and went back in November, 2010 without the local communities’ knowledge or government representatives coming with them”, Said informant.

Other related issue, but still at normal situation was about forest concession project of Equatoria Teak Company Limited (sub-section 4.1.1) in Nzara County, Western Equatoria State. The company stopped working for eleven months (until November, 2011) and there still no concern shown by either the National Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry or Western Equatoria state government. During the agreement, Western Equatoria state government was the principal partner and therefore, can still be the principal partner to handle the disputes as stipulated in agreement document (appendix 1.1).

The government at county level both in Western and Central Equatoria States tried to initiate some approaches, but still difficult for them to resolve the situations to reach the consensus among the key stakeholders of those concession projects. The county authorities were of course involved in the implementation of the projects, but they were not among the signatories (appendix 1.4).

In the case of Central Equatoria Teak Company, the Lainya county authority adopted the following provisions at county level to reduce the rate of deforestation of plantation forests. These were:

- Formulated and endorsed the law for arrest of illegal loggers in County administrative conferences
- ceased any vehicle carrying any illegally harvested timber
- Approached and deployed South Sudan Wildlife Forces to protect plantation forests from illegal loggers.

These steps minimized the severity of encroachment in plantation reserve of Loka in Lainya County. However, I argue the sustainability of this approach. It is clear that the functional



role of the Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism in relation to the Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry according to South Sudan Forest Policy Framework is to “assist in Forest Conservation” (Lomuro, 2007, p. 37). But if such role will be used as absolute protection of entry of local people to forests for search of non-timber forest products, it may cause another disaster from the local communities’ perception by being isolated from the resources of their localities.

Another contradictory measure taken for protection of Korobe forest plantation under contractual agreement of Central Equatoria Teak Company was control of the plantation by South Sudan Army Forces or Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA). I was lucky to get this discussion going on at Pakula Boma Head Quarter on December 02, 2011 when I was there for consultative meeting about the case of this forest concession agreement in the context of condition with in local community. I call it contradictory because the functions of Sudan People’s Liberation Army do not have any relation with forest protection. It would have been better if that was Forest Rangers, Wildlife Forces or South Sudan Police Services (SSPS).

There was severe illegal logging in the plantation site of Korobe forest reserve. Therefore, the Army Forces took control of the plantation area and nobody was allowed to enter. See the picture of timbers below. The picture (appendix 2.1k) presents timbers which were caught from illegal loggers whom some were members of the local community and their customer was Ugandan. They were under custody on December 02, 2011 at Pakula Boma Head Quarter.

If there was intensive monitoring of forest concession projects by the government, there would have been some solutions for the case of Central Equatoria Teak Company which its concessionaires did not implement a single term of agreement and left the forest plantations under huge destruction by local communities with negative perception of being the property of concessionaires or foreigners as they used to put it.

I was very suspicious and get some information from some individuals within local community that the Army Forces also might have involved in such illegal businesses, but pertain to protect the plantation. I doubt the sustainability of this approach. In my meeting with local community, they also made it clear that they were not in trust with either government or the concessionaire of Central Equatoria Teak Company anymore.

In the beginning of my discussion with local community of Pakula Boma, Yei County, the chief of Pakula Boma briefed me once he heard the agenda I had for us to discuss. This was in front of 21 community members in Boma Head Quarter. Follow the story below.

“In 2009 a team from central government came to us with concessionaires. They already agreed with central government. They told us they will provide agriculture machines, compensate the local community to establish schools, health centres, open access road and recruit staff from local people. They went but not came back. I called one of government

officials who came to us when handing over done, but nothing happened. We could support if they sent us few forest guards (rangers) to protect the plantation. Later, the local people started to illegally cut trees, saying the forest is sold to foreigners, they did not come back and no benefits for us; let us clear it. I have no power to stop them. Soldiers catch them in the forest. This Teak brought problem in our community. This agreement should be terminated and return the plantation to government”, Said Felix Sebit Yakobo.

In the case of Equatoria Teak Company Limited, the county authority of Nzara in Western Equatoria State also met the challenge to approach the state government to find out and may possibly resolve the reason which led to break of the company to operate, but never made it possible to effect still. The County authority has this concern because the local community, especially the employees were on inquiry for what caused the break of the company’s operations. Actually the market which the company brought to this locality collapsed. That was worrying the local community. The two examples above in two different companies with different concessionaires and in two different states indicate lack of monitoring.

To refer the purpose and the long term goal of this research project as presented in the first chapter, the participatory approach to the local communities to win their mind with purposeful forest development initiatives can pave the way forward to have a sustainable forestry in South Sudan. Undigested political games will worsen the situation and will never lead to any achievement by forest stakeholders, but will result into the expense of all. The politicized case of Central Equatoria Teak Company (sub-section 4.1.3) benefited none of its stakeholders (government, local communities or concessionaire), it rather caused misunderstandings which will be very complex to resolve while the forest plantations are being degraded.

Deep N. (Pandey, 2000) stated impressively that the concept of sustainable forest management requires removal of the community ill-being<sup>28</sup>. He also suggested the awareness of local communities being effective management of ecosystems and beneficial in societal, economic and ecological context. This shows the issue of community involvement in forest management as big concern in sustainable forest management committed societies.

Other studies such as Sudan’s Post-conflict Environmental Assessment (UNEP, 2007) and Southern Sudan Environmental Threats and Opportunities Assessment: Biodiversity and Tropical Forest Assessment (USAID, 2007) predicted some evidences on some forest related challenges which are being encountered currently in the management of forest resources in the country. Despite the fact that these studied dated back for more than three years, they presented the real situation being faced by forest stakeholders in South Sudan.

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<sup>28</sup> **Community ill-being** refers to lack of knowledge on how to manage forest resources sustainably while serving the needs of the society

## 5.4.2 Inter Communal grievances over forest resources

### 5.4.2.1 Geographical boundary as threat in future development of Korobe Forest Reserve

I was surprised when introduced into unexpected case within the local community during my consultative meeting with Korobe community under Kopera Payam in Lainya County, Central Equatoria state. What I did not expect was existence of communal conflict over ownership of Korobe plantation reserve. When I was planning my assessment trip to this community, I prepared questionnaires and shared with government officials who witnessed the situation from agreement to implementation stage of the concession project of Korobe forest reserve.

The purpose of questionnaire was to assess the condition of agreement or measures taken when the concessionaires failed to implement the project (appendix 4.). I was provided with more and detailed information by the participants, but none of them touched the issue of communal grievances. The cause of communal grievances was due to geographical location of Korobe Boma which felt under Lainya County, while the Korobe forest reserve remained in the geographical boundary of Pakula Boma in Yei County. Previously, the Korobe Boma was part of the forest reserve as the name shows, but the recent political arrangement in Central Equatoria State pulled out this community from forest reserve. However, the community is not comfortable with this arrangement.

My plan was initially to meet with local people in Korobe whose forest reserve was under contractual agreement with Central Equatoria Teak Company. On my way, I was heading to plantation site in which I thought the Korobe community is located. I and my Driver did not know exactly where the community is located, but we were directly moving to the plantation area. However, we were not allowed to reach the forest reserve by Army Forces that controlled Korobe plantation. In my note, I have only 'Korobe' as destination. Therefore, I bypassed Pakula Boma and proceed to Korobe Boma after my trip to plantation was blocked by Army Forces who did not allow us to enter plantation, but they directed us to where the community is located.

Something I did not know was that the ownership of Korobe forest reserve is under Pakula Boma in Yei County, not under Korobe Boma/community. I later learnt it from the local community that the Korobe Boma was relocated to Lainya County and this community according to geographical boundary proposed recently was out of ownership of Teak plantation termed by name 'Korobe'. In my discussion with Korobe Boma community on Central Equatoria Teak Company's concession project, this was another outstanding issue which requires government attention even though the Pakula community are also having grievances against Central Equatoria Teak Company for failure to timely implement project.

I presented below some direct statements which indicate their grievances against both the neighbouring community and the government. In my discussion with this community the local Chief briefed me about the situation related to this forest reserve before open discussion with the whole group. He stated the following:

“Korobe is ours, but now we are neglected from these forest resources. If you see, compare my Boma with other Bomas utilizing their resources. I am still thatching while others came to level of concrete buildings with Iron sheet roofing. My heart is burning. I wish if something demolish this Teak plantation and remains bare. This Teak will bring problem. I am not happy for relocation of my Boma away from the land of the Teak in which we grew up. Since 1987, during the war I was here, but where is our benefit now in the government of South Sudan? In my conclusion, my government forgets me! If I am given a chance to have even 50 Teak timbers, we would improve the development in our Boma. I would suggest the need for negotiation for our benefit in young Teak plantation growing now”, Munasi Milla Debu.

Another Youngman of Korobe Boma also expressed his grievances during the discussion and said, “21 years have gone, but we are still suffering in Korobe. We are here still dying mentally. We do not have even community centre, while my age-mates are there driving their cars which were bought with benefits generated from this Teak. Our Chief submitted requests up to County level for our complaints, but no response. We still thatch our houses with grass, while other communities benefiting from the Teak of Korobe have taken another step in their local development. This will bring another problem. See our Boma’s Head Quarter.”

The community has complaint still, to benefit from Korobe Teak plantation and requests further discussions in border of Pakula Boma (Yei County) and Korobe Boma-Kopera Payam (Lainya County). The only good thing is that they both fall under administration of Central Equatoria State, but if the administration of two counties will not take some action on this issue, it will be another problem between those communities.

The local community of Korobe Boma has issue beyond the case of concession agreement or implementation because they have question of both the ownership of forest land and benefit from the resources plantation. This is more complicated than the complaint of their neighbouring community (Pakula) which questioned only the failure of Central Equatoria Teak Company to implement the concession project.

In general, all the local communities of Central Equatoria Teak Company built negative perception towards its concession project. However, the case of Korobe is different from the rest. Pakula Boma, the neighbouring community of Korobe put their blame on government about the agreement and the company by claiming their absence in negotiation process while they were involved when handing over done. They acknowledged during our discussion that they were involved and even had some stakeholders meetings before handing over. But, in case of Korobe, the local community complaint their absence in stakeholders’ meetings during concession agreement and also the ownership of plantation from Pakula community. This makes it more complex and may probably result in conflict between the two communities later. This case in reference to statement above by the Chief of Korobe, ‘will bring problem’, I would think about inter communal clashes or severe illegal logging activities of the plantations if no consensus between the two communities.

#### **5.4.2.2 The impact of insecurity on accessibility of local development facilities**

There are many ways to describe insecurity situation in South Sudan at internal or external context. But, in this research project, I presented only the case of Lord Resistance Army (LRA) which impacted on the development brought to local communities in Western Equatoria state through services from their local forests. Western Equatoria State is one among the peaceful states in term of communal conflicts in the country. However, inhabitants have been suffering from insecurity created by Lords Resistant Army (LRA) attacks in some areas in the State. This external insecurity was the major constraint amongst other anti-development issues.

I experienced this during data collection when I visited a deserted Health Care Centre which was constructed with social fund as compensation to Asanza community by Blue Lakes Limited which contracted forest reserve of this community. The picture below was Naakiri Health Care centre which was established by Asanza Community in Western Equatoria State with community compensation fund from Blue Lakes Limited.

I experienced this during data collection when I visited a deserted Health Care Centre which was constructed with social fund as compensation to Asanza community by Blue Lakes Limited which contracted forest reserve of this community. (See picture below).



**Figure 10-5 Disserted development facilities due to insecurity in Yambio**

The issue of insecurity or any case which may lead to inaccessibility of development facilities needs consideration when planning the locations in which those facilities can be established. This is something to consider by local communities when planning, so that every development facility provided will be utilized. It may (in some cases) need consultations with local development planners.

#### **5.4.3 Some Limitations and Personally Encountered Challenges in the research process**

The research project was successful in term of achievement of its purpose, the required data and the collaboration of its stakeholders with me in the research process. Unfortunately, some shortcomings and challenges I met during the implementation process of this research work

made the work challenging for me and to some extent created gaps during data collection and data analysis process. They are as follows.

#### **5.4.3.1 Limitations**

As briefly introduced above, the research process underwent some shortcomings which did not of course lead to failure of the proposed project activities or the requirements of this research work to implement, but still I have seen gaps created by the following factors.

-Absence of contribution of Central Equatoria Teak Company concessionaires in provision of the required data about their forest concession project was one of the key factors which I think may cause some shortcomings or weaknesses in the data provided. The Central Equatoria Teak Company (sub-section 4.1.3) among the three forest concession projects I assessed in this research work was the problematic concession project. This project can otherwise be categorized as a failed if the status was to be given to each project.

In my consultation with government officials and the local communities which are the host of the Central Equatoria Teak Company, all the blames which led to failure of the project were put on the concessionaire for the reason that they withdrew without implementing the project. However, this may not be the only case; there would have provided (maybe) other relevant information which forced them from those localities. Their presence might have been a chance for me to get more information which was not presented by both the government officials and the local communities. I would like to refer the issue of local politics discussed under sub-section 4.1.3 as evidence for the concessionaires to quit out or other reason may available with them.

-Bureaucratic formalities in the government led me failed to access the Central Equatoria Teak Company and Blue Lakes Limited concession agreement. I requested the concession agreements of those two projects, but I was not allowed to use them despite the fact that I was doing my research work as part of the government project. The documents were kept confidential and not only for me, but also was not accessed by the local people who hosted those forest concession projects.

I learnt that the local communities did not access the agreement documents because it was raised up during my consultative meeting with Yabongo community (host of Blue Lakes Limited) in Western Equatoria State and again in Pakula Boma (host of Central Equatoria Teak Company) in Central Equatoria State.

I presented this issue as shortcoming because some terms of agreement presented in each case (sub-sections 4.1.2 and 4.1.3) may stand as rephrased statements and lack concrete reference legally documented as done for sub-section 4.1.1. Nevertheless, the statements were provided by informed participants whose some of them were witnesses of agreement process. Therefore, the information provided does not contradict with original data, it is relevant.

-Lack of visual records from Korobe forest plantation which I would have presented as concrete data such as pictures of degraded compartments or the general condition of the

plantation. I intended to take practical observation to capture the current forest stand after the severe illegal logging by the local people, but I was not allowed to enter the plantation area by Army Forces who controlled the Korobe forest reserve due to illegal logging. That complex situation of Korobe plantation forest reserves which involved the Army Forces restricted me from taking personal observations at the plantation site to have the real picture of the forest condition as I did for other development facilities and forest reserves assessed.

-No group logs produced. I was dealing with senior officials as participants in forest concession work who were not specifically working on my project, but they were mainly working for the whole government project in which my initiative was integrated. Therefore, the target for them was not only to develop my work. They rather put my initiative as a component of the whole project. There was no enough time and even not advisable for me to use them to be part in the development of logs on what was outcome of our discussions or the experiences after our sessions. I just take my note on all I learnt in our meetings. However, the minutes of our meetings were distributed after every meeting and therefore, I used them as substitutes for group logs because they present the outcomes of our discussions. The results of my assessment reports at local communities were part of agendas for discussions by the concession work group which includes me (appendix 3.1).

#### *5.4.3.2 Personally Encountered Challenges in the research process*

-Being unemployed in the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry was factor which contributed to the complexity of my initiative to be immediately accepted by the Ministry. It was also difficult for me to get relevant data when I started to distribute the questionnaire to the Ministry's staff for the first time. I was told that any information needed by an outsider whether for research or for any purpose needs authorization from senior management of the Ministry. No one contributed at all for the first time to work on the questionnaire I prepared. I confirmed this issue of confidentiality as reality when I distributed the questionnaire for the second time after integration of my initiative into concession work by the Ministry. Participants willingly contributed and did the work beyond my expectation.

-Changes occurred during the collaboration process were also my challenges. It seems to be easier after getting accepted by the Norwegian Forestry Group for research internship in their partnership with Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. But it happened later that the plans for concession work were not yet finalized. It therefore, took time for me to take off the data collection as there was no concrete project in which I attached my research with it.

However, I did not sit idly without option. I immediately shifted my initiative to Norwegian People's Aid to implement my research project through Land and Natural Resources Rights Projects under Civil Society Program. This was still challenging because I again edited my proposal in order to meet the goals of Land and Natural Resources Rights Projects. I was also still in consultation process with the Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry which was time consuming task.

-Language issue was my challenge during the data collection at local community level and particularly in Korobe and Pakula Boma where I did not have English to Arabic translator, while most of participants speak only Arabic and their local languages. In all the local

communities I visited, the local people use their local languages and the second language widely spoken is Juba Arabic<sup>29</sup>. My problem was not that it was Juba Arabic being spoken, but I am not fluent in either Classical Arabic or Juba Arabic. Therefore, it was very difficult for me to convey my message to people in meetings.

The translation (English to Arabic) of key issues I prepared to discuss with participants, especially the use of technical terms of forestry was difficult for me. I tried to get help from members to translate for me from English to Arabic in the meetings, but everyone said, “I am not good in English.” I know, some can speak English, but for some reasons they might have in their minds, they did not want to do it for me. The only thing I tried was to mix either of Arabic with English words when I find it hard to translate a single word in the discussion process. It is something I will take care for it in every research work I will do.

-Inadequate data on forest resources of South Sudan was my challenge. Getting relevant secondary sources to use specially those which focused on South Sudan Forests or particularly on forest concessions was difficult. There was insufficient secondary data for forest concessions in South Sudan. Inadequacy of secondary sources specifically on forest concessions management in South Sudan one of the challenges. This was also noticed in Southern Sudan Environmental Threats and Opportunities Assessment (USAID, 2007). Most of documents generalized the Sudan as a whole instead of South Sudan separately.

-Time factor was one of the major challenges I encountered and I very well would expect in every collaborative work. I did not at all implement my plans according to weeks I proposed and even months sometimes (refer reflections for more details in this particular challenge).

#### **5.5.4 Achievements as outcomes of this research project**

In reference to the purpose and the long-term goal of this initiative, there were some indicators during the research process showing the accomplishment of some improvements which were outcomes of this research project. The following are examples:

- The data I gathered in this research project impacted on the development of South Sudan forest concession work. In another word, the experience of local communities in existing forest concessions which was data generated through this research initiative was used as reference in the development process of forest concession guidelines & agreement templates by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in the Republic of South Sudan.
- The research answered my research claim to knowledge about the participation of local communities in forest concessions management in South Sudan. I had a claim to knowledge that the encouragement of participation of local communities in the management forest concession projects may be very low in South Sudan.
- The Participation of different stakeholders in the research process and collaborative work among them was achieved (See the stakeholders below).

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<sup>29</sup> **Juba Arabic** is an Arabic which relatively differs from the classical Arabic in term of pronunciation of some words. It was developed in greater Equatoria Region in South Sudan



- It initiated and created awareness to its stakeholders on importance of the Participatory Forest Management practice. The forest concession work group proposed some articles which emphasize active participation of local communities through consultation prior the agreement of any concession project. The following statement was one of drafted terms during the development of forest concession guidelines with support of this research data. “Communities need to be involved as early as possible in the concessions to ensure their support which will be critical to the successful implementation and operation of any concession undertaking” (appendix 3.2)

To restate the message in the first bullet above, this research work as initiative for innovative improvement in forest concessions management through the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry positively contributed in the development of South Sudan Forest Concession guidelines and agreement templates. The project was integrated into forest concession work with specific task for me to contribute the data on communities’ experiences in order for forest concession work group to consider in the process of developing guidelines. It was taken as socio-economic component of forest concession process.

This research project provided relevant data to me and the involved stakeholders to understand the role played by local communities adjacent to contracted forest reserves (being negative or positive) and why each assessed forest concession project gets status in the analysis; being successful or not. The assessment reports I prepared and submitted to forest concession work group created awareness to the government on local communities’ experiences in existing forest concessions. The local communities after every meeting I conducted with them have recommendations which I noticed and report to the forest concession work group for further discussion and consideration in guidelines document.

The research project was absorbed by the National Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry as part of its action project in partnership with Norwegian Forestry Group. It was collaborative work (See the stakeholders below).

The evidence of its stakeholders being aware can be referred to the minutes of concession work group meetings which reflect the community component in forest concession work (appendix 3.1).

#### **5.5.5 The role of key stakeholders participated in the research process**

The participation of different stakeholders in the research process as briefly present earlier significantly made this work successful. I felt, it may be less important to just acknowledge the vital role played by stakeholders than presenting what they contributed and how they did it. They were as follows.

##### ***5.5.5.1 The National Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry***

The National Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry as an umbrella for all the development agencies on forest resources of South Sudan played great role in this research work. It integrated this research project into forest concession work. The team of forest concession

work from the Directorate of forestry was the one which used my field work assessment results in the process of developing the forest concession guidelines & agreement templates.

This team was the focus group during data collection and helped me in analysis of field work primary data which we used to discuss and take the relevant information for use as an article in the guidelines document. I used in most cases the direct statements from local community participants and a subjective language in my reports I presented to concession work group. I purposely did this because I want the team to have the real expression of local people so that we all understand and put different analytical views then draw better conclusion on what to consider in the development of concession guidelines & agreement templates. The Ministry was the host institution of the research project and first user of its results.

All the workshops conducted with this team and the Norwegian Forestry Group-forest concession consultants, were under the supervision of this Ministry. Some of the Ministry's staff contributed in planning of research works for field data collection and in provision of relevant data based on their experiences on assessed forest concession projects. They participated as focus group, in filling of proposed research questionnaires and to some extent through conversations in their respective offices in the Ministry.

#### *5.5.5.2 The Central & Western Equatoria States Directorates of Forestry*

The Central Equatoria State Directorate of forestry involved only in contributing the data through interviews and answering the questionnaires. However, at county level, the Department of Forestry in Lainya assigned the Head of forest Nursery to supervise my visitations to local communities and Teak plantation reserves where the local informants were met. The Head of forest Nursery was also serving as part of the discussion group when we met with local informants. The Plantation management staff of Loka forest reserve also participated in the discussion about the case of Central Equatoria Teak Company concession project conducted at plantation site.

The Director of forestry in Western Equatoria State practically involved from the planning stage of my assessment work in Yambio and Nzara Counties. The planning of consultative meetings, observation of all the concession project sites and individual interviews was a shared work with him. He made network with key informants especially chiefs, chairpersons of Forest Associations, County Authorities and company staff through phone calls and made schedules to meet those key informants even before I arrived in Yambio. He also helped me in planning to meet some community members who were involved in discussions during the negotiation of forest concession projects at state government level to share their experiences gained during the process. His cooperation created a wider range of informants beyond my initial plan.

#### *5.5.5.3 The Norwegian Forestry Group*

The Norwegian Forestry Group (NFG) South Sudan Program staff and consultants were the first stakeholders in collaboration process whom I approached earlier during my planning to attach my research project in their forest management planning works in South Sudan. They

were the ones provided information about the priority areas for implementation in the year 2011 by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. The Norwegian Forestry Group South Sudan Program supports this Ministry both technically and financially on inventory, mapping of forest resources and concession work. The development of forest concession guidelines was Norwegian Forestry Group's task. It was implemented with their support to the Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry.

The field work financial expenses including accommodation, communication and transport costs to research sites in Western Equatoria state were facilitated by Norwegian Forestry Group (NFG). They took this responsibility because my initiative was part of the forest concession work; the data I was to collect in Western Equatoria state meant to be used for concession work. Technically, the consultants of forest concession supervised me in planning for data collection process. They contributed on proposed interview questions and kept suggesting on some elements to consider during discussions with local communities especially the key issues which the concession required. Their experiences in consultancy services in South Sudan contributed in the quality of report produced and submitted to South Sudan forest concession work group committee in December, 2011.

The diagram below was proposed by South Sudan forest Consultant Ronnie Cox after the acceptance and integration of this research initiative as one component among the three pillars for concession guidelines to address. He presented the diagram during the committee meeting after integration of my research project. This was one of remarkable images produced as outcome of this Participatory Forest Management initiative.

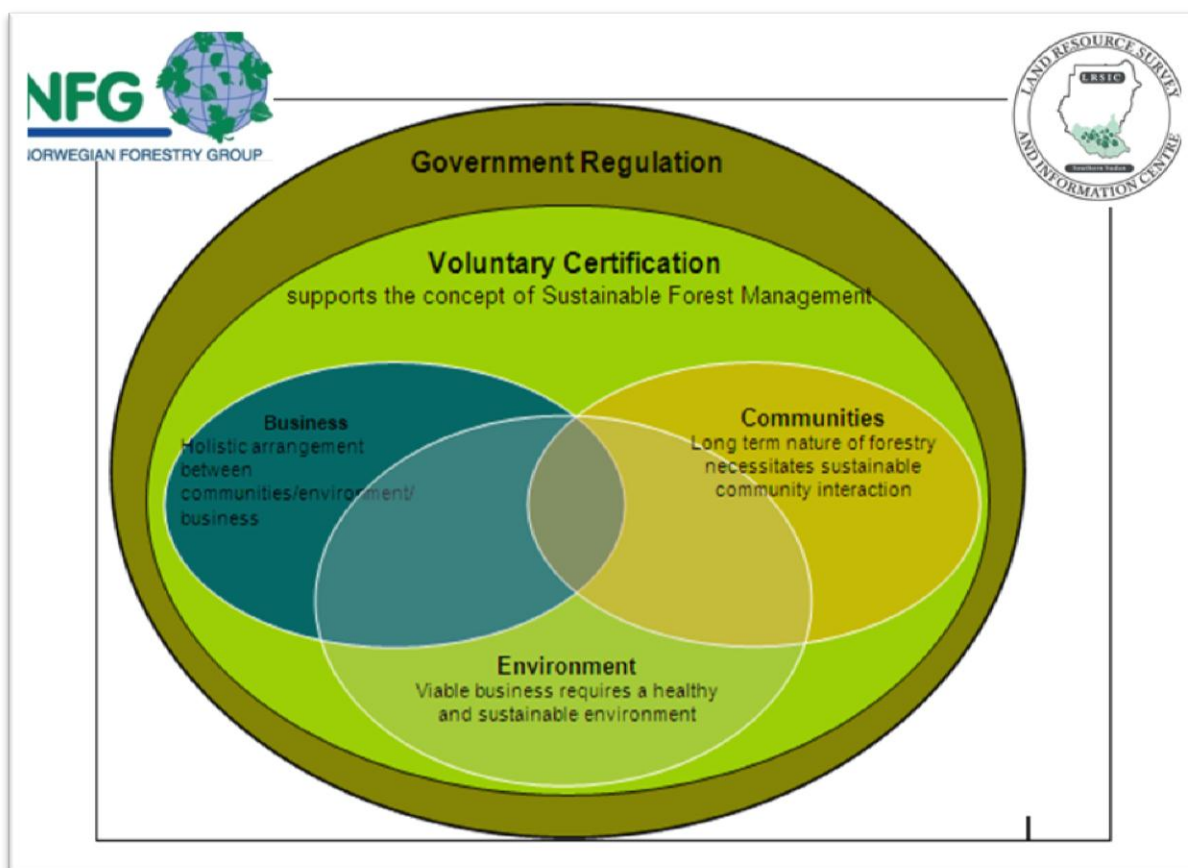


Figure 11-5 Components in South Sudan Forest Concession

The diagram above was adopted from Ronnie Cox, the consultant of forest concession in South Sudan who was member of focus group during the research process. He drew the three pillars' picture as a combination of issues to be addressed by forest concession guidelines and agreement templates. The three pillars are in the context of Social/community, economic and sustainable environment (appendix 3.2).

It was proposed after adding a Participatory Forest Management initiative as a component in the development of forest concession guidelines. This was one of the indicators for this focus group to own the initiative. It could therefore, be concluded in this step that the team adopted it and hopefully will be extended to other stakeholders through dissemination and application of the forest concession guidelines & agreement templates produced.

#### 5.5.5.4 The Norwegian People's Aid

Before acceptance of this research initiative by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) integrated it under the Land and Natural Resources Rights Project in Civil Society Development Program.

The Norwegian People's Aid throughout the research work provided office equipment and logistic services. They also offered UN-World Food Air services for flight to Western Equatoria State for field work. They also provided the Norwegian People's Aid vehicles for me to travel in short distances where forest concession projects are located. They made all the

office services available including working desk with internet, personal Computer (laptop) and the required office stationeries for the research work.

Another technical support was provision of hand books for field work. The secondary materials provided were the Law of Southern Sudan, the Land Act (2009) and Baseline survey of large-scale land investment in Southern Sudan. These materials served as study guides in my field work. Land Act (2009) guided me in term of knowledge about land laws and community rights as well as land classifications in accordance with Land Act. Baseline survey of large-scale land investment in Southern Sudan (Deng, 2011) was extraordinary helpful in identification of existing forest concession projects, their respective locations and experiences already drawn from them.

While working with Norwegian People's Aid, I conducted several discussions on my research proposal with Norwegian People's Aid research consultant and the staff of Land & Natural Resource Rights Project. It took some time for me to edit my first-draft proposal into concept of Land & Natural Resource Rights Project so that its results will be achievements of this project.

Their understanding on the concept of my research project initiative gave me opportunity to involve in the workshop on awareness creation through dissemination of South Sudan Land Act (2009). The issue of land ownership still unanswered by the Land Act (2009) because it was not yet heard at local community level which also affect the forest ownership issues. This touched the point of community awareness and participation to understand and work in collaboration with government with guidance of the Laws made by the government on land and forest related issues. The land ownership issue touches forest ownership agenda; this was the connection with my research work with objective of that workshop.

My participation in this workshop was to learn from participants on challenges related to land and land resources experienced so far at local communities. I also used that opportunity to give message on importance of participatory approach when land resources related conflicts arise. My research work as initiative for innovative improvement in management of forest resources in South Sudan inspired me to convey the message of Participatory Forest Management approach. Therefore, my involvement in this workshop was an example of methods through which I used to share this idea with different stakeholders during the research work. It served as the sensitization part of this research project.

The participants of the workshop were from selected states in South Sudan. They were Trainers of Trainees who will convey the same message of South Sudan Land Act (2009) in their states. In this workshop, I learnt that the local people did not hear about South Sudan Land Act (2009) instead of seeing the document. It was not publicly known even at states level. This contributed in the local land resources conflicts in many parts of the country. The local people need to have this policy document (See the picture below).



Figure 12-5 Collaborative work in Dissemination of South Sudan Land Act 2009

#### *5.5.5.6 The role of local people and the company staff*

My initial plan for this research work was to implement it through working with local people in their local forest development project so that I could practically try to initiate the idea of Participatory Forest Management in the project development process, but later changed to government project. However, the perspective of Participatory Forest Management as my working tool to achieve the long term goal of my research project which is sustainable forestry in South Sudan did not change. The role of local communities was still the main focus.

Despite the change of my research work into government project, the local communities had also contributed the primary data based on their experiences from interaction with concessionaires and the government in the implementation of forest concession projects. The information they contributed was the basis for success of this research project. Their experiences were made use by forest concession work group in the development of forest concession guidelines & agreement templates. To pin-point the impact of their contribution, the local Communities' role in concession process became one of the key components in forest concession document (appendix 3.1 & 3.2).

I learnt their readiness and hidden experiences of local communities which the government never had chance to utilize. They used to post sensitive questions which actually show their concern and doubt for sustainable forest management to happen in South Sudan without their involvement. I presented their brainstorming questions in the field work assessment reports to concession work group for more analysis and for their own reflection on what community really think about their relationship with forest concessionaires and the government. This was advantage for me to learn more because such questions when discussed during the concession work group meetings, they create dialogues among the policy-makers which may possibly be considered in the future by the Ministry through those who accessed them in the discussions we conducted.

One of steps which confirmed to me the interest of local communities for extension of this initiative was immediate action taken by the office of commissioner of Nzara County in Western Equatoria state. The county administration after our consultative meeting sent the message to Yambio FM-Radio on the same day; encouraging all stakeholders to stay informed about the initiative in all the localities in which forest concession projects existed. This was one supportive act I would not manage to do, but made possible by County administration to project stakeholders in Western Equatoria state.

To let many people, institutions and different entities which have stake in forest resources in South Sudan aware was my intention from initial point when chose the Participatory Forest Management as initiative through which I developed my understanding on the role of local people in forest concession management. Though some did not actively involved, they will have chance later.

## 6. Reflections, Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter is closing part of the work. It is more of summarized statements from the general experience I acquired in this research work. I presented some important statements which I restated and put analytical way of emphasizing the statements to show how they may be concern and how they were important issues in the research. There were a lot I learnt which I actually tried to present in each section of the research work, but here I presented only few to bring into attention once more.

I concluded this work with research guiding questions, problem statement, the purpose and my claim to knowledge in mind that helped me to understand what the research brought to me in term of knowledge as I expected and beyond, the innovative improvement in host institution and especially to the local communities which were the target in this research.

I tried to contribute some recommendations mainly to the Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry in the Republic of South Sudan, the local communities and generally for further researches which may contribute in the future improvement for better management of forest concession projects in the country.

### 6.1 Reflections on lessons learnt

All the lessons learnt with their time line were presented in the log which I produced as separate report from the Thesis. As mentioned above, the following were reflective statements I selected from the general experience in this research. I presented some in the tabulated form and add other relevant issues in the texts after the table which I think will be reminders about what I learnt in this research.

Table 5-6 Reflections on lessons learnt

| Key Lessons  | Reflections  |
|--|--|
| Influences of the role of local communities in forest concession projects                  | It was my experience in this research project that it may be cheap and simple to approach local people and accept the development initiative. However, in case the promises failed, local communities can be threat (4.1.3)  |
| Impact of steps/approaches used during agreement of concession projects                    | The National Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and the Central Equatoria state Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Animal Resources & Fisheries were not open to each other during agreement stages on the issue of ownership of plantation forests of Loka, Korobe and Kajiko-North. The process was centralized and made the local communities passive in decision making in the negotiation stage (appendix 1.1) There were lack of active involvement of forest stakeholders (Sheona Shackleton, 2002) |
| Participatory Forest Management can positively contribute in successful outcomes of forest | Active participation of local communities in the management of forest concession projects in which they were involved led to successful outcomes (4.1.1 and 4.1.2)   |



|   |  |
|---|--|
| development initiatives   |  |
| Action Research as an appropriate method in facilitating the Participatory Forest Management initiative | I do not think, I can explain what Action Research is, or ask somebody to tell me what it is, but I would like to do Action Research to know what it is. To me it was an appropriate method in facilitating the Participatory Forest Management initiative. The idea of Action Research enabled me to conduct my research work with thought of innovative improvement which led to the above achievements.   |
| Working with questionnaires.  | My lesson on the use of questionnaires was that I firstly proposed too many questions. I realized during the distribution of questionnaires, that some participants were scared to see 15 questions in three pages to fill. Some participants to say it was big work for them to do. What I did later was to merge and omit some questions which were relatively similar with other questions and managed to develop only one questionnaire sheet. I proposed the questions in form of agenda for discussion and introduce specific questions in the discussion process. |

*Lack of transparency was experienced at initial stages of concession projects.* To my understanding, if the plantations felt under the national government project could not mean centralization or confidentiality of information about the project. The concession project operates in the local communities under Central Equatoria state government. The involvement of local communities played greater role. The ignorance of participation of state and local communities was the cause of misunderstandings which resulted in politicization of the initiative rather than being perceived as development opportunity at local communities.

*Politics reached the local communities.* I realized during my consultative meeting with Pakula Boma community that the local people were aware for existence of local politics on Central Equatoria Teak Company. The participants in group did not accept taking the photographs. They did not of course tell me the reason of refusing it, but I think it was for confidentiality as the discussion was dominated by the criticism they put on the company for failure to implement the project and on the government due to lack of monitoring of concession projects.

*Some local communities were not aware of their role.* The community of Loka left everything to the Lainya county administration. Some community members were daily arrested due to their encroachment to contracted forest reserves to Central Equatoria Teak Company. The protection of forest reserves were under Wildlife forces authorized by office of County Commissioner. It was clear in this point that local people denied responsibility and are being against this particular concession project.

It was my lesson that the local communities of (Loka, Korobe and Pakula) which host the Central Equatoria Teak Company perceived the administrative role of government on forest resources as ownership. I urged local people not to forget that they have ownership right and the central role to minimize unsustainable use of Teak plantations being done currently. The local people did not understand that the loss of these resources will hinder their local development in the long run.

I realized that the local communities are likely positive to accept a development initiative, but can easily turn to destructive activities if their needs are not met. None of local communities reacted against introduced forest concession projects, but local communities which are the host of Central Equatoria Teak Company turned to be threat against the concessionaires and the central government, while they were the ones involved in illegal logging.

*Challenges ahead.* Government has a lot to run still. The development of sound forest concession guidelines and agreement templates may not be sufficient if no way for other forest stakeholders to access and use them in the future concession work. It will be similar situation which made the Pakula Boma community to state that they do not know about the existence of South Sudan Forest Policy Framework, while it already existed but was not known to them.

The consequence of the mistrust between the government and the local communities experienced in the case of Central Equatoria Company (sub-section 4.1.3) will be realized on the difficulties to bring back the positive attitude of those local communities towards concession works under the contractual agreement by the government. Other participatory approaches may help to handle this issue, but if this will take long, there will be no more commercial trees to talk about in Korobe and Kajiko North in Central Equatoria State.

*This research contributed.* There is likelihood that the initiative of Participatory Forest Management which was would work in South Sudan. The developed forest concession guidelines and agreement templates was inclusive in term of outlining the key stakeholders (government, local communities and concessionaires) which will collaborate in the next concession work. This indicated the improvements as outcome of this initiative with reflections based on experienced challenges due to ignorance of participation of local communities in negotiation of previous forest concession projects.

I learnt that the policy-makers found something useful about communities' involvement based on new action taken by emphasizing the local communities' participation in the developed forest concession guidelines (appendix 3.2). This was a proof that the policy-making body learnt new approach to make the next initiatives transparent to forest stakeholders. This is my point of departure to introduce participatory forest management approach with emphasis on roles of local communities in the forest concession projects as focus. "Before a collaborative forest management programme can be introduced, there is a need to clearly understand the nature of forest resource use by local communities, their socio-

economic characteristics and attitudes towards forest management practices” (J.Obua, 1998, p. 113) .

Throughout my work, I had some criteria which guided me in evaluation of what I did against the questions I put forward. They include: how the collaboration process went among concession stakeholders during agreement, the phase in which Local communities participated (negotiation or implementation), community needs met or not (indicators: improvements in local development due to concession projects), what implemented or not implemented and the local communities’ recommendations. I also tried to understand the local community-government-concessionaires’ interaction (employment, protection of local forests- evidences for encroachment in illegal logging) and the impact on forest concession projects due to measures taken by the local communities.

## 6.2 Conclusion

This research project as presented in the introductory part aims at understanding the role of local communities in the management of forest concession projects. It questioned how their role could influence the outcomes and whether or not the practice of Participatory Forest Management may help in the improvement and bring sustainability in those concession projects. In other words, what this research work tried to initiate was collaborative work among the government, the local communities and forest concessionaires in the management of forest businesses inclusively and sustainably.

The qualitative research methods and collaborative approaches I used in this research enabled me to understand how the role of local communities impacted on the management of forest concession projects both positively and negatively which was actually influenced by factors and mainly the top down approaches from the government with little concern on active participation of local communities in the management of forest resources in the country. Other key issue was the ownership of forest resources.

The theories of Participatory Forest Management and Action Research brought insight and strengthened my argument with practical experiences on how the participation of stakeholders lead to successful achievements and better life-learning at work when innovative improvement is a concern.

The research produced a comparative data which was highly influenced by the procedures followed during the agreements and implementation of forest concession projects. The data was comparative because the role of local people in different communities with different forest concession projects contributed in the success of projects in which they were involved before implementation stage. However, the local people were the threat to concessionaires who did not meet their interests and who did not follow the formal stakeholder consultations with local communities before handing over the plantation reserves they contracted.

The role of local communities influenced the outcomes of forest concession projects in South Sudan. The participation of local people in the management of forest concession projects which was implemented with their support resulted in successful operation, but there were negative outcomes on the concession projects which did not meet the expectations of the

communities in which the companies operate. It became interesting for me to discuss with reflection on the issue of participation of stakeholders which was the claim of this research project. It was interesting because the negative outcomes encountered was due to lack of active involvement of key stakeholders who claimed to be partners in the decision-making process for example, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Animal Resources and Fisheries and the local communities who were involved after the concession project of Central Equatoria Teak Company was accepted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

The collaborative and participatory research approaches I used in this research project with emphasis on how the management of forest concession projects was done in South Sudan enabled me to identify the causes of Misunderstanding among the National Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, and the Central Equatoria State Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Animal Resources & Fisheries, the concessionaires and the local people which hosted the Central Equatoria Teak Company. As discussed in chapter 4 sub-section 4.1.3, the root cause of misunderstanding was centred on the ownership of forest plantations which was not made clear to forest stakeholders in Central Equatoria State and the local communities.

The forest concession agreement with Central Equatoria Teak Company in Central Equatoria State was the only problematic forest concession project among the three projects I assessed due to misunderstandings on the ownership of the plantation reserves between the Central government and the state government. The forest reserves under this contractual agreement were in severe illegal logging and huge destruction by local communities.

Besides ownership issue and inadequate consultation from the initial stage of this concession project, the local politics worsen the situation for the projects to be implemented. As the sequence of the local politics, the negative perception of the local people on the project that ‘the forest was sold to foreigners’ which was associated with inadequate monitoring of the agreement by the central government made the situation complex.

I experienced a contrasting situation from concession projects for example the case of Blue Lakes Limited and Equatoria Teak Company Limited in Western Equatoria State. In these forest concession projects, the state government in collaboration with concessionaires reversed the top down approach used during negotiation stage by conducting stakeholders’ forums before implementation of the projects. The forums were inclusive which brought together the local communities, government forest sector in the state and the concessionaires before the concessionaires accessed the contracted plantations. This paved the way forward and the companies operated with full support of the local communities. Therefore, these were evidences which showed that the active participation of local communities in forest concessions management may lead to sustainability of the projects in term of cooperation from the local people.

The process and the outcomes of those concession projects, with support of agreement document I accessed revealed that all the forest concessionaires were granted leases without the involvement of local communities at negotiation stage, but they were involved in the

implementations of the projects. It was also clear that the three agreements were made without the use of standard guidelines followed; there was no document produced by the central government in the interim period of South Sudan (2005-2011).

The South Sudan's forest policy documents stated the participation of local communities and their rights to benefit from the forest resources, but there are indicators that the local communities were passive in decision-making process in the management of concession projects. One of the indicators was the top-down approach which dominated the steps taken during the negotiation process of forest concessions. This was also an indicator of the lack of some Participatory Forest Management approaches in South Sudan which could involve all the forest stakeholders from decision-making process to implementation of concession projects.

### **6.3 Recommendations**

-Further researches are needed to back up the results of this research project. There might be other aspects which this research might have not covered and may be relevant in relation to the current condition in South Sudan forest concessions. It is obvious that situations change; there may also be some improvements soon later which will challenge the experiences presented in this report.

-It would be wise idea for the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry to timely disseminate the developed Forest concession Guidelines & agreement templates to all stakeholders in order to minimise the occurrence of disputes on forest resources and ensure sustainably operation of forest companies at the local community level. The Ministry needs Participatory Forest Management or other bottom up approaches if wishes to achieve sustainable forestry in the country and gain support of forest stakeholders at states and local community levels.

-The National Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry needs to aware forest stakeholders about forest policies, forest ownership issues, and the sustainable management strategies the Ministry developed. This will help the Ministry to have strong network with local communities to be supportive in the development forestry in the country. This could be done through consultation with local communities to ensure the participatory approach in forest policy-making process through organization of local forest management groups, individuals owning private woodlots, government institutions and other partners who have stake in forests in South Sudan. It would be wise idea to reverse the situation from top-down approach experienced to be the cause of conflicts in some forest concession projects previously.

-The National Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry needs to peacefully resolve the grievance of Central Equatoria State Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Animal Resources and Fisheries on Central Equatoria Teak Company which its concessionaires escaped for fear of local politics due to misunderstandings between the two Ministries, thus contributed in the

complication of the situation at local community level. I would urge the presence of local community representatives when the two Ministries would try to sort-out this issue.

-The commercial forest reserves under the territory of Central Equatoria State need to have timber processing company or concession projects which can engage the community adjacent to those forests in the management of resources with some supervision of active timber company. The local communities can learn through development initiatives and may change the perceptions that concession agreements may mean selling of forest lands with its resources. It could also create jobs for local people and create local markets with minimal costs. Dependency only on foreign companies which aim at exportation of raw timber for manufacturing outside the country will cost high and associated with a lot of complications as experienced in this research work.

-The inadequacy of secondary sources in South Sudan for use in researches has been one of the challenges in this research work which was also recommended in other assessment documents. Therefore, I would urge the establishment of research centre or institute in the Country which may invite both the local and international researchers to contribute in publications through it and may help the domestic researchers to access the required literatures.

-I suggest Western Equatoria State Government to turn and cooperate with Nzara county authority to resolve the issue of Equatoria Teak Company which stopped working for eleven months without clear information to the county authority

-I urged the National Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry in collaboration with states Directorates of Forestry to take serious measure in monitoring of forest concession projects in order to reduce the challenges experienced during the last six years (2005-2011)

-I would like to remind the forest stakeholders in the Republic of South Sudan with secondary statement which has relevant message in the context of this research project as the last recommendation. “Economic drivers will ensure that an export timber industry of some sort will evolve rapidly in Southern Sudan. What is at stake is the environmental sustainability of this industry, and how much benefit flows through to local populations. Political will and rapid action from GoSS, as well as support from the international community, are urgently needed” (USAID, 2007, p. 14).

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## Appendices

### 1.0 Samples of Concession Agreement document

#### Appendix 13-1.1 Concession key stakeholders

| Concession Agreement<br>Government of South Sudan and Equatoria Teak Company Limited |  |
|--|--|
| <b>1. CONCESSION AGREEMENT IS</b>  |  |
|  | <b>Between</b>   |
|  | <b>THE GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN EQUATORIA STATE, MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT<br/>(AS PRINCIPAL PARTNER)</b>  |
|  | <b>AND</b>   |
|  | <b>THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTHERN SUDAN (MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY),</b> represented by the Minister hereinafter referred to as <b>"the Government"</b> ;<br><b>all jointly of the one part,</b>  |
|  | <b>AND</b>   |
|  | <b>EQUATORIA TEAK COMPANY LIMITED</b> of Western Equatoria State Yambio, the Company duly organized and incorporated in accordance with laws of NEW SUDAN. The Company is represented by CDC duly authorized by the Company with authorization hereinafter referred to as <b>"the Concessionaire"</b> of the other part, |
|  | Whereas;   |
|  | a. This agreement promotes the development of a forest sector in South Sudan on a sustainable basis for the benefit of present and future generations of South Sudan.  |
|  | b. The agreement envisages the involvement of stakeholders, including the private sector and communities, in the sustainable management of forest resources, and the maximisation and quotable sharing of economic returns generated from the management of these natural resources.                                     |
|  | c. That all the concessions will be managed in accordance and compliance to the laws of South Sudan.   |
|  | d. That the concessionaire expresses willingness to exercise the grant of the concession in accordance with the terms and conditions agreed.   |

Concession Agreement  
Government of South Sudan and Equatoria Teak Company Limited

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- 2.4.1** The Concessionaire understands and agrees that this Agreement and grant is by license and not lease, confers only permission to occupy and use the Plantation in accordance with the terms and conditions hereinafter specified without granting or reserving to the Concessionaire any interest or estate therein; the expenditure of capital and or labour in the course of use and occupancy hereunder shall not confer any interest or estate in the Plantation by virtue of the said use, occupancy and or expenditure of monies thereon; and it is the intention of the Parties to limit the right of use granted herein to the use of the concessionaire, revocable on the terms of this agreement and non-assignable privilege of use of the premises for the concession granted herein.
- 2.4.2** The Concessionaire hereby acknowledges the title of the *Government* in and to the Plantation, the improvements existing thereon and the Biodiversity on the Commencement Date and covenants and agrees never to assail, contest and or resist the said title or do anything that could negatively impact on the Biodiversity.
- 2.5 Handover of the Plantation**
- (a) The Government hereby undertakes to handover to the Concessionaire physical possession of the Plantation free from Encumbrances on the Commencement Date together with all the improvements thereon for the purposes of management and development thereof. The Concessionaire shall, on the Commencement Date, be deemed to have acknowledged personal inspection of the Plantation and evaluation of the forest products thereon and shall thereafter be disqualified from making any demands upon the Government for any deficiencies whatsoever. Improvements and assets forming part of this plantation lease are noted in Annexure B.
- (b) The Government hereby confirms that upon the Plantation being handed over pursuant to the preceding sub-Section (a) the Concessionaire shall have the exclusive right to enter upon, occupy and use the Plantation and make, at its costs, charges and expenses, such developments and improvements in the Plantation for the better management and development of the Plantation, subject to and in accordance with the provisions of this Agreement.
- (c) The Government of West Equatoria State requires surety for the development of the project for the concessionaire for an amount of United State Dollars (US\$) 300,000. This surety will be repaid to the concessionaire when the concessionaire has invested an amount of US\$ 2,000,000 into the Yambio County Project. The surety will be transferred to an appropriate government account within 45 days from the date of signing this agreement.

**5. CONSIDERATION**

**5.1 Levies and Royalties**

In consideration for the concession granted through this Agreement the Concessionaire will regularly pay royalties on the following terms:

- (i) Selling of forestry produce which shall be based on volume of whole standing trees or merchantable volume considering clause (ii) of his section.
- (ii) A royalty of USD\$ 100 per cubic meter (m<sup>3</sup>) of sawn board exported. This royalty value will be reviewed and if necessary re-negotiated every two years using as reference points the international sales price development as achieved by the Concessionaire and the production cost development of the Concessionaire as a base for negotiation.
- (iii) The royalty payment as defined in 5.1 (i) above will be paid as follows;
  - a. Eighty percent (80%) to Western Equatoria State Ministry of Agriculture.
  - b. Twenty percent (20%) to Yambio County Local Government.
- (iv) Customs and clearance duties will be payable at the rate of ten percent (10%) of the royalty value (as defined in clause 5.1 (i) above) of every cubic meter (m<sup>3</sup>) of timber being exported. This sum will be paid as Custom Clearance to Customs Office in Yambio, State Headquarters.
- (v) The concessionaire will pay an amount of US\$ 100,000 (one hundred thousand US\$) into a social fund account. The money will be spend on community development projects as will be determined with stake holding communities at the second stakeholders meeting not later than 6 months after the signing of this agreement.
- (vi) A further social fund contribution will be paid by the Concessionaire into a community fund at a rate of US\$ 5 per cubic meter (m<sup>3</sup>) of sawn board exported.

**5. COMMUNITY AND THIRD PARTY RIGHTS.**

**5.1 Village Community Rights**

**5.1.1** Without prejudice to the provisions of Section 7 of this Agreement, the Concessionaire shall, as far as may be reasonably practicable, have due regard to the wishes of the Village Communities living adjacent to the Plantation and their customary dependence on the Plantation with respect to forest products (including controlled access to fuel wood, house construction material, thatching grass and non timber forests products) and employment, and shall avoid any action which might tend to prejudice good relations between the said Village Communities and the Concessionaire or Government.

**5.1.2** For the better performance of the Concessionaire's obligation under section 6.1.1, the Concessionaire shall prepare and submit to the Government for approval within a period of six (6) months, as an Addendum to the Forest Management Plan, the Concessionaire's proposals covering social responsibility.

Appendix 16-1.4 Signatories of Equatoria Teak Company Limited Concession Agreement

| Concession Agreement<br>Government of South Sudan and Equatoria Teak Company Limited  |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Signature, attached as P1</b>  |   |
| In witnessed hereof the parties to this agreement have hereunto affixed their respective signatures at Juba, Southern Sudan on .....day of..... 2006 in the presence of the witnesses as hereunder: |   |
| <b>The Government</b><br>(i) Minister for Finance, Trade<br>And Investment Western Equatoria State<br>Government<br>Signature: _____<br>Name: _____<br>Title: _____                                 | <b>Concessionaire</b><br>(i) Equatoria Teak Company Limited<br><br>Signature: _____<br>Name: Peter Skov<br>Title: Managing Director |
| (ii) Minister for Agriculture, Environment<br>and Rural Development,<br>Western Equatoria State Government<br>Signature: _____<br>Name: _____<br>Title: _____                                       | (ii) Signature: _____<br>Name: Chris Bekker<br>Title: Director<br>Signature: _____  |
| <b>Witnesses</b>  |   |
| Signature: _____<br>Name: Col. H.E.Patrick Zamoi<br>Title: Governor Western Equatoria State   | Signature: _____<br>Name: Hon. Lawrance Korbandy<br>Title: Advocate   |

Appendix 17-1.5 Plantation Reserves contracted by Equatoria Teak Company Limited

**2.2 Description of Plantation and Concession Option**

The Plantation is comprised of the Forest Reserves in the and including the following estimated forest areas;

|                              |                       |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Yabua forest reserve      | 2,083                 |
| 2. Nangodi forest reserve    | 2,513                 |
| 3. Mbarizanga forest reserve | 3,750                 |
| 4. Magaba forest reserve     | 3,825                 |
| 5. Ringasi forest reserve    | 6,469                 |
| <b>Total area</b>            | <b>18640 hectares</b> |

## 2.0 Pictorial illustration of research data

### Appendix 18-2.1 Comparative presentation of data through pictures



a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

The *Yabongo forest* in which those *young men (a)* socialize provided the *timber (b)* for the Blue Lakes Limited. The social fund for the local community enabled them to establish the *Naakiri Health Care Centre (c)*, *Carpentry Unit (d)*, *Boreholes (e)* and other services. The fund for all these services was provided by Blue Lakes Limited which contracted Yabongo and Asanza Forest Reserves in Yambio County, Western Equatoria State.



f.

g.

h.

i.

The Equatoria Teak *Company (f)* (symbolized with sawmill), which contracted 5 Forest Reserves managed to process these *sawn board (g)* for exportation while compensated the local community with services which included the fund for construction of *Nzara Secondary School (h & i)* in Nzara County Western Equatoria State.



j.

k.

l.

m.

The Department of Forestry in Lainya County, Central Equatoria State tries its best to establish *Tree Nursery (j)* in every season of the year. However, the forest concession

agreement signed by the government of Southern Sudan Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry with Central Equatoria Teak Company to manage Loka, Korobe and Kajiko North had never come to effect in term of implementation by concessionaires. The concessionaire withdrew sometimes after agreement without notice to either the government or the local communities.

This resulted in *illegal logging* in *Korobe* Forest reserve (k) with severe destruction of the plantation forest by local people. The *Loka Forest reserve* (l) survived with good care under Lainya County Administration with use of South Sudan Wildlife Forces to protect it from the local illegal loggers. There was no any improvement due to investment on those plantation forests and people live in *poor housing* (m) with negative perception towards the company.

#### Appendix 19-2.2 Forest inspires and brings hope for generations



a.

b.

c.

There were evidences that the situation in some local communities in Western Equatoria state was improved with help of forest concession projects.

The primary (a) and secondary (b & c) school children in Nzara County, Western Equatoria State are among the direct beneficiaries who enjoyed the services from forest resources of their locality. The primary school children are made hopeful to study in better quality secondary school and that was possible only through wise decision-making by their local community members who are actually their mothers and fathers for them to have a bright future in term of education with benefits the forests provided.

The first picture (a) is the former school in Nzara Country and (b & c) is secondary school constructed with social fund from Equatoria Teak company which contracted forest reserves in Nzara. The pictures also tell the improvement in term of development from low (a) to better (b & c) quality school through the use of facilities gained from forest revenues.





d.

e.

f.

g.

In some local communities *Yabongo* (e) and *Asanza* (f) for example are no longer using the *natural wells* (d) for drinking water. These Boreholes were constructed with social fund from *Blue Lakes Limited* (g) which contracted the forest reserves of these communities in Yambio County, Western Equatoria state.



h.

i.

j.

But unsustainable management of forests (h & i) brought hopelessness from the local community, caused deforestation with many negative impacts socially, economically and environmentally. There was no local *development* (j) in poorly managed forests in Korobe and Kajiko-North.

The above pictures: h. are timbers illegally cut in Korobe plantation which were caught and under custody at Pakula Boma Head Quarter. i. is charcoal production business in Loka, Lainya County. j. in front of four gentlemen is Chief of Korobe Boma whose local community felt underprivileged from services of Korobe forest plantation.

### 3.0 Some articles from South Sudan forest concession work group

#### Appendix 20-3.1 Integration of this research project in forest concession work

##### **Minutes of the Work Group meeting held at LRSIC offices on 23<sup>rd</sup> September**

##### **Present**

Christopher Lemi

Edward Laila

Stanslaus Philemon Kayanga

Samuel Amule

Nicholas Wongo

Michael Sworo

Nhial Gogok Nhial

Campbell Day

Ronnie Cox

Apologises James Mindo

Christopher Lemi chaired and opened the meeting at 14.00.

Initially the meeting reviewed the working papers prepared for the group.

Specifically members noted the market information on the price of plantation teak logs from South Sudan imported into India.

In reviewing the business model on Katire and Imilia plantations several of the members raised questions on the cost structure of re-planting and maintenance, it was noted that the costs used should be increased.

In reviewing the working paper on the concession matrix, the group noted that it was unlikely that there would a single fix solution for any concession documentation. It was however agreed that the matrix correctly identified the areas where such documentation would be required.

It was noted the importance of the role of the community in any concession process and in developing the procedures going forward it was agreed that a community component would be included in the inventory team from LRSIC.

### Concession template

It is essential for any concession contract to be effective that the document must provide certainty of rights and obligations for the concessionaire. The performance hurdles required of the concessionaire need to be clearly detailed.

It is understood that the management and development plantation agreement used for the ETC concession is being used as such a template. This is an excellent document which addresses the 3 key components of sustainable forest management (social, environment and economic policies) within the overarching legislation of government forest regulation.

There may be specific issues within this document that may need to be reviewed.

The specific roles of the stakeholders need to be clarified particularly that of the central and the state governments, detailing the responsibilities of each of these entities. The role of the community in the process should also be reviewed. The feedback from the consultation processes has underlined the necessity on clarity of ownership between the various stakeholder groups. Communities need to be involved as early as possible in the concessioning process to ensure their support which will be critical to the successful implementation and operation of any concession undertaking.

The concession period (2.3) itself is normally requested to be sufficiently long to ensure a process of sustainable forest management. However the concession could also be short-term but renewable based on proven forest management performance i.e. performance set against a set of agreed key indicators.

The concession fee (section 2.5c) could be broken down into;

An initial concession fee to be set against proven levels of capital investment or export of sawn timber within a timetable

An annual fee based on the concession area or annual allowable cut. This might be easier to collect than a stumpage fee or measured harvested volume.

An up-front lump sum reflecting the underlying value of the forest resource and the length of the concession. If it is deemed necessary for the concession period to be long term then this should be reflected in the amount of the up-front payment.

- ✓ The document needs also to address the distribution process of these payments between the various stakeholders (central and state government and communities)

In the section 7.3 under obligations of the government it should be stated all necessary permits will be provided to the concessionaire subject to agreed performance targets

### Other issues

The concession mapping process should seek to be inclusive as possible with all stakeholders, particularly the community participating in the process

**Purpose:** To gather information about the interaction of local communities with concessionaires in forest concessions signed during 2005-2011.

This questionnaire was prepared for community members/individuals whose community hosts the forest concessions, government officials attached to concessions and forest concessionaires in South Sudan.

I requested your willingness to take some time and contribute your experience in the following questions. I would be very grateful for your comments and they will only be used as answers for questions of this academic research. I requested all participants to submit and take the questionnaire with me after filling/discussion.

**I. This is prepared for all participants illegible to contribute.  
Participant's' data**

Name of respondent: .....Male Female

Occupation: .....State: .....Tel./e-mail:.....

1. Name of the forest concession project..... lease period (years).....

2. Could you briefly tell how the stakeholders of the project approached/steps/used during agreement? .....

3. Were the local communities involved during agreement of the concession project?

Yes No

4. Was there percentage given to local community? Yes (in what kind and how is it received by the local people?) No .....

5. What were the roles or responsibilities distributed among the parties in concession project?

6. Do you think the process was participatory and addressed the interest of the host community?  Yes  No .....

7. Are there documented templates of the agreement?  Yes  No (If yes, who signed the agreement?).  RSS-MAF with investor  State-MAF with investor  Community Chiefs with investor Others .....

8. Are there challenges faced as result of reluctance of local people towards the initiative?

Yes No (Please list as you can) .....

9. What are the benefits promised to the host community during agreement?

10. Was there impact assessment made prior the implementation of the project?

Yes  No

10. Are there negative social or environmental impacts experienced as the result of the investment?

Yes  No (what are the measures taken and by who?) .....

11. Was collaboration attractive in term of support from the local communities?

Yes  No (Can you explain a bit?)

12. Any conflict of interest hindering the operation of the project from other Natural Resource users? (Wildlife conservation, Pastoralists or other farmers)?  
Yes    No (Can you give brief explanation?)
13. What were your expectations which were not met by the project to support the community?
14. What are the traditional forest management practices in this locality which you think can contribute to success of the project in term of collaboration if local people are actively involved?
15. Any comment based on your experience on the agreement and the implementation of the project? .....
16. Anything to comment as your reflection on this investigation of the case? .....

## **II. Government Officials attached to forest concessions**

**Purpose:** pre-assessment of the condition of Central Equatoria Teak Company from the Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry staff before consulting the communities hosting the concession project.

### **Participant's' data**

Name of respondent: .....Male    Female

Occupation: .....State: .....Tel./e-mail:.....

1. Concession's year of contract and the lease period.....
2. What is the status of Central Equatoria Teak Company in contracted plantations (Loka, Korobe and Kajiko-North) in Central Equatoria state?  failed     successful
3. Reasons for failure (if some cases are known to you).....
4. Were the local people involved when the concession agreement done?  Yes     No
5. Did local people actively participate during agreement or implementation process? ....  
 Yes     No
6. Does the company wish to operate? .....  
 Yes     No     Not known
7. Anything to add or comment based on your experience on the agreement and the implementation of the project? .....

*Thanks for cooperation. Your contribution will be kept confidentially and will be used only for the purpose of this research.*