

## An Analysis of Community Based Forest Management in the East Usambaras, Tanzania

**Renee Bullock**<sup>1</sup>, MA Student

<sup>1</sup>Department of Geography, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL, USA

The submontane and lowland forests of the East Usambaras, which are part of the Eastern Arc mountain range, are recognized as a biodiversity hotspot for their high degree of species diversity under anthropogenic threat. Within this region, thirteen Village Forest Reserves are managed by Community Based Forest Management (CBFM), which devolves management responsibilities and rights to local communities. While this strategy has been claimed as a panacea to protect biodiversity and reduce poverty, evidence suggests that there are weaknesses in village governments, such as financial misappropriation, that are thwarting CBFM objectives.

Currently, land use conversion by rural smallholder farmers engaged in cash cropping is the principle threat to surviving forests. As a result, reserves gazetted for strict protection present opportunity costs to farmers. Therefore, the benefit flows from CBFM should function as a compensatory mechanism that provides viable incentives to local communities that will garner support for VFR's. Effective governance is critical in efforts to incentivize communities.

The aim of my study is to identify the performance and institutional constraints of PBFM by utilizing the "Dashboard Method", which measures the efficacy of management by evaluating benefit flows from protected areas. This social instrument assesses the levels of decision making, local empowerment, and responsibility as understood by local communities. Exploring the linkages between governance and stakeholder's perceptions of incentives will provide insight that will guide adaptive management of CBFM through the feedback mechanism of the Dashboard, in which the analyses results are returned and discussed with the community.

Keywords: Community Based Forest Management; local governance; benefits; incentives; East Usambaras; Tanzania

Contact Information: Renee Bullock, MA Student, Department of Geography, University of Florida, 3141 Turlington Hall, Gainesville, Florida, 32611, Phone: 609-784-5542  
Email:reneemarie@ufl.edu