

BUSITEMA UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

**ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTS OF HUMAN ACTIVITIES ON OKOLE
WETLAND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES**

A CASE STUDY OF OKOLE WETLAND IN LIRA DISTRICT.

BY

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF NATURAL
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FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF
BACHELORS' DEGREE IN NATURAL RESOURCE ECONOMICS OF
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DECLARATION

I **OKORI SAMUEL**, do hereby declare that this is my original report submitted to the Faculty of Natural Resources And Environmental Sciences in partial fulfillment for the award of Bachelors' Degree in Natural Resource Economics of Busitema University and declare that it is original and has not been submitted for the award of a Degree in any institution by anybody before. I, therefore, do take full responsibility for any errors, arising from omissions or otherwise that may appear in this work.

Sign


.....

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APPROVAL

This is to certify that this report has been successfully completed under my supervision and I recommend it for submission to the faculty of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences of Busitema University with my approval.

Mr. KIFUMBA DAVID

Signed.....

Date

DEDICATION

This report is dedicated to the almighty God who enabled me to successfully complete this research. To my parents; Mr. Obote Geoffrey and Mrs. Harriet Obote, my brothers; especially Ario Patrick; my sisters and all my friends and to all my course mates especially Watela Winnie, and Atuhaire Denis; may the almighty God bless the work of your hands, protect and guide you throughout your lives. AMEN

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ABSTRACT

Uganda's wetlands are widespread and complex (NEMA 2000). In Uganda wetlands are normally referred to as swamps. The most common vegetation in Uganda's wetlands is papyrus. For long time, wetlands in Uganda were condemned and seen as dangerous habitat that provides breeding ground for deadly reptiles, animals and insects such as the anopheles mosquito that causes Malaria (NEMA 1998). Out of the four (4) wetland systems in the Lira District, up to 46% of Okole wetland experienced increased encroachment during the war of the Lord's resistance army. The surrounding population that began to settle there engaged in cultivation. Poor weather due to often prolonged drought makes crop farming in the upland area unproductive. The community also carries out fishing to get food and raise money,

The study was conducted in Ngetta sub-county among the communities surrounding the wetland in the parishes of Akia, Burlobo, and Ngetta in Lira district.

The general objective was to generate information about current effects arising from various human activities carried out in Okole wetland on its natural benefits to the Okole wetland to the community. This information would be useful in guiding the district authorities design wetland resource conservation measures to ensure sustenance of livelihoods and quality of life of stakeholder communities.

Data was collected using questionnaires, focus group discussions and observations.

The most prevalent human activity in the wetland was found to be crop farming to grow various crops to provide food for the family and sell the surplus to raise money so as to support the family with the necessary basic needs and requirements. Most people actively involved in prevalent activities encountered in Okole wetland are youth. Water is the main resources communities obtain from the wetland. Most people pointed out location of their land near the wetland as the major reason for their involvement in different activities in the wetland. Natural and ecological challenges are the challenges being faced in the wetland.

ACRONYMS

DEA:	Directorate of Environment Affairs.
DWD:	Directorate of Water Development.
DWRM:	Directorate of Water Resource Management.
EIA:	Environmental Impact Assessment
FAO:	Food and Agricultural Organization
ILEC:	International Lakes Environment Committee.
IUCN:	International Union For conservation of Nature.
MFPEd:	Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic development.
MUINER:	Makerere University Institute of Environment and Natural Resources.
MWE:	Ministry of Water and Environment.
NARMAP:	Natural Resource Management and Protection
NEMA:	National Environment Management Authority
NGO:	Non Governmental Organization
PRB:	Population Reference Bureau.
UNEP:	United Nations Environment Programme
USEPA:	United State Environmental Protection Agency.
WID:	Wetland Inspectorate Department.
WRI:	World Resource Institute.
WWF:	World Wild Fund.

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CHAPTER ONE:

1.0. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. Background to the study.

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, (1971,) characterised wetlands as areas of marsh, fen, peat land, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six meters. The national environment statute 1995 defines wetlands as areas which are permanently or seasonally flooded by water and where plants and animals have become adapted.

Uganda's wetlands are widespread and complex (NEMA 2000). In Uganda wetlands are normally referred to as swamps. The most common vegetation in Uganda's wetlands is papyrus. In Uganda wetlands occupy about 13% of the country's total area. They are mostly located in the central region of the country (NEMA 2000). Some are found in the west, Eastern and Southern areas. Wetlands are normally found bordering Rivers and Lakes (State of Environment Report for Uganda, 2008).

For long time, wetlands in Uganda were condemned and seen as dangerous habitat that provides breeding ground for deadly reptiles, animals and insects such as the anopheles mosquito that causes Malaria (NEMA 1998). This perception, however, places wetlands under great pressure given continued encroachment by people living near them. Large chunks of wetlands countrywide especially in the east, central and western Uganda have been converted to other uses and the reason for this widespread conversion includes rice cultivation, dairy farming, industrial development, urban settlement, brick making, sugar cane plantation, floriculture and horticulture. (NEMA 2010)

In Uganda poverty is compelling many people to build on the wetlands as population growth and urbanization increase land competition (UBOS 2002). The construction destroys the lands ecological value and interferes with the ecological productivity of the wetlands thus leading to loss of biodiversity and inability of the wetlands to perform their functions and values (Moore, 2009).

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