

# UNIVERSITY OF LUSAKA

**SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES**

**STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENTS AND ITS IMPACT ON COMMUNITY  
PROJECTS OUTCOME, A CASE STUDY OF THE LUANGWA COMMUNITY  
FOREST REDD+ PROJECT**

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE  
STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF LUSAKA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
AWARD OF MASTER OF SCIENCE IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT**

**BY**

**CONSTANCE NYAWA PHIRI**

**MSCPM23117944**

**SUPERVISOR**

**PROF. MOHAMED SAHEED BAYAT**

**©2024.**

**DECLARATION**

“I, Constance Phiri, hereby declare that the master's degree thesis submitted herein is my own original creation and does not infringe any copyright laws or academic regulations. It also complies with the ethical standards for research at the university. Where appropriate, the literature has been referenced accordingly, and relevant acknowledgments have been made”.



Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 19<sup>th</sup> March 2025



Supervisor's Signature: \_

Date : 19<sup>th</sup> March 2025

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this report to all my family, with deepest thanks for your strong support, encouragement and trust in me. Your love has been my mast, and your direction, my lantern. This work is as much a response to your support as it is to my own.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I am most thankful to God for the gift of life and for enabling me to complete this research, which has not been without its challenges. I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Mohamed Saheed Bayat, whose input towards the development of this research was instrumental. I also want to extend my gratitude to the School of Postgraduate Studies at the University of Lusaka and its faculty for their support. I express my gratitude to my respondents, as their input was vital to these results, and to my colleagues, whose insights enhanced my comprehension during this endeavor.

To end, I am most thankful to my friends and family: my beloved husband and children; and especially to my kind, one mother, Mrs. Beverly Zulu, whose inspiration and support turned this experience both academically stimulating and professionally inspiring.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### Contents

<b>DECLARATION</b> .....	2
<b>DEDICATION</b> .....	3
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b> .....	4
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b> .....	5
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b> .....	8
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b> .....	8
<b>ACRONYMS</b> .....	9
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	10
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH BACKGROUND</b> .....	12
1.1 INTRODUCTION.....	12
1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY .....	13
1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.....	13
1.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.....	14
1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS .....	15
1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY .....	15
1.7 SCOPE OF THE STUDY .....	1
1.8 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY .....	2
1.9 LITERATURE REVIEW.....	2
1.10 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....	4
1.11 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS .....	4
1.12 ANALYSIS OF DATA .....	5
1.13 STRUCTURE OF THE CHAPTERS .....	5
1.14 CONCLUSION .....	6
<b>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW</b> .....	8

2.1 INTRODUCTION.....	8
2.2 EMPIRICAL REVIEW.....	8
2.2.1 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND PROJECT OUTCOMES .....	8
2.2.2 KEY STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED ON THE LUANGWA COMMUNITY FOREST PROJECT, THEIR ROLES AND CONTRIBUTIONS .....	14
2.3 CRITIQUE OF THE LITERATURE.....	19
2.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK .....	21
2.6 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.....	23
<b>CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>26</b>
3.1 INTRODUCTION.....	26
<b>3.3 RESEARCH METHODS AND METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>27</b>
3.3.1 RESEARCH METHODS .....	27
3.3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....	27
3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN .....	27
3.4.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF RESEARCH DESIGNS .....	28
3.5 TYPES OF RESEARCH DESIGNS .....	29
3.5.1 EXPLORATORY STUDY .....	29
3.5.2 DESCRIPTIVE STUDY .....	29
3.5.3 EXPLANATORY STUDIES .....	29
3.5.4 EVALUATIVE STUDIES.....	30
3.6 RESEARCH STRATEGY .....	30
3.7 STUDY POPULATION.....	31
3.8 SAMPLE SIZE.....	31
3.9 SAMPLING TECHNIQUES .....	32
3.10 DATA COLLECTION/INSTRUMENTS .....	32
3.10.1 SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE .....	33

3.10.2 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS .....	33
3.11 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE .....	34
3.12 TYPES DATA SOURCES .....	34
3.12.1 PRIMARY DATA SOURCE .....	34
3.12.2 SECONDARY DATA SOURCE .....	34
3.13 DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE .....	35
3.14 ANALYSIS OF DATA .....	35
3.15 DATA VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY .....	35
3.16 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY .....	37
3.17 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION .....	37
3.18 PILOT TESTING OF THE INSTRUMENTS .....	37
3.19 CONCLUSION .....	38
<b>CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS</b> .....	<b>39</b>
4.1 INTRODUCTION.....	39
<b>4.2 SURVEY RESULTS</b> .....	<b>39</b>
4.2.1 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS.....	39
4.2.2 AWARENESS OF STAKEHOLDERS AMONG SURVEY RESPONDENTS.....	40
4.2.3 STAKEHOLDERS PRESENT WITHIN THE PROJECT .....	40
4.2.4 STAKEHOLDER ROLES IN THE LCFP PROJECT .....	41
4.2.5 MOST FREQUENT STAKEHOLDER INTERACTION .....	43
4.2.6 METHODS OF ENGAGEMENT BY STAKEHOLDERS .....	43
4.2.7 FREQUENCY OF ENGAGEMENT BY STAKEHOLDERS.....	44
4.2.8 EFFECTIVENESS OF STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT.....	45
4.2.9 NOTABLE SUCCESSES DUE TO STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT .....	46
4.3 INTERVIEW RESULTS.....	47
4.3.1 STAKEHOLDER CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PROJECT .....	47

4.3.2 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND ITS IMPACT ON PROJECT SUCCESS	48
4.3.4 POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE OUTCOMES OF STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT	49
4.3.5 SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS TO THE CURRENT STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PRACTICES .....	50
5.0 CONCLUSION .....	51
<b>CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>67</b>
APPENDIX 1: ITEM-TOTAL STATISTICS FOR THE FIVE SCALES OF MEASURE USED	67
APPENDIX 2: LETTER OF PERMISSION FROM THE UNILUS ETHICAL COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT RESEARCH .....	68
APPENDIX 3: QUESTIONNAIRES .....	70
APPENDIX 4: WORKPLAN .....	76

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Reliability statistics.....	40
Table 2: Demographic characteristics.....	42
Table 3: Stakeholder roles in the LCFP Project.....	45
Table 4: Notable Successes due to stakeholder engagement.....	50
Table 5: Specific contributions of stakeholders to the project.....	51

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Location of the Luangwa Community Forest REDD+ Project.....	16
Figure 2: Conceptual Framework.....	26
Figure 3: Awareness of stakeholders among Survey respondents.....	43
Figure 4: Identified Project main stakeholders.....	44

Figure 5: Frequent stakeholder interactions

Figure 6: Methods of engagement by stakeholders

Figure 7: Frequency of engagements by stakeholders

Figure 8: Effectiveness of stakeholder

Figure 9: Stakeholder engagement and its impact on project success

Figure 10: Positive and negative outcomes of stakeholder engagement

## **ACRONYMS**

<b>LCFP</b>	Luangwa Community Forest Project
<b>BCP</b>	BioCarbon Partners Limited
<b>REDD+</b>	Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-Governmental Organizations
<b>CFMGs</b>	Community Forest Management Groups
<b>FD</b>	Forestry Department
<b>DNPW</b>	Department of National Parks and wildlife
<b>FDZ</b>	Frankfurt Zoological Society
<b>FPIC</b>	Free and Prior Informed consent

## **ABSTRACT**

Community projects are powerful instruments for addressing many social problems and attaining development that is sustainable at the local level. This kind of initiative's success usually relies on the quality of stakeholder engagement in a broad, multi-disciplinary approach that gathers and mobilizes perspectives and skills throughout the project life cycle. However, this paper explored the impact of stakeholder engagement on community project outcomes through a case study focused on the Luangwa Community Forest REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) Project in Zambia. The REDD+ Project with its geographical area of more than one million hectares, cutting across three provinces and affecting more than 225 000 people is the largest REDD+ project in the African continent aiming at conservating the forest while promoting forest conservation and carbon offsetting-related activities alongside socioeconomic development.

The study employed a mixed methods approach combing the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data to better understand stakeholder engagement and its role in the implementation of community projects. Quantitative data was obtained from a questionnaire survey of 385 community household heads and qualitative data was obtained from an in-depth interview with 33 core stakeholders, comprising of local leaders, government professionals, and environmental groups.

Data analysis of Quantitative data from in-depth interviews was statistically explored using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and Excel to find patterns, correlations, and trends regarding stakeholder engagement and project results. Qualitative data from interviews was analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes, perceptions, and recommendations associated with stakeholder engagement.

The results of the study highlighted key practices of engagement such as Free Prior and Informed Consent, needs surveys, capacity-building workshops, and community meetings contribute to a component of project success. The results underline how such an important role as stakeholder collaboration plays in increasing ownership of the projects, while at the same time it enables efficient use of resources, reduces risks, and achieves successful project results, which in turn facilitate sustainable development.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that efficient stakeholder engagement brings about a sense of shared interest, ensures transparency, and makes allowance for consideration of the specific needs

of the local context. For example, it was found that 77.8% of respondents stressed the positive role of stakeholder engagement with respect to establishing trust, community involvement, and long-term commitment to the outcome of the project. The results also elucidate that participatory approaches must be adopted to strike a cognitive balance between environmental conservation and community development. On the contrary, 13.9% of the respondents expressed negative effects of stakeholder engagements due to the priority and resource title conflicts and constraints of the participants, contrary to the progress.

Furthermore, there is a need to find proper strategies to ensure a balance so that the negative impacts of stakeholder engagements are minimized. Therefore, the study puts forward recommendations for policy makers and project implementers to consider. One such recommendation is to conduct training and awareness programs for local communities and authorities on the importance of equitable resource distribution and decision-making and establish Inclusive Governance Structures and engage local traditional leaders, women's groups, and youth representatives in forming and running these committees to encourage participatory decision making.

Lastly for future research, the study should consider examining the ways in which gender dynamics affect participation, decision making, and benefit-sharing for the REDD+ projects.

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH BACKGROUND**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Stakeholder engagement becomes part of the community-based programs in which shared responsibility, inclusiveness, and accountability are built in. It's an activity-based process involving large numbers of individuals, groups, or organizations that have a stake in the project they get involved in, consult, and become part of the group's decision-making process. Engaging stakeholders in this regard is very critical, since it builds trust, encourages transparency, and improves overall efficiency and sustainability of the initiatives for better community outcomes (Doe, 2024).

Engaging stakeholders is effective as it moves beyond a "consulting" situation and is defined by an ongoing commitment to inclusion, transparency, and accountability (Ambaah, 2024). The practice of actively involving stakeholders at all stages of the project life cycle from inception and planning until community project implementation and evaluation has a capacity to leverage and utilize a variety of perspectives, expertise and resources by working together, this collaborative model not only significantly improves the chance of project success, but it also instils a sense of ownership and responsibility in participants, in turn producing more sustainable results that are more attuned to community desire and goals. In addition, both successful stakeholder engagement and opportunity development have the potential to assist in mitigating the risks of exclusion and reducing the likelihood of local conflicts, such as those involving the use of natural resources, being engendered, strengthened, or intensified (FAO,2015).

Specifically, stakeholder engagement and its effects can span beyond the short-term project outcomes into the social, economic and environmental realm. Working with stakeholders, such as agencies of government, civil society organizations, communities and business can help mobilize their knowledge base, varied expertise and joint potential to change practice changing for sustainable development, for building social cohesion and for achieving equitable growth (Sandra 2023).

In summary, stakeholder engagement is the platform of success community project management, epitomizing the values of inclusivity, partnership and responsibility. By using this pathway project managers can leverage the common knowledge and authority of various stakeholders in what are co-designed outputs, which are not only strong, long-lasting, and have a lasting social impact on the social fabric of the communities in which they reside, providing a legacy of positive social change.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

The Luangwa Community Forests REDD+ Project (LCFP) is a large-scale, community-based, spatially extensive project in the Luangwa Valley, Zambia. REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) is one of the global framework initiatives, aiming to minimize carbon release in the future through forest protection and sustainable land use promotion. The largest REDD+ project in Africa, known as the LCFP REDD+, run by BioCarbon Partners Limited (BCP), spans over 1 million hectares in the Eastern, Muchinga, and Central Provinces of Zambia with the purpose of providing 225,000 people, living in the Luangwa and Lower Zambezi Valleys, the benefits of forest carbon fee and livelihood activities. Forest, wildlife and other natural values are protected as well through the LCFP REDD+ project and it has a significant influence that collaboration of Community and Government partners has done (BioCarbon Partners Report, 2021-2024).

The REDD+ project is unique in targeting community engagement and ownership, among projects aimed at development. Participatory approach is implemented, and local communities oversee forest resource management, decision-making and benefit-sharing arrangements. Community members, especially the local leaders in the project area, are empowered to manage their own forests and they benefit from education, healthcare, and infrastructure (BioCarbon Partners Report, 2023).

## **1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Project failure continues to be a serious matter in Rwanda during the period of 2020-2022, which is due to several reasons, but the pre-dominant one lacks stakeholder determination in the scheme's life cycle. According to Davis, (2014) and Eyaih-Botwe, (2015), the key outbreak to the failure of project is attributed to the role of stakeholders involved in those projects. Mafokosi in his research about the causes of project failure in railway infrastructure projects; found out that the failure in stakeholders' management and the lack of their engagement to design the objects and implementation of project target into the failure of the whole project (Mafokosi. 2018). According to the PwC Global Project Management Survey, only 2.5% of the 10,640 projects examined and finalized with 100% success rate. What about the remaining 97.5% of companies? The reasons for this are either that the deadlines, the budget, or the objectives and/or scope were not reached based on deficiency of stakeholders' support in the life cycle of project (Cohen & Henry, 2019).

Generally, stakeholder engagement is very instrumental to setting the tone for project outcomes, unfortunately, many development projects in Zambia, especially those themed around the

environment and community, are characterized by poor stakeholder engagement (Kujala et al., 2022; Reed, 2008). This scarcity in stakeholder engagement often leads to unachieved project objectives, poor sustainability, and low effectiveness (Maina et al, 2013). Further, a lack of optimum stakeholder engagement is cited as a major cause of poor outcome and unsustainable projects often witnessed in the less developed countries (Masanyiwa & Kinyashi, 2008).

A study by Plan international Zambia was conducted on one of its community development projects and findings were that the projects barely go beyond six months when funding stops (Plan International report, Homa Bay PU, 2014). The situation is wanting since Plan International activities in Nyanza region are concentrated in three poverty-stricken units of Homa-Bay, Kisumu, and Bondo. Better performance and sustainability of community projects in these areas are key to the wellbeing of the households who live below the poverty line, and this can only be achieved through the effective engagement of the stakeholders.

This study seeks to assess how stakeholder engagements have impacted the outcome of projects using LCFP REDD+ as a case study and to produce such knowledge to strengthen the effectiveness and viability of the community interventions in Zambia.

## **1.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The aim of the study is to analyze the effect of stakeholders' engagements on project outcome of community projects and specifically to Luangwa Community Forest REDD+ Project (LCFP) in Zambia.

### **specific objectives**

1. To identify the key stakeholders in the Luangwa Community Forests REDD+ Project by analyzing each stakeholder's role in the achievement of project goals.
2. To investigate the methods used for engaging stakeholders within the Luangwa Community Forest REDD+ Project.
3. To investigate the degree to which stakeholder engagement influences community project outcomes.

## **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. Who are the key stakeholders involved in the Luangwa Community Forest REDD+ project and what are their roles?
2. What are the methods used to engage stakeholders in the Luangwa Community Forest REDD+ Project?
3. In what ways does stakeholder engagement influence the outcomes of community projects?

## **1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This work will contribute to the literature that is explaining stakeholder engagement in the context of the success and sustainability of community-based environment among the Luangwa Community Forest REDD+ Project. The study provides a unique lens in understanding how stakeholder engagement in project implementation influences its project success. Since projects affect community groups either positively or adversely, it is implementation that should peg on continuous engagement with all that have interest in its outcome. Project implementers and developers must seek collaborative efforts among stakeholders to gain general knowledge and clear program objectives (Ibrahim 2017). Project communities, implementing partners, donors and international NGOs will also find this study useful to deal with perennial problems and find best ways of adopting sustainable development programs that are based on the community at large.

In addition, the findings will inform implementers that stakeholder engagement, when conducted properly, can create a greater level of collusion and trust, where stakeholder engagement can be found to significantly increase the buy-in of the project leaders. A lesson to be learned and further developed will be an improved project ownership and sustainability of local groups, who feel they have a sense of ownership in a project will be more likely to sustain it for the long term. This is particularly true for environmental endeavors such as REDD+, which depends on the long-term viability of the anti-deforestation and climate change-impacts mitigation efforts.

## 1.7 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study will focus on stakeholder engagements and its impact on the community project outcomes, a case study of the Luangwa Community Forest REDD+ Project which is being implemented by BioCarbon Partners Limited. The Luangwa Community Forest Project is being implemented in Eastern and Lusaka Provinces of Zambia in 8 districts. The project, however, is mainly implemented in the Eastern province of Zambia, which is between the Luangwa River and the borders with Malawi to the east and Mozambique to the south and running from Isoka in northeast to the north of Luangwa in the south (Simon 2008).

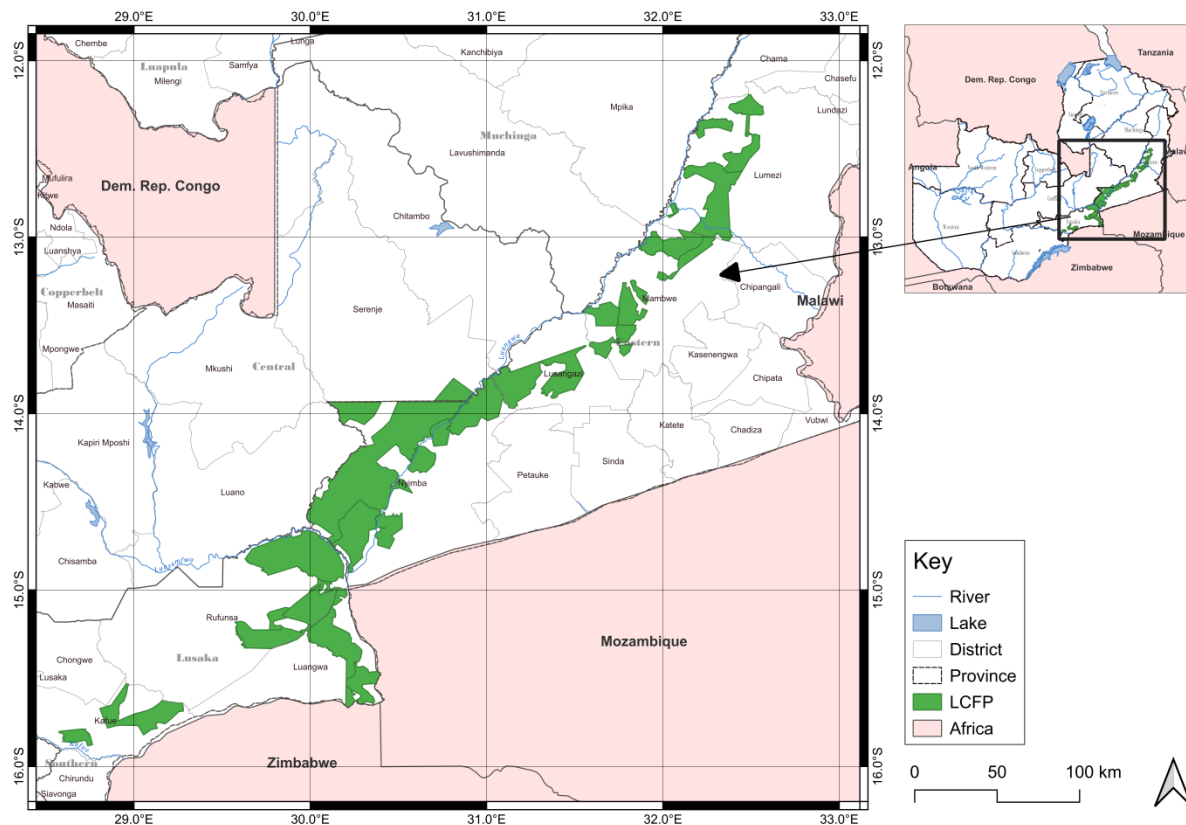


Figure 1: Location of the Luangwa Community Forests REDD+ Project. Source: BCP Carbon Department

Building on the previous discussion, this study will focus on filling the knowledge gap that exists by explaining the impacts stakeholder engagement has on the outcomes of community projects using the Luangwa Community Forest REDD+ Project as a case study.

## **1.8 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

This research study examined the effect of stakeholder engagement on the outcomes of community projects using LCFP REDD+ Project as a study site. The research aimed for an audience consisting of, household heads, members from the Community Forest Management Groups (CFMGs), Headmen, staff from our partner environmental organizations like Frankfurt Zoological Society (FDZ) as well as government agencies (government of Forestry Department (FD) and government of Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW) etc.

## **1.9 LITERATURE REVIEW**

This section aims at reviewing the literature on stakeholder engagement and its impact on community projects outcomes. Stakeholder engagement is a key element of a company's strategic management of long-term projects with the potential for social or environmental negative effects.

Research indicates a positive correlation between stakeholder engagement and project success and this relationship is further enhanced by empirical evidence. Turner and Müller (2005) have pointed out that project success depends on the indicators provided by critical stakeholders, and their expectations and requirements need to be appropriately satisfied or managed. On the other hand, if stakeholder engagement is not handled correctly it may result in controversy, scope shifts, time overruns, and eventually a breakdown in the project. Stakeholder engagement is of great importance in the context of REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation) projects. This program is dedicated to sustainable forest management and increasing forest carbon stock retention. Successful delivery of REDD+ projects is dependent on effective stakeholder engagement which will involve partnerships with multiple stakeholders such as local communities, indigenous peoples, departmental members, NGOs and the private sector. This partnership is pivotal for guaranteeing sustainable, inclusive attainment of all the objectives of the project (Tacconi et al, 2012).

In addition, Stakeholder engagement is key in involving local communities and indigenous peoples, who may have deep knowledge and links to forest resources, in the project

design of REDD+ initiatives. Their indigenous/local/local knowledge and actions related to forest management play an important role in the achievement of these initiatives.

Further, absence or insufficient engagement of stakeholders in environmental endeavours can result in several undesirable consequences. The project may lose the support of local populations, which in many cases is critical for the success of such interventions. If stakeholders, especially indigenous and local populations are not in the decision-making process, there is a likelihood for misunderstanding or resistance of the project objectives, because it may appear that the needs and knowledge are not considered (Tacconi et al, 2012).

Boon, et al., (2012 reported that community projects in Ghana, including market structures, toilet facilities, and boreholes have been left behind because of lack of stakeholder engagement. In Nigeria implementation of rural development projects has been impeded as observed by the center down approach in which the rural people were not involved in project conception, planning and monitoring which often led to failure and abandonment of many valuable projects (UN, 2005).

Studies, such as those by Turner and Müller (2005) and Reed (2008), highlight the positive relationship between stakeholder engagement and project success, this focus often overlooks critical logistical and political obstacles. These issues are especially significant in intricate, cultural and social settings such as REDD+ initiatives. A middle of the road view, which takes into consideration challenges like competing interests, limited resources and possible power imbalances will provide a more expansive insight.

Nevertheless, a common conclusion from several investigations is that projects have a higher chance of success if they are congruous with the wishes and requirements of the important stakeholders, most noticeably local communities (Turner and Müller, 2005). This result is also particularly relevant to the Luangwa Community Forest REDD+ project, as the emphasis on local community satisfaction may help guarantee continuous engagement and reassurance of the local communities and thus has important relevance for a positive project result.

## 1.10 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study will use a mixed methods approach that combines quantitative analysis with qualitative understanding to better understand stakeholder engagement and its role in community work. In this study, a survey questionnaire, comprising open and closed-ended questions, as well as an interview guide will be used to collect primary data. Secondary data will be collected from secondary data collection such as, research conducted by others, books, and websites.

## 1.11 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

**Stakeholder engagement:** Is the process of targeting specific stakeholder groups, organizations, or individuals, who may have a high level of impact or influence in a particular project. These stakeholders might be affected or can affect the outcome of the project in some way. (Trappett L, 2023).

**Stakeholders:** A stakeholder is defined as "individuals and organizations who are actively involved in the project, or whose interests may be positively or negatively affected as a result of project execution or successful project completion" (Smith, 2000).

**Project:** A temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product, service, or result (PMBOK Guide, 2021)

**REDD+:** Reducing Emissions through Deforestation and Degradation (REDD+), is a method designed to reduce global emissions caused by deforestation and create a financial value for the protection of carbon stored in forests. The "+" signifies the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks.

**Project Outcome:** Refers to the specific result or product that is expected upon completion of a project. It is the tangible or intangible deliverable that the project is

designed to produce to meet its objectives and fulfill stakeholder expectation (Olson B, 2023).

## **1.12 ANALYSIS OF DATA**

Data will be gathered through a survey questionnaire and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to find patterns, correlations, and trends concerning stakeholder engagement and project success. Qualitative data from interviews will be subjected to thematic analysis to discover common themes, experiences, and suggestions relating to stakeholder interactions. Integrating quantitative and qualitative outcomes offers an overall view of the research area and enable triangulation, which supports the validity and reliability of the results.

## **1.13 STRUCTURE OF THE CHAPTERS**

### **CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY**

Chapter one covered the background, aims, objectives, research questions, problem statement, scope of the study, delimitations significance of the study and definition of key terms.

### **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter presents the theoretical framework of the study. Literature review will delve deeper into looking at stakeholder engagements and its impact on community project outcomes using the Luangwa Community Forest REDD+ Project as a case study and reviewing existing literature on stakeholder engagements. The focus will be on:

- The types of stakeholders that are involved in the Luangwa Community Forest Project
- The Methods that are used on the Luangwa Community Forest REDD+ Project to engage its stakeholders.
- Impact of stakeholder engagements on community projects outcomes.

### **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

The chapter describes the Research design, Scope of the study, Target population, Sample size and Sampling techniques, Research instruments, Validity and Reliability of the instruments, Data collection procedure, analysis and Ethical consideration.

### **CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF DATA**

The study will present data analysis and their interpretations; discussions will also be done

### **CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The study will provide a summary of research findings, make conclusions and recommendations and offer suggestions that can be used for future research.

### **CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Provide summarized remarks on research, main recommendations put forward and conclude on the research project.

#### **1.14 CONCLUSION**

An overview of the study was discussed in chapter one including the statement of the problem that is under investigation. The chapter also outlined the aims, objectives and research questions of the study. Definition of the key terms was also done in this chapter as well as the research methodology, design, and scope of the study. The chapter ended with outlining the structure of the chapters.

In the next chapter, the review of the existing literature on stakeholder engagements will be done. The theoretical framework of the study will also be done providing the foundation

upon which research is built and finally the conceptual framework will also be discussed to offer a structured lens through which the research problem is been understood, guiding the formulation of research questions, hypotheses, and methodology. It will also provide a structured approach to understanding the relationships between the two variables which are stakeholder engagements and project outcome which forms the basis on which the entire research is anchored on.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The literature review was undertaken with a view to assessing stakeholder engagements and its impact on community project outcomes. Stakeholder engagement is an important part of a firm's efforts to strategically manage long-term projects that involve potentially adverse social or environmental impacts.

### **2.2 EMPIRICAL REVIEW**

Stakeholder engagement is a critical determinant of the success and sustainability of community projects worldwide. Effective involvement of diverse stakeholders ranging from governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to local communities and private sector actors ensures that projects are aligned with the needs and aspirations of the communities they serve. This paper examines the impact of stakeholder engagement on community projects from a global perspective while highlighting specific experiences from the global, regional and Zambian context (Arnstein, S. R. (1969).

#### **2.2.1 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND PROJECT OUTCOMES**

Globally, stakeholder engagement has been widely recognized as an essential practice in community development. Theories of participatory development emphasize the importance of involving local communities in decision-making processes to enhance project effectiveness and sustainability. Research indicates that projects characterized by high stakeholder engagement tend to achieve greater legitimacy, increased ownership, and improved resource mobilization (Reed, 2008).

In many countries, successful community projects involve multi-stakeholder collaborations. For example, in India, participatory watershed management initiatives have demonstrated how engaging local farmers and community leaders in project planning and implementation leads to improved water resource management (Joshi et al., 2004). Similarly, in Latin America, community-led conservation programs, such as those in Brazil's Amazon region, show that inclusive governance structures can enhance

environmental conservation outcomes while supporting local livelihoods (Schneider et al., 2021).

Additionally, Scholars such as Sara, (1997) performed an assessment of water performance in several countries, they found that the performance of water systems was markedly better in communities where households were able to make informed choices about the type of system and the level of service they required, and where decision making was genuinely democratic and inclusive. On the other hand, projects that were built without community oversight and engagement in which the project planning was free of obligation to the community, were more likely to be built at low quality by private contractors. In a study of 121 rural water supply projects in 49 African, Asian, and Latin American countries, stakeholder engagement was identified as the greatest predictor of project success and water system maintenance. According to the study, it was when people were involved in decision-making during all stages of the project, from design to maintenance, that the best results occurred. However, when they were only participants in information sharing and consultations, outcomes were much worse (Narayan, 1995).

Furthermore, studies have shown that ineffective stakeholder engagement in construction projects significantly contributed to construction projects cost overruns which resulted in project failure. Additionally, from the results, it was clearly remarked that the issues of stakeholders should be treated as an emergency, preventing projects cost overruns. In India (Sindhu, 2016) reported that ineffective stakeholder involvement in construction projects in India was number one priority factor that contributed to increased cost overruns in construction project. In line with the findings, (Rajeev, 2014) mentioned that, in construction projects where the interactions and interrelationships among stakeholders were not strong, it was observed that projects were not executed within the budgeted cost whereas in situations where interrelationships and interactions between stakeholders were strong, projects were implemented within their initially budgeted cost (Rahman Alzubi, 2015).

A study in Taiwan found that stakeholder engagement has challenges such as power inequality barriers, according to the study, power inequalities among stakeholders had

been cited as an obstacle to meaningful stakeholder engagement. The Flood Risk Management (FRM) project planner for instance indicated that at the beginning of the process, flood victims were questioned about their flood experiences and all information was one-way; always flowing from the planners/officials to other stakeholders in a top-down manner. Little chance was given to other stakeholders to meaningfully contribute. Similarly, the briefing materials for the meetings were usually not available in advance and, without preparation, it was difficult for residents to fully understand what was being proposed so as to raise pertinent issues (Tseng and Penning-Rowsell 2012). There is need for active participation of stakeholders in project design, implementation monitoring and evaluation in order to ensure high project implementation success. Rural development projects continue to experience limited productive stakeholder engagement, yet the underlying causes are not well documented in literature.

Generally, ineffective stakeholder engagement can lead to conflicts, lack of trust, and project failures. Studies in Africa reveal that top-down approaches that marginalize local actors often result in low community participation, reduced project acceptance, and unsustainable outcomes (Arnstein, 1969).

Development projects that recognize the importance of establishing lasting relationships with target communities and other interested parties throughout its lifecycle, and not merely during design stage, are realizing the benefits of better risk management and positive results. Also, public and private sectors have started to recognize the hazard of bad stakeholder interaction and the possibility of good ones (International Finance Corporation (IFC), 2007).

Over the past three decades, many development projects and programs have failed where activities have been designed with little or no reference neither to people's needs or priorities, nor to their knowledge and skills. An evaluation of 25 projects sponsored by the World Bank reported that 13 of them had been discontinued a few years after financial assistance had ended. Lack of attention to stakeholder engagement and to local organization-building when the projects were formulated and implemented appeared to be the main cause (Zazueta, 1994).

Paul, (2007) also pointed out that identifying the importance of increasing the status of stakeholders such as community coalitions to facilitate access to service delivery of disadvantaged populations is paramount. Grassroots groups are better adapted to translating community needs into mobilizing activity and to furnish rapid feedback, a synergistic combination that raises the probability of productive partnerships. Development policies should be such as promoting projects that would build up and improve the capacity of the local populations, so that development projects strengthening capacity of beneficiaries become more autonomous.

Boon, et al., (2012) indicates that various community projects in Ghana, including market structures, latrines, and boreholes, have all been left unfinished because there has been insufficient or no stakeholder engagement. In Nigeria implementation of rural development projects has been impeded as observed by the center down approach in which the rural people were not involved in project conception, planning and monitoring which often led to failure and abandonment of many valuable projects.

Oino, et al., (2015) offer an overview of factors that contribute to successful project delivery and ultimately project sustainability in Kenya, most notably for the most vulnerable communities where such projects are the last remaining source of hope. They are based on examination of secondary evidence from Kenya and other areas of the world. The main point of their argument is that so much money is being wasted on community-based endeavors, but most of these endeavors have been, frankly, ineffective at delivering useful positive effects and lasting benefits to the recipients. The study particularly observed that although many projects highlight elements of sustainability in their proposal stage, the actual implementation seems to lack emphasis on sustainability. Authors focus on socio-cultural, political, economic and technical issues, as well as their impact on the sustainability of community-based initiatives. This study concluded that lack of stakeholder ownership and commitment leads to project failure. Moreover, aid provision by development institutions has, on many occasions, failed to take full account of nor respond to socio-economic, cultural and political realities which affect the design,

planning and execution of projects. Additionally, very minimal post implementation support is provided by these development organizations. Therefore, there is a need for inclusive and viable community driven approaches to project sustainability which can be achieved through engagement and involvement of all stakeholders.

Furthermore, when stakeholder engagement is at a minimum or nonexistent in environmental projects, as is the case for community-based projects like REDD+ there are numerous harmful consequences. On the other hand, it may end up disenfranchising the local communities, which are very important for the viability of such programs. If stakeholders-especially indigenous and local communities do not participate in the decision process, probabilities of misinterpretations or resistance to project goals increase, as they may suspect that their interest and knowledge are not considered. Reference was made to the financial and success reports of Gisenyi Youth New Vision (2014), the project used around twenty million of United States dollars to finance its projects in Rubavu district. However, despite the huge amount of money used, its project's success has not been very successful in its past twelve years of activities and one of the reasons given by project consultants and evaluators is poor engagement of stakeholders specifically the stakeholders of the project whereby they have not been involved in project planning, implementation, in decision making and in evaluations. Thus, this research aimed to find out the impact of stakeholder involvement on the success of a project in Rwanda and Gisenyi Youth New Vision Project used as a case study.

Research tells us that insufficient or poor participation of stakeholders can lead to a lack of communication, backlash, and ultimately project failure (Kujala, 2022). A great deal of research supports the need for ongoing, flexible stakeholder engagement approaches that are sensitive to community input and the ever-changing project contexts for enduring environmental and social effects (Kirsi, 2024).

As per the research, there is a strong relationship between stakeholder engagement and the project results and the same is further validated by empirical evidence. As Turner and Müller (2005) have also observed, the outcome of a project depends on the satisfaction

of the important stakeholders, whose needs and expectations should ideally be fulfilled or controlled as far as possible. On the other hand, ineffectively conducted stakeholder engagement may result from conflict, scope adjustments, delays, and eventual project failure.

In Zambia, stakeholder engagement plays a crucial role in the implementation of community-based projects, particularly in sectors such as natural resource management, health, and education. Community-driven initiatives, such as the Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) programs, demonstrate how collaborative governance can yield positive social, economic, and environmental outcomes.

A notable example is the implementation of the REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) program in Zambia, particularly in the Luangwa Community Forests Project. This initiative involves a wide array of stakeholders, including government institutions such as the Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW), NGOs like the Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS) Zambia, local communities, and private sector actors. Research suggests that the active engagement of local communities in decision-making processes enhances project ownership and ensures equitable benefit-sharing mechanisms, thereby contributing to project success (UN-REDD, 2020).

Gender dynamics further shape stakeholder engagement in Zambia's community projects. Studies indicate that women's participation in decision-making remains limited due to socio-cultural barriers, yet their engagement is crucial for the equitable distribution of project benefits (Mwase et al., 2015). Addressing these barriers through inclusive policies and capacity-building initiatives enhances the overall effectiveness of community projects.

Stakeholder engagement plays an overwhelming role in the field of REDD+ projects aimed at reducing the impacts of climate change by decreasing carbon emissions resulting from deforestation and forest degradation (Reed, 2008). Effective stakeholder engagement is pivotal for the success of REDD+ projects by involving collaboration with diverse groups, including local communities, indigenous peoples, government agencies,

NGOs, and the private sector. This partnership is critically important to enable sustainable and equitable attainment of the objectives of the project (Tacconi et al., 2012).

Stakeholder involvement in developmental projects is an issue that is being raised worldwide because studies have demonstrated that most projects worldwide and (potentially) in Zambia completely disregard the contribution of stakeholder engagement to the achievement of project consequence.

Stakeholder engagement is an integral part of an optimal delivery of project outputs and if the well-executed community engagement process enables the stakeholders to collaborate towards the betterment of mankind, mitigation of undesired environmental impacts, and achieving economic sustainability of the project (Maina, 2013). So, stakeholder engagement, in turn, should be taken as an integral component in every sustainable development project (Golicha, 2010). From the perspectives of governments and international organizations, it's of great significance that community projects can apply various engagement strategies to ensure their success in achieving the respective project outcomes.

Lastly, research conducted by Colfer et al. (2011) stress that the rights and duties of indigenous peoples and local host communities must be taken seriously in REDD+ activities and respecting them, will ultimately lead to REDD+ project success.

### **2.2.2 KEY STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED ON THE LUANGWA COMMUNITY FOREST PROJECT, THEIR ROLES AND CONTRIBUTIONS**

There are several important stakeholders playing key roles in the Luangwa Community Forest REDD+ Community Project. The following outlines some of the identified key stakeholders and their roles:

**Community Forest Management Groups (CFMGs):** The Community Forest Management Groups are an important mechanism for community governance and play a significant role in REDD+ initiatives by enhancing local involvement, promoting sustainable forest management practices, and ensuring that the local community is

represented in the agenda-setting process. These communities are involved in the monitoring and equitable sharing of benefits related to the management of forest resources, which are key elements in the success and sustainability of REDD+ projects (Agrawal Chhatre, 2011).

**Local Chiefs:** In REDD+ projects, local chiefs can be an important key factor because they may be authority figures and community-respected, thus becoming an indispensable stakeholder for project implementation. Their roles may include mobilizing communities, mediating dialogue between project developers and inhabitants, and helping with the enforcement of forest management practices. The governance exercised by the Chiefs helps to guarantee the safeguarding of local customs and cultural values in the project, thus promoting community acceptance and participation. In endorsing REDD+ initiatives and leading in the resolution of conflicts, chiefs encourage the spirit of cooperation and dedication that translates into continued participation in conservation practices, and consequently better results for the project (Sunderlin, 2014).

**Forest Department (FD):** The Forest Department (FD) contributes a crucial role to the implementation of REDD+ projects, through the provision of technical support, regulatory control and policy guidance. Their tasks often involve forest inventory and estimation, establishing and trotting carbon baselines, and making sure that they adhere to REDD+ policy and standards. FD works in partnership with community groups and stakeholders to implement sustainable forest management, enforce forest legislation and deliver conservation training. Through such coordinated activities, the FD plays a key role in providing accountability and transparency, both of which are critical to REDD+ operations and the success and legitimacy of REDD+ programs (Sunderline, 2014).

**The Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW) of Zambia:** DNPW is a driving force in implementing REDD+ activity by promoting sustainable forest management and protecting forest resources for community benefits and biodiversity conservation. Their contributions to REDD+ projects typically involve overseeing protected areas, enforcing anti-poaching regulations, and fostering community-based natural resource management

practices. DNPW collaborates with local communities and other stakeholders to integrate conservation efforts with REDD+ objectives, ensuring that communities are engaged in the protection and sustainable use of forest resources, thus contributing to both ecological and economic outcomes of REDD+ initiatives (Zimba, 2018).

**Residents/community members:** Residents are critical stakeholders on the LCFP REDD+ Project and are the primary beneficiaries of the project. Their views and lived-experience are keys to the evaluation of the socio-economic impact of REDD+ program (BCP, 2015).

**Environmental organizations such as the Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS) Zambia:** These are at the heart of REDD+ project implementation through the provision of technical assistance, financial resources and skills in biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. FZS Zambia has frequently collaborated with indigenous communities and government bodies, such as the Department of National Parks and Wildlife, in the formulation of strategies safeguarding forest biomes/ecosystems and species' biodiversity and that are also viable REDD+. Their key roles involve the conduct of biodiversity surveys, provision of training components, and acting as a conduit for community knowledge on conservation, as well as active anti-poaching activities. This participation guarantees that REDD+ activities go beyond carbon emission reduction and act as a safeguard of ecological integrity and a source of sustainable livelihoods (Kalaba, 2018).

### **2.2.3 METHODS USED FOR ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS ON THE LUANGWA COMMUNITY FOREST REDD+ PROJECT**

The Luangwa community project uses multiple approaches to involve their stakeholders. These have been shown to successfully facilitate inclusive decision making and contribute to the effectiveness of forest conservation efforts in the area. Below are a few techniques which are employed.

**Community involvement through Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC):** This process is the right of communities to agree or disagree to proposed projects potentially impacting the lands that they customarily own, reside, or otherwise work. The FPIC principles acknowledge the right of local communities to participate in decisions concerning lands that they customarily use via full and effective involvement.

The FPIC applies to REDD+ regarding potential changes in resource uses that could significantly impact the substantive rights of indigenous peoples and, where relevant, other forest-dependent communities. Under these circumstances, consistent with international human rights instruments and other treaty obligations, potentially impacted people have the right to participate in and consent to or withhold consent from a proposed action. The term FPIC stands for **Free** which refers to consent that has been obtained from communities without force, coercion, intimidation, or pressure from any actor. **Prior** refers to consent that has been sought in advance of any authorization or decision-making related to the implementation of REDD project activities. **Informed** refers to consent that has been obtained through the full disclosure of all relevant information, including all stakeholder perspectives, and which has been provided in appropriate languages and formats. **Consent** that has been obtained in compliance with the principles of FPIC entails that the community has made a full and clear agreement on the terms of the proposed REDD+ project.

FPIC processes have been effective in ensuring that communities have the autonomy to make decisions about their land and resources, hence preventing external parties from overriding local priorities and needs. (Standard Operating Procedure on FPIC in Zambia, 2018).

**Community engagement meetings and workshops:** BioCarbon Partners Limited uses community engagement meetings as a way of engaging stakeholders like residents in communities where implementation of the projects takes place. The meetings are held at regular intervals within their vicinity. During the meetings, residents are sensitized on different topics such the importance of REDD+, and how to raise grievances, or benefit

sharing mechanisms. Sometimes the meetings cover discussing the project objectives, gather feedback, and address concerns (LCFP monthly report, 2024).

The meetings are very effective because community meetings provide a platform for stakeholders to voice concerns, share ideas, and provide feedback. They foster open communication and build trust.

**Assessments:** Every time BCP wants to implement a project, needs assessments are conducted in the communities where the potential project will be implemented. The stakeholders are always involved when it comes to assessments. This is imperative as the stakeholders are part and parcel of the project process and can make decision making when it comes to project design, implementation and monitoring. For example, during needs assessment, community members can express themselves in terms of what kinds of projects they feel should be implemented according to the community's priority.

This process of involving communities is important to enhance Local Knowledge and Contextual understanding as communities possess deep, often nuanced, knowledge about their environment, needs, and challenges. Involving them ensures that any project addresses actual, pressing needs rather than assumed or externally imposed ones. This avoids the risk of developing initiatives that are irrelevant or ineffective. Additionally, needs assessments are very effective methods of engagement as they increase ownership and buy-in as when communities are actively involved from the assessment phase, they are more likely to feel a sense of ownership over the project. This increases their willingness to participate in and support the project long-term, as they perceive it as aligned with their needs and priorities (LCFP Needs Assessment Report, 2024).

**Capacity building:** Capacity building is another method that BCP uses to engage communities on the Luangwa Community Forest REDD+ Project. The goal of capacity-building activities is to empower individuals, organizations, communities and other stakeholders with the knowledge, skills and resources needed to participate effectively in project activities and decision-making processes (BCP Agriculture Report 2024).

## **2.3 CRITIQUE OF THE LITERATURE**

Although this study offers remarkable contributions to the effectiveness of stakeholder engagement, it largely focuses on the positive side but ignores the obvious challenges in this way. Although the literature contains documentation of a positive relationship between stakeholder feedback consolidation and project success, as observed by some researchers such as Turner and Müller (2005), and Reed (2008), it is an unfortunate and recurring focus to shift emphasis from the necessary logistical and political challenges that can occur. The difficulties that are encountered in complex cultural and social environments, for instance in conjunction with REDD+ program, are most important. A more functional view of a real situation, which regards the barriers as a divergence of interests, limited resource, and, hypothetically, power asymmetries, will also give a holistically view.

In any case, a common feature of several studies is that common agreement can be reached that a project's success is marked by an adequate ability to fulfill the requirements and aspirations of a key stakeholder, namely local communities (Turner and Müller 2005). This finding is especially relevant in the context of the Luangwa Community Forest REDD+ project, as any increase in awareness among local community members can be an important trigger for their support and participation in the project, establishing positive results for the same.

## **2.4 KNOWLEDGE GAPS**

The summative review of the literature in relation to the effects of stakeholder engagement on community project results revealed several research gaps related to this work. The following are the research gaps in the existing studies of the subject. The gaps offer a springboard for future research to examine successful stakeholder engagement methods and their short-term influence on project outcomes, especially in complex, community-based settings such as REDD+ projects.

Research states that a lot of money is being spent on community-based projects yet most of such projects have generally failed to bring positive outcomes and sustainable benefits

to the target groups. The study particularly observed that although many projects highlight elements of sustainability in their proposal stage, the actual implementation seems to lack emphasis on sustainability. Authors did not focus on socio-cultural, political, economic and technical factors and their impact on sustainability of community-based work. (Oino et al., 2015).

According to (Boon, et al., 2012) several community projects in Ghana such as, market structures, toilet facilities and boreholes have been abandoned due to little or no stakeholder participation. The implementation of rural development projects in Nigeria has been hampered by the center down approach, where rural people have not played a part in project conception, planning and supervision often resulting in abandonment of many of those worthwhile projects. There is Ineffective Stakeholder engagement as numerous studies document failures in community projects due to insufficient engagement but do not systematically examine how specific engagement shortcomings such as poor communication or lack of inclusivity directly lead to project failures

Stakeholder engagement is a pivotal factor influencing project outcomes. The success of any project, whether it pertains to infrastructure development, technology implementation, or organizational change, is intrinsically linked to the way stakeholders are identified, engaged, and managed throughout their lifecycle. This interaction between stakeholder engagement and delivery outcomes has generated great interest from academics, practitioners and organizations, who are all in search of better delivery performance (Kujala et al, 2022). Literature failed to consider the effect of power dynamics and conflicts that often occur because of the power imbalances between stakeholders on the outcome of a project, i.e., dominant actors masking community voices and leading to conflict, and resistance (Kujala, 2022; Brouwer, 2013).

Globally, development projects that recognize the importance of establishing lasting relationships with target communities and other interested parties throughout its lifecycle, and not merely during design stage, are realizing the benefits of better risk management and positive results. Like, the private and public sectors have also recognized the potential pitfalls that arise from the lack of stakeholder involvement in a good way and the

potential that transpires from a bad one (International Finance Corporation (IFC), 2007). Although it is well reported that stakeholder engagement is desirable at the initiation of projects, there is rather less consideration of how to maintain such engagement through the length of the project lifecycle to achieve project success in the long term.

## **2.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.5.1 STAKEHOLDER THEORY**

The stakeholder theory serves to help explain the context in which a business operates. A stakeholder is described as "any group or individual who is potentially affected or is affected by attainment of the organization's objectives" (Freeman, 1984). These views put an emphasis on the need for interdependence between an organization and its stakeholders. Therefore, it calls for the identification of the need to seek support of the stakeholders through appropriate meaningful engagement.

The model was selected because it explains how organizations take into consideration the concerns of those people or groups whose behavior is impacted by their actions. It identifies the range of stakeholders, including stakeholders with direct interest, intermediaries who advocate on behalf of stakeholder interests, and external regulators who set controls on the organization. Stakeholder relationship and the creation of value for stakeholders are brought to the core of the theory (Mutya and Nnadi, 2023).

Successful stakeholder engagement would result in value creation resulting from dialogue and motivation among the parties concerned (McLaughlin and Osabajo, 2020). Other scholars and researchers have argued and concluded that successful stakeholder engagement could be a source of reputation gains, facilitate commitment and promoting cooperation amongst stakeholders and corporations, foster project success and stakeholder satisfaction, promote ethically sound decision-making and balanced diverse claims, encourage trust and legitimacy to operate in each environment, and foster economic benefits (Cennamo et al., 2006). However, Reed (2008) argued that the quality of decisions made through stakeholder engagement is firmly dependent on the nature of

the process leading to such decisions. This is consistent with Holmes (2011) assertion that stakeholder engagement involves different ongoing activities and/or processes that build trust and relationships. Building on these arguments, this study will, therefore, adopt Reed's series of eight practices for conducting successful engagements that lead to project success and further lead to stakeholder satisfaction.

In summary, Stakeholder Theory posits that organizations should consider the interests of all stakeholders, not just shareholders, in decision-making processes. This theory emphasizes the importance of engaging stakeholders to create value and achieve sustainable outcomes (Freeman, 2020). In the context of the suggested topic, Stakeholder Theory provides a theoretical framework for understanding the significance of stakeholder engagement in project management and its potential impact on project success metrics.

The stakeholder theory lies in its holistic approach to business ethics and decision-making. It fosters stronger relationships and trust between the organization and its stakeholders, encourages corporate responsibility, and helps to mitigate risks associated with conflicts of interest. By considering the needs and concerns of a broad range of stakeholders, organizations can achieve greater innovation, enhance their reputation, and ensure long-term viability in a socially responsible manner.

### **2.5.2 MULTI-STAKEHOLDER THEORY**

The Multi-Governance Theory, also known as Multi-Level Governance (MLG), is a framework used to understand how decision-making and power distribution occur across multiple levels of governance, from local to global scales. It emerged primarily in the context of European Union studies but has since been widely applied to various policy and governance settings, including environmental management, climate change policy, and natural resource governance. The theory challenges the traditional hierarchical model of governance, which assumes that national governments hold the primary authority, by highlighting the interactions between supranational, national, regional, and local actors in shaping policies and outcomes (Hooghe, L., & Marks, G. 2001).

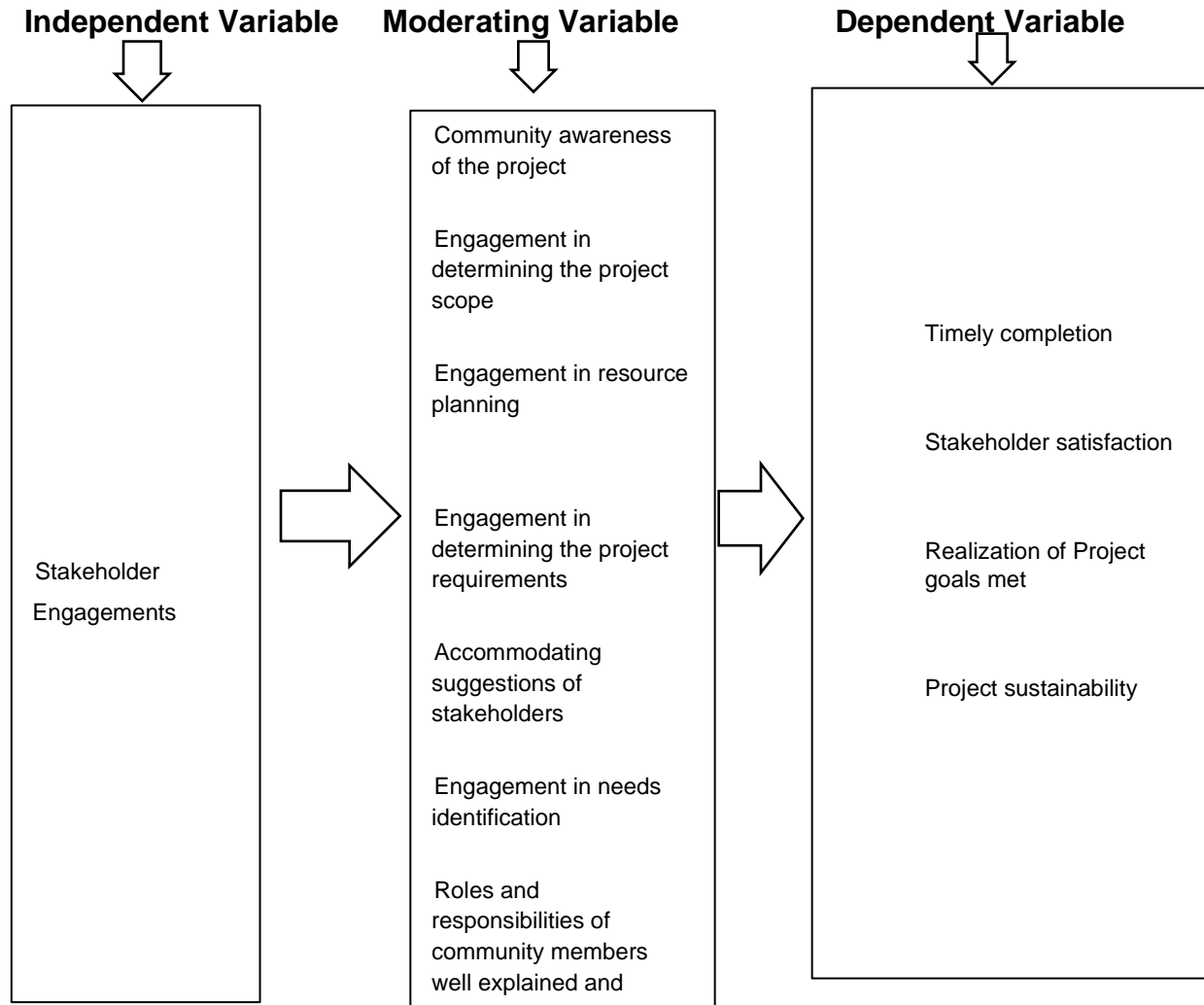
A key feature of Multi-Governance Theory is its recognition that authority and decision-making are not concentrated in a single level of government but are dispersed among multiple actors, including state and non-state entities. These actors include governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector, and local communities. The theory emphasizes that governance occurs through complex networks of cooperation, negotiation, and power-sharing, rather than being dictated solely by central governments. This perspective is particularly relevant for global environmental governance, where challenges such as climate change and deforestation require coordinated efforts at multiple levels (Hooghe, L., & Marks, G. 2001).

In the context of projects such as REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation), Multi-Governance Theory provides a useful lens to analyze how different stakeholders, from local communities to international donors, influence decision-making and benefit-sharing. It helps explain the interactions between global climate initiatives, national governments implementing policies, and local communities directly affected by conservation efforts. By understanding governance as a multi-level process, policymakers and researchers can better address challenges related to inclusivity, participation, and equity in environmental governance

## **2.6 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

It is a conceptualization of the relationship and interactions among the variables informing the study to achieve the objectives of the research. According to Kothari (2004), the independent variable, also called explanatory variable, is defined as the assumed cause of the variations of the dependent variable. The dependent variable is the one that the researcher wants to expound. A conceptual framework aims to describe and categorize concepts relating to the study and draw relations amongst themselves. This will help map the research environment or conceptual scope, identify gaps in literature, systematize relations among concepts and define Concepts. This is graphically shown below.

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework



The conceptual framework above is crucial as it provides a structured foundation for understanding and analyzing the research problem. It helps in defining the key variables and their relationships, that is the relationship between stakeholder engagements and project outcomes.

## CONCLUSION

The aim of this chapter was to focus attention on the literature available on the research question. According to Literature, the LCFP REDD+ Project highlights the importance of effective stakeholder engagements in the success of community-based conservation and climate mitigation initiatives. Key players such as community members, local leadership,

partners, government organizations like DNPW have been very instrumental in shaping the project's outcomes. Their roles come with unique perspectives and resources, contributing to governance, capacity building, policy enforcement, and conservation efforts which are further contribute to project success.

Several studies have also highlighted that stakeholder engagement is an integral part of an optimal delivery of project outputs and if well-executed community engagement process enables the stakeholders to collaborate towards the betterment of mankind, mitigation of undesired environmental impacts, and achieving economic sustainability of the project (Maina, 2013). So, stakeholder engagement, in turn, should be taken as an integral component in every sustainable development project (Golicha, 2010). From the perspectives of governments and international organizations, it's of great significance that community projects can apply various engagement methods to ensure their success in achieving the respective project outcomes as there is a strong relationship between stakeholder engagements and project outcomes.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

Research is a study or investigation to discover facts or gain information. It is a universal activity by which a specific phenomenon is studied objectively to create a valid concept of that phenomenon. The process of research simply constitutes the formulation of a problem, from which may flow a question, or questions and the methods used to gain the information needed to answer it or them. (Fox and Bayati, 2007).

According to (Goundar, 2012) research is a logical and systematic search for new and useful information on a particular topic. It is an investigation of finding solutions to scientific and social problems through objective and systematic analysis. It is a search for knowledge, that is, a discovery of hidden truths. Here knowledge means information about matters. The information might be collected from different sources like experience, human beings, books, journals, nature, to mention but a few.

This chapter will provide a basis for how the research topic will be approached; it will state the methodology that will be employed. The chapter will also look at the research approach, study design, study population, sample size, sampling techniques, data collection instruments, data analysis, Validity and Reliability of the Measuring Instrument, Anonymity and Confidentiality, Time horizon of the research, statistics, pretesting, Ethical Consideration

### **3.2 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY**

The research philosophy will be pragmatism (Rashid, 2023). This befits the mixed-methods design since we will apply both quantitative and qualitative methods (Creswell, 2014). This allows us to capitalize on the strengths of both approaches. Quantitative methods, emanating from positivism, will enable data collection in measurable form and test hypotheses. Qualitative methods offer an in-depth knowledge of participants' experiences, thereby adding to our knowledge of the research phenomenon.

### **3.3 RESEARCH METHODS AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.3.1 RESEARCH METHODS**

Research methods are the various procedures, schemes, and algorithms used in research. All the methods used by a researcher during a research study are termed as research methods. They are essentially planned, scientific and value neutral. They include theoretical procedures, experimental studies, numerical schemes, statistical approaches to mention but a few. Research methods help us collect samples, data and find a solution to a problem. Particularly, scientific research methods call for explanations based on collected facts, measurements and observations and not on reasoning alone. They accept only those explanations which can be verified by experiments (Goundar, 2012).

#### **3.3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

(Schwardt,2007) describes research methodology as a theory of how an enquiry ought to proceed. It is a process of examining the assumptions, principles and methods of a given methodology of inquiry. Additional methodologies illustrate and clarify the types of issues to be studied and what can be considered, a researchable issue, testable hypotheses, how such an issue may be formulated so that it can be studied using designs and procedures and how, given a problem, to select and build the necessary tools with which to collect data.

Research methodology is defined by its fundamental and explicit function as a systematic and organized framework for designing and conducting research studies. Research methodology furnishes a structure for the design, conduct, and analysis of studies in a systematic and consistent way. Above all, it has the potential to guarantee that research outputs are believable, replicability and worthwhile (Jaffer, et al., 2023).

#### **3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The research adopts mixed-methods type. The research design adopted in the study was an embedded design (George, 2023). Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analyzed at the same time, but within a larger quantitative design. The qualitative data was secondary to the quantitative. This was an ideal approach taken due to limited time and resources.

The study employed an embedded research design that integrates both qualitative and quantitative data to provide a comprehensive understanding of complex research phenomena by leveraging the strengths of both methodological approaches.

### **3.4.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF RESEARCH DESIGNS**

According to (Shivani, 2020), a good research design should always fulfill the following four characteristics: objectivity, reliability, validity and generalizability of the findings.

**Objectivity:** The findings are said to be objective when they pertain to the method of data collection and the scoring of the responses. The objectivity in respect of the procedure may be judged by the degree of agreement between the final scores assigned to various people by more than one independent observer. The more the agreement among the observers the more objective are the observation, recording and evaluation of the responses. Therefore, a good research design should permit objective measuring instruments in which every observer visualizing a performance comes to the same conclusion.

**Reliability:** The question of reliability of knowledge is usually raised when the presence of a problem arouses in the knower a demand, not only for something more than mere conjecture, but for something for which it shall be useful in each situation and perhaps in other similar situations. Reliable knowledge means any claim that is substantiated as trustworthy for a given purpose.

**Validity:** Validity implies self-consistency or absence of self-contradiction. It is identified with formal truth or self-consistency. Valid reasoning conforms to the rules of correct reasoning. It is that type of reasoning where conclusions automatically follow from the premises legitimately.

**Generalizability:** The degree of generalizability is known in terms of the replicability and reproducibility of the findings despite different measures and settings respectively.

## **3.5 TYPES OF RESEARCH DESIGNS**

### **3.5.1 EXPLORATORY STUDY**

Exploratory research is conducted when enough is not known about a phenomenon and a problem that has not been clearly defined (Saunders et al., 2007). It does not aim to provide the final and conclusive answers to the research questions but merely explores the research topic with varying levels of depth. Therefore, its theme is to tackle new problems on which little or no previous research has been done (Brown, 2006). Even in the extreme case, exploratory research forms the basis for more conclusive research and determines the initial research design, sampling methodology and data collection method (Singh, 2007).

### **3.5.2 DESCRIPTIVE STUDY**

(Loganathan, 2013) states that descriptive research describes characteristics about a subject that is under investigation. Descriptions are used for frequencies, averages and other calculations. Although this type of research is factual and statistically accurate, it may not explain what caused a situation. Therefore, this type of research cannot be utilized to establish causal relationships between variables, and it may also have a low requirement for internal validity. Generally, a survey is conducted to gather primary data for statistical evaluation and analysis which researchers can utilize to draw observations and arguments from.

### **3.5.3 EXPLANATORY STUDIES**

The study of exploring a new universe, one that has not been studied earlier that research work is called explanatory research design. It is also defined as the research work of a topic that has been studied before or had not been well explained previously in the proper way. The main purpose of this research design is to gain familiarity in unknown (Inaam. A, 2016). Explanatory research design always starts with a theory or hypothesis and after gathering evidence it approves or disapproves a theory. Explanatory study always carries with a set of concepts that guide the researcher to look for the facts. Explanatory Research is designed for a problem that has not been thoroughly researched before, that

requires priorities, that produces performance descriptions and provides a better researched model. It is a type of research design that focuses on explaining the features of your research in a detailed way. The researcher begins with a common view and uses research as a tool that can lead to future studies. It is intended to provide information where a limited amount of information is available for a particular product in the mind of that researcher.

#### **3.5.4 EVALUATIVE STUDIES**

Evaluation studies are comprehensive evaluations of design, implementation and effect of a project, program or policy to gauge its effectiveness and efficiency. The aim is to evaluate the extent to which the activity fulfills its targets, to point out points where there is room for enhancement, and to be able to take strategic decisions for future planning. Evaluation studies have been known to consider both quantitative and qualitative data and to look at processes, outputs, and impacts (Rossi, Lipsey, and Freeman 2004).

#### **3.6 RESEARCH STRATEGY**

What is referred to as a research strategy (Garima, 2017) is a plan or scheme of how work is to be done towards the acquisition and evaluation of information discovered. It covers the general one, measurements of data/processes, principles of analysis of data/processes, and the reasoning for selection of methods. The approach guarantees that the research is systematic, stable, and can lead to valid results. It thus formulates the data collection and analysis activities of how specific types of data will be selected and analyzed to respond to the questions of the research.

In this paper, a mixed-methods research design is used along with both qualitative and quantitative methods to provide an exhaustive investigation of the research topic. The quantitative dimension will rely on a questionnaire to obtain quantitative data, which is then amenable to statistical processing and generally applicable results. Qualitative components will include interviews to extract rich and contextually grounded views. The aim of the study is to integrate these modalities so that quantitative results can be enriched with qualitative information allowing a more integrated understanding of the

research phenomenon. The mixed-methods approach is used to facilitate triangulation, improve data validity, and provide a detailed examination of results that accommodates both breadth and depth in the research questions.

### **3.7 STUDY POPULATION**

While describing population, (Burn & Groove, 2003) describe population as all the elements that meet certain criteria for inclusion in a study. The population is therefore an entire set of people, services, elements and objects that have generally visible features. Therefore, the target population of the study will be household heads from communities, project managers, representatives from the community resource board, headmen, representatives from the department of national parks and wildlife, and Forestry department.

### **3.8 SAMPLE SIZE**

A sample is a group of people, objects or items that are taken from a large population for a measurement. The sample should be representative of the population to ensure that we can generalize the findings from the research sample to the population (Never, 2016).

To sample the study population, a Raosoft Online Sample Size Calculator (Daniel, 2021) was used to determine the number of respondents required. The confidence level was 95 percent, which refers to the amount of uncertainty that can be tolerated and had a margin of error of 10 percent. The sample used was the number of households in the Luangwa Community Forest REDD+ Project which currently is at 49,379 (BCP Impact Report, 2023). After the calculation using the sample calculator, a total of 385 households was estimated which was then used to randomly sample 385 household heads.

Additionally, to get some qualitative data, key informants were conveniently sampled to be interviewed and among them were 5 headmen, 17 chairpersons from each Community Forest Management groups, 5 Sector managers. 1 representative from the Departments of National Parks, and 1 representative from the Forestry Department, 2 staff from

Municipal council and 3 staff from partner organizations bringing the total number of stakeholders interviewed to 33.

All the respondents involved in the entire study were adults above the age of 21 years old to ensure they have reached a level of legal adulthood, maturity, and life experience necessary for informed decision-making, which enhances the validity of their responses, and reduces ethical concerns.

### **3.9 SAMPLING TECHNIQUES**

The research will use simple random sampling and purposive sampling which are probability and non-probability methods, respectively.

In simple random sampling, the sample is drawn from the population such that every member of the population has an equal "chance" from the pool of draws in the first and each subsequent draw is a simple random sample (Fox and Bayati, 2007).

The objective is to guarantee that every individual in the population has an identical opportunity of inclusion in the sample, in such a way as to produce a representative sample of all the individuals in the population. This procedure will lead to reduce bias and increase the chance that the sample is representative of the population.

Convenient sampling, convenience (or accessibility) sample is obtained when the most practical or accessible units of population are chosen as people interviewed at random in a shopping center for a television program. You continue the process by which the sample is selected, until the desired sample size is met (Fox and Bayati, 2007).

### **3.10 DATA COLLECTION/INSTRUMENTS**

Data collection instruments are the tools used to collect data, such as paper questionnaires or computer-assisted interviews. Examples, Checklists, Interviews, Occasional Checks, and Surveys or Questionnaires are all tools used to collect data (Anupama, 2022).

The research used both the Survey Questionnaire and an Interview guide to collect quantitative and qualitative data respectively. This was done to identify patterns, trends, and statistical relationships from quantitative data and while also to explore the underlying reasons, perceptions, and contextual factors influencing these patterns.

Furthermore, this study utilized a triangulation approach to integrate the strengths of both data sets, enhancing the validity of the findings and ensuring robust conclusions on the research topic.

The study used the following data collection instruments:

### **3.10.1 SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE**

The survey questionnaire was used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data on stakeholder engagement and its impact on community project outcomes. The Survey questionnaire was administered to 385 household heads participants to ensure that a substantial dataset is obtained.

The questionnaire consisted of open and closed-ended questions where the respondents recorded their answers. In some instances, close-ended questions consisted of a likert scale for respondents to record their degree of assessment of an issue. The Likert scale as observed by (Upagade & Shende, 2012) is good as it measures people's attitudes, perception and behavior towards certain objects, services, products and events. These questionnaires were self-administered. Self-administration of the questionnaires was deemed fit because it would tackle the concerns of information reliability by reducing and removing variations in the questions asked. 385 household heads were randomly sampled from the communities and survey questionnaires were administered to them.

### **3.10.2 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS**

Semi-structured interview guides were used to get insights from the perspective of the service providers and implementers. This tool was used to enable the researcher to get in-depth information (Kothari, 2004) as a way of getting an understanding from the professionals' point of view. 33 key stakeholders were interviewed to ensure a rich and

diverse set of qualitative data. This enabled us to collect detailed information on the impact of stakeholders on community projects.

### **3.11 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE**

The research collected data by using a questionnaire and an interview guide. The data collection entailed the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. The qualitative data (non-numerical data) was collected using the interview guide. This data was also collected from the open-ended questions where the responses were recorded by the respondents. The quantitative data was collected using the closed questions where the responses were scored on a numerical scale. These instruments were developed to contain the items that helped in achieving the objectives of the study.

### **3.12 TYPES DATA SOURCES**

Data is a word that describes valid information that can help a researcher answer his/her question(s). It can be understood as the result of observations. There are basically two sources of data which are primary and secondary sources (Douglas, 2015).

#### **3.12.1 PRIMARY DATA SOURCE**

Original information or primary data (i.e., data, information created or generated directly from the event, time, or individual that is being studied) are referred to as primary sources. These sources provide personal testimony and direct evidence in the matter in question. Examples of primary sources of data include focus group discussions, Interviews, Observation and case students (Jaffer, et al., 2023).

Therefore, the current study also collected main data by a questionnaire and an interview protocol, respectively, which were repeatedly surveyed to the respondents.

#### **3.12.2 SECONDARY DATA SOURCE**

Secondary sources are interpretations, analyses, or summarizations of primary sources or other secondary sources. These sources offer background, interpretation and

comments on an area of interest. They are written by people who were not present at the time and places they describe. Secondary sources are bibliotherapy books, articles, and documentaries (Jaffer et al., 2023).

To obtain secondary data, this study applied a variety of sources, namely, books, Articles, Online materials and various literatures involved in stakeholder engagement.

### **3.13 DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE**

(Burn & Groove, 2003) define data analysis as a process of reducing and organizing data to produce results that demand interpretation from the researcher. According to Hyndman (2008) analysis of data encompasses coding, editing, and data entry. With the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Excel data collected was arranged and converted to quantitative format for ease in analysis. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically. The statistics generated were frequencies, descriptive and inferential.

### **3.14 ANALYSIS OF DATA**

Quantitative data from in-depth interviews was statistically explored using Statistical package for the Social Sciences and Excel to find patterns, correlations, and trends regarding stakeholder engagement and project results. Qualitative data from interviews was analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes, perceptions, and recommendations associated with stakeholder engagement. Integration of quantitative and qualitative results will yield an integrated understanding of the research topic, to enable triangulation that can further increase the validity and reliability of the results.

### **3.15 DATA VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY**

Means to ensure the quality (validity and reliability) of reported data are presented, such as the application of questionnaire piloting to check both clarity and pertinence. To maintain the validity and reliability of the research results, by following the accepted validity and reliability criteria of the study, the study would like to guarantee the accuracy and credibility of the research results.

**Validity** is explained to the extent to which the measures or devices selected to be used in the study represent the theoretical concepts under study (Mugenda, 2003). Measures were also taken to make the data obtained via multiple methods valid in our study.

1. **Content Validity:** Bollen (1989:185) defined content validity as a qualitative type of validity where the domain of the concept is made clear and the analyst judges whether the measures fully represent the domain.
2. **Predictive Validity:** This is another statistical approach to validity that estimates the relationship of test scores to an examinee's future performance as a master or non-master. Predictive validity considers the questions, how well does the test predict examinees future status as master's or non-master? (Bollen 1989:185)
3. **Construct Validity:** It implies using the construction correctly (concepts, ideas, notions). Construct validity seeks agreement between a theoretical concept and a specific measuring device or procedure (Bollen 1989:185).

**Reliability** is an index of the degree to which a research instrument produces consistent results or data when tested repeatedly over time (Mugenda, Mugenda, 2003)

**Internal Consistency:** Internal consistency reliability was calculated on scales or indices used in the questionnaire based on tests (e.g., Cronbach's alpha). Scores on each scale were checked for both collocation and consistency, such that the scale produced consistent results. In our study a 5-like-art-scale was applied in the survey questionnaire. The scale items were probed, and we achieved a Cronbach's alpha of 0.82. This score suggests that the scale of validity is high. Below are the results from the test:

**Table 1: Reliability Statistics**

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.820	.839	3

### **3.16 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

This research faced several limitations such as respondents not being fully truthful during the interviews and wanting to provide what they think the researcher wanted to hear as opposed to what is the exact situation. To counter this, the researcher assured the respondents' anonymity and confidentiality telling them that the feedback was only for the purpose of the study.

Further, it was difficult to access some of the Key stakeholders like the officials from line ministries such as the Ministry of Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW), and Forestry Department (FD) due to their busy schedules. This was solved by attempting to reach them via electronic means, for instance the use of emails and direct phone calls.

The research also faced time constraints in collecting information. This was because the time within which the study needed to be accomplished was minimal hence the researcher had to work tirelessly to ensure that the scope was covered within the allocated time frame.

### **3.17 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION**

Ethical considerations in research are a set of principles that guide your research designs and practices. Scientists and researchers must always adhere to a certain code of conduct when collecting data from people (Pritha, 2021).

The study ensured that ethical guidelines were adhered to throughout the study, ensuring participant anonymity, informed consent, and confidentiality of sensitive information.

### **3.18 PILOT TESTING OF THE INSTRUMENTS**

Different authors have described pilot study as a practice that makes sure errors are confined at a minimal cost. It is carried out to ascertain the reliability and validity of data collection tools (Saunders, et al., 2009). The pilot study was done to a totally different group and those engaged in the pilot study such some community members were not incorporated in the final research to prevent research fatigue and tiresome.

### **3.19 CONCLUSION**

The methodology used for the study in this chapter was described elaborately including the methodology used for providing the best response to the research questions. A quasi-experimental mixed-methods design designed to understand a study built on stakeholder interaction and its effect on community project outcome has been adopted for the Luangwa Community Forest REDD+ project as case study.

Both simple random and convenient random sampling were used as a sampling method to select the respondents. Data collection took place through a questionnaire with closed and open answer questions and a key Informant Guide.

This approach was designed to improve both the reproducibility and validity of research outputs. Through rigorous data collection and analysis techniques, this study aimed at generating valuable insights into stakeholder engagements and its impact on community project outcomes. Results of this methodology will be discussed and further explored in subsequent chapters, in the context of the major research goals and in the elaboration of new knowledge within this area.

## CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the results from the survey questionnaire administered to the household heads and the interview responses given by the other stakeholders involved in the project. Themes were drawn from the data and the quantitative data was used to describe the study population.

### 4.2 SURVEY RESULTS

#### 4.2.1 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

The demographic composition of the survey respondents by age group and gender revealed the following: on one hand, the number of males and females was almost equal: 198 to 187. Other grouped categories for age included 21–25, 26–35, 36–45, and 46–65+.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Survey Participants

No.	Age Range	Female	Male	Frequency	Percentage
1	21-25	34	60	94	24.4%
2	26-35	50	52	102	26.5%
3	36-45	53	43	96	24.9%
4	46-65+	50	43	93	24.2%
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>187</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>385</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

The most typical age group was 26–35 years, with 102 respondents (26.5%), followed by the age groups 36–45 and 21–25 years, with 96 (24.9%) and 94 respondents (24.4%), respectively. The senior cohort, defined as 46–65+, had 93 respondents (24.2%). All this provides an equitable representation of the different age categories and genders, indicating a heterogeneous sample and, thus, offering a wide demographic framework for the subsequent analysis of the survey findings.

#### 4.2.2 AWARENESS OF STAKEHOLDERS AMONG SURVEY RESPONDENTS

The survey results showed that most respondents (378 out of 385, or 98.2% knew about the stakeholders in the project. Seven respondents (1.8% reported that they did not know their stakeholder. Most respondents were quite informed about the project and about the major protagonists thereof.

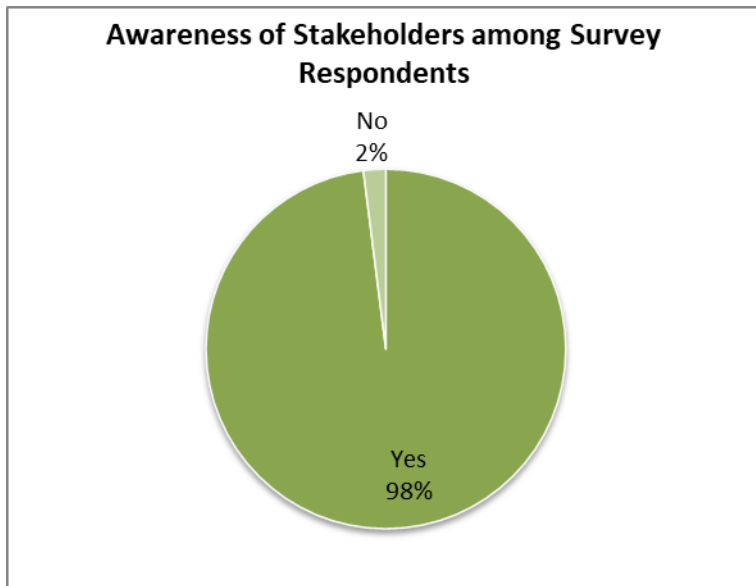
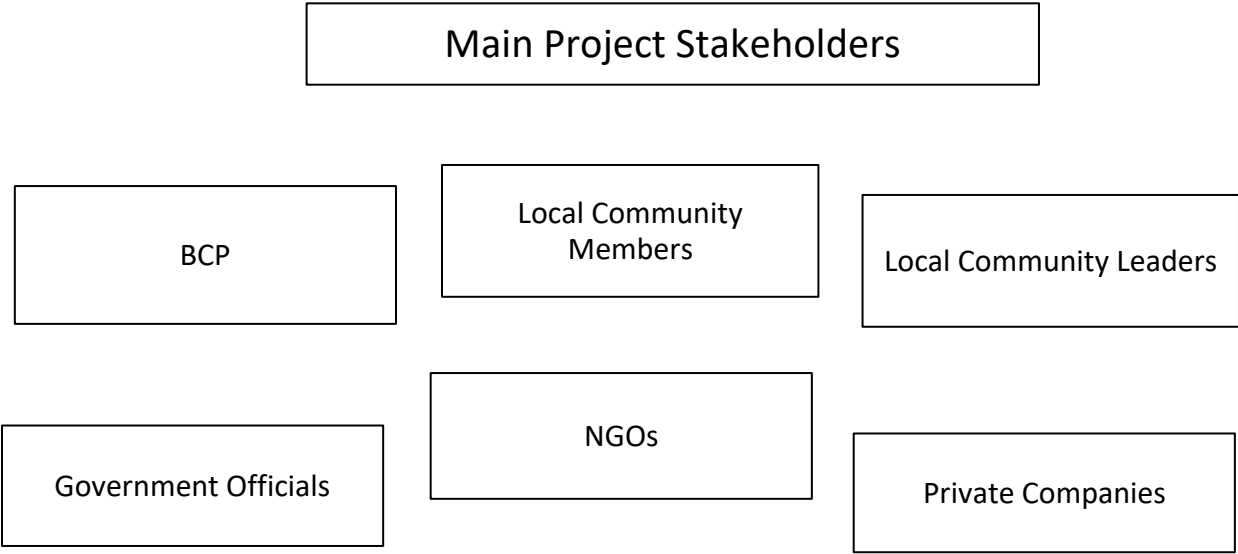


Figure 3: Awareness of Stakeholders among Survey Respondents

#### 4.2.3 STAKEHOLDERS PRESENT WITHIN THE PROJECT

The main project stakeholders identified by the survey respondents were Local community leaders, Government officials and BCP. There were mentions of other private companies, international donors and NGOs.



**Figure 4: Identified Project Main Stakeholders**

**4.2.4 STAKEHOLDER ROLES IN THE LCFP PROJECT**

An analysis of stakeholder roles in the project showed that collaboration in execution, coupled with clearly spelt-out responsibilities, is an important ingredient to success in achieving the goals of the initiative. Stakeholders, therefore, play key roles in thematic areas such as environmental awareness, conflict resolution, resource allocation, and project administration. Some major activities will involve training and empowering local populations to create a culture of sustainability through creating a heightened degree of environmental awareness and holding community workshops. Conflicts resolution efforts encourage proper coordination and remove barriers among the communities, hence a good environment for project implementation.

**Table 4: Stakeholder Roles in the LCFP Project**

<b>Stakeholder Roles in the Project</b>
Increase environmental awareness
Engage in conflict resolution
Coordinate and manage project activities
Monitor and evaluate project progress
Organize community workshops and training
Provide funding for community initiatives
Distribute resources such as farming inputs and livestock
Monitor and evaluate project progress
Organize community workshops and training
Coordinate and manage project activities
Provide funding for community initiatives
Increase environmental awareness
Engage in conflict resolution
Distribute resources such as farming inputs and livestock

Second, stakeholders are obligated to sustain coordination, management, and monitoring of project activities. These factors guarantee that all aspects of the project are critically considered in terms of progress and impact. Stakeholder funding via financial contribution provides the necessary funds for community -based projects). Also, supply of basic livelihood goods and services, such as agricultural inputs and livestock, upgrades the local farmers" way of farming. Together, these functions contribute to the establishment of a cohesive and lasting model of community development in which all stakeholders cooperate and symbiotically complement each other as in achieving short-term sustainability of the community against the long-term sustainability of the same.

#### 4.2.5 MOST FREQUENT STAKEHOLDER INTERACTION

The survey results on stakeholder interactions highlight the central role of BCP, which had the highest frequency of interactions at 381 responses, representing 99.0% of the total sample. It is shown that BCP is the main nexus of project activities.

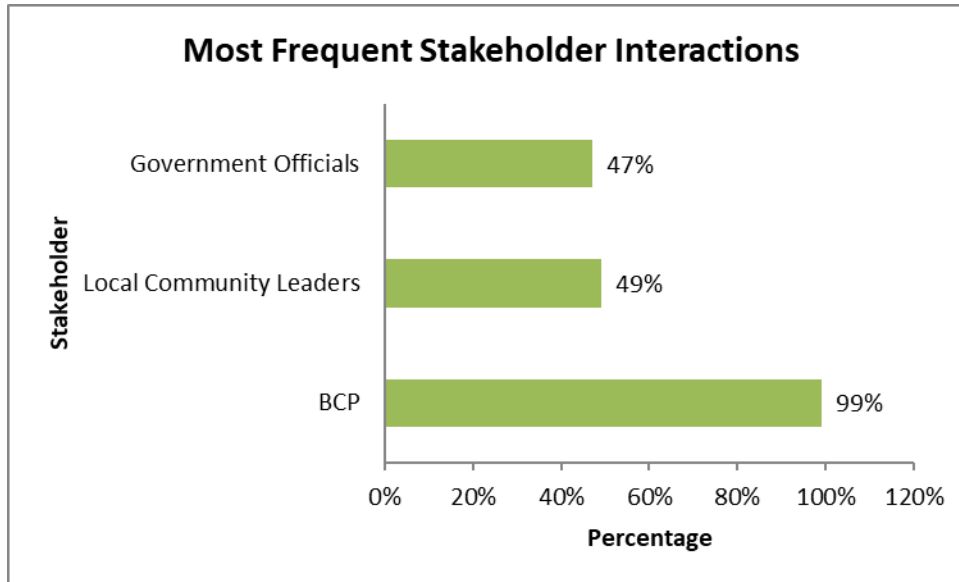


Figure 5: Most Frequent Stakeholder Interactions

Local community leaders (n 187, 48.6% highly engaged, likely for grassroots coordination and community engagement). Government guidance, professional review group (n=181, 47.0%, or regulation (n=181, 47.0%. Overall, these findings suggest the use of a collaborative approach, where each team brings something to the project through a period of periodic, specific collaboration between the teams.

#### 4.2.6 METHODS OF ENGAGEMENT BY STAKEHOLDERS

Results of the survey regarding stakeholder engagement practices demonstrate observed levels of involvement in various activities. Workshops and meetings are the most encountered interactive methods with each a frequency of 84 which represent the strength of the methods for interaction and knowledge sharing. Capacity building activities

are closely trailed by 78 examples, highlighting the focus on skill development and capacity building across the stakeholder group.

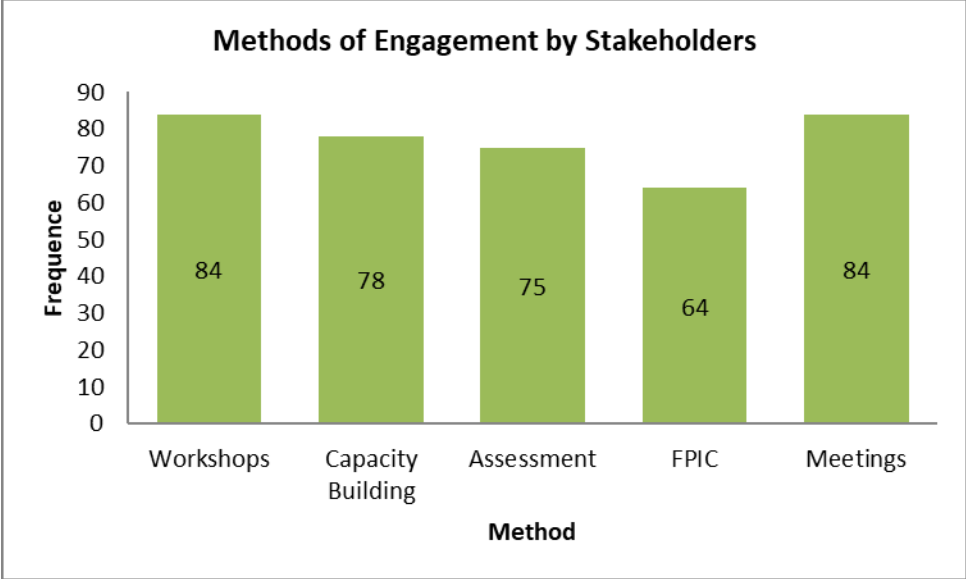
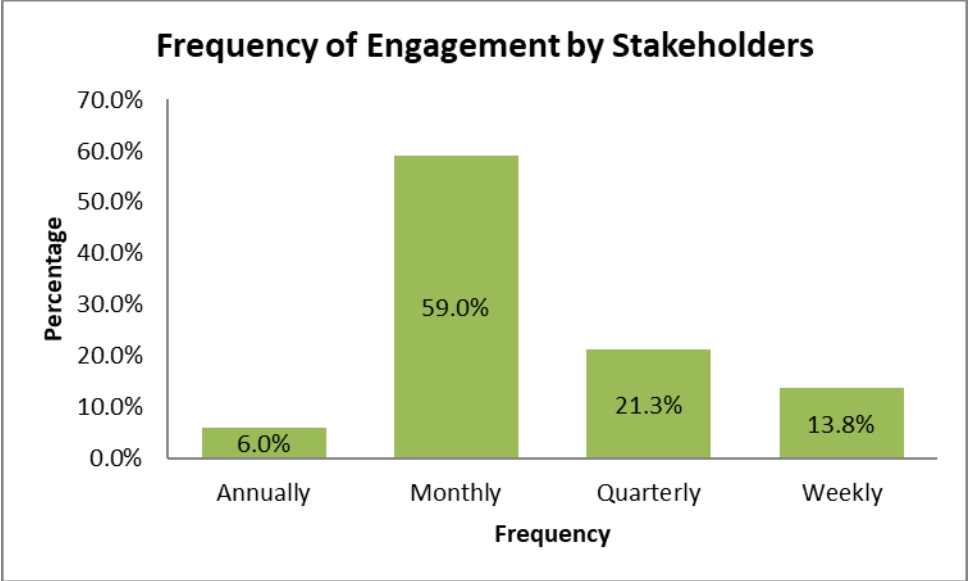


Figure 6: Methods of Engagement by Stakeholders

The assessments (recorded 75 times) indicate concentration on data collection and project review. In the end, FPIC (Free, Prior, and Informed Consent) couplings appear 64 times, illustrating the attempts to secure community consent and participation in the making of the decision. These approaches cumulatively show an integrated model of participation, which includes structured meetings, capacity building, and the formation of consent processes.

#### 4.2.7 FREQUENCY OF ENGAGEMENT BY STAKEHOLDERS

The information regarding the frequency of stakeholder engagement showed preferences for monthly contact, representing 58.96% of all contacts. This frequency implies a commitment to consistent postings and continued collaboration between parties. The remaining most frequent pattern is quarterly engagements, 21.30%, probably employed for cyclical checks and monitoring the course.

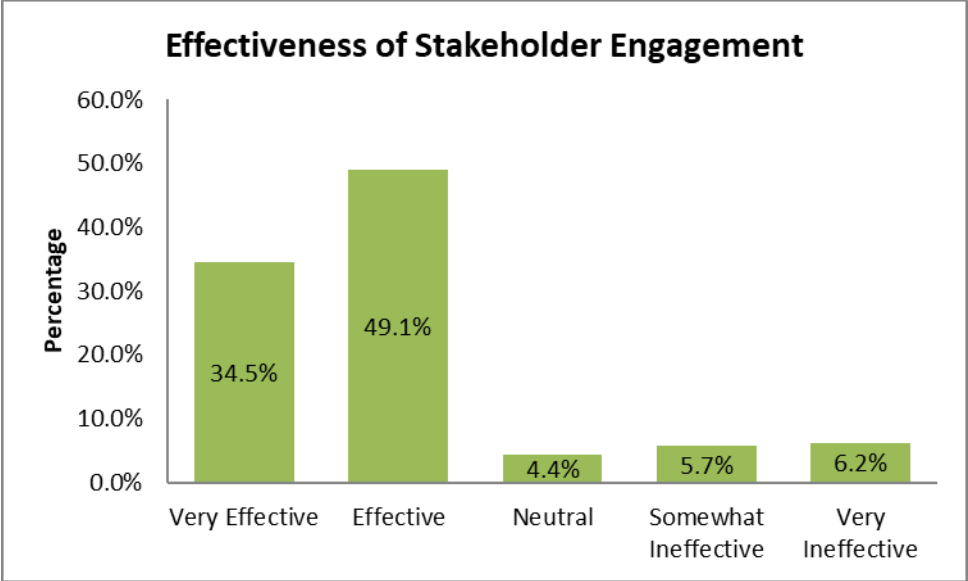


**Figure 7: Frequency of Engagement by Stakeholders**

Weekly interaction, constituting 13.77%, characterizes high engagement in different steps of the project cycle or activities controlled carefully (e.g. Annual appointments, at 5.97%, are the least common event, which may be kept exclusive to major reviews or strategic decision-making exercises. These frequencies suggest a monitoring strategy which combines constant surveillance with focused, deep coordination.

**4.2.8 EFFECTIVENESS OF STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

There is a positive report on the effects of stakeholder engagement. A significant portion of respondents, 49.1%, rated the engagements as "effective," while an additional 34.5% considered them "very effective". These responses combined total 83.6% suggesting that primary stakeholders consider the engagement methods to be valuable and effective.



**Figure 8: Effectiveness of Stakeholder Engagement**

In contrast, only a few percent considered the interaction to be negative, 5.7% found the intervention to be “somewhat ineffective”, and 6.2% “very ineffective. Only 4.4% of respondents remained neutral. Overall, these findings highlight the effectiveness of the engagement approach, with the majority recognizing its positive impact.

**4.2.9 NOTABLE SUCCESSES DUE TO STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

Stakeholder engagement has already made its contribution to several of the project's multiple successes as evidenced by the number of answers that mentioned some of the successes. Most respondents (143) reported an increase in social and economic resources, and this indicates that the project has improved the economic status of the community and provided opportunities to access essential needs.

**Table 5: Notable Successes Due to Stakeholder Engagement**

<b>Project Success</b>	<b>Frequence</b>
Improved social and economic resources	143
Increased environmental awareness	122
Reduced deforestation	120

Furthermore, 122 respondents also attributed increased awareness of the environmental issues to being a great success, indicating that stakeholders have successfully advanced sustainable behaviors and given voice to environmental problems in the community. Finally, the decrease in depression (reported by 120 respondents), also emphasizes the strength of the project on the conservation actions. These achievements together illustrate the importance of active participation from stakeholders in achieving social and environmental targets, facilitating sustainable development and environmental conservation.

### 4.3 INTERVIEW RESULTS

#### 4.3.1 STAKEHOLDER CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PROJECT

This stakeholder involvement adds significantly to the success of the project by enabling the project to incorporate policy advice that is appropriate to implement measures, which are aimed to be in line with Zambia Forestry Act of 2015 and Zambia Wildlife Act of 2015. They actively recruit communities and are sure that community voices are considered in project discussions and thereby participatory processes of decision-making are present.

**Table 6: Specific Contributions of Stakeholders to the Project**

<b>Specific Contributions of Stakeholders to the Project</b>
Policy guidance to align local initiatives with national environmental regulations
Mobilizing the community and ensuring local voices are represented in project discussions.
Aligning the project activities with the Zambia Forestry Act of 2015
Aligning the project activities with the Zambia Wildlife Act of 2015
Technical insights on forest conservation practices
Facilitated critical activities like community training and infrastructure.
Ensuring policies align with REDD+ Standards.

They also contribute to the technical aspect of forest conservation practices, which shapes and guides the activities of the project. They also help conduct major project activities, such as community training and the establishment of needed infrastructure, which aids in project implementation. In addition, stakeholders ensure that policies related

to projects are in line with the standards of REDD+, thus ensuring consistency with international environmental frameworks. These contributions are of great importance in balancing the local, national, and international environmental goals of the project.

#### 4.3.2 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND ITS IMPACT ON PROJECT SUCCESS

When asked how stakeholder engagement affected the outcome of the project, interviewees, 77.8% of respondents, stressed the positive role of stakeholder engagement with respect to establishing trust, community involvement, and long-term commitment to the outcome of the project. Nevertheless, problems still exist, because 13.9% felt negative affects due to the priority and resource title conflicts and constraints of the participants, contrary to the progress.

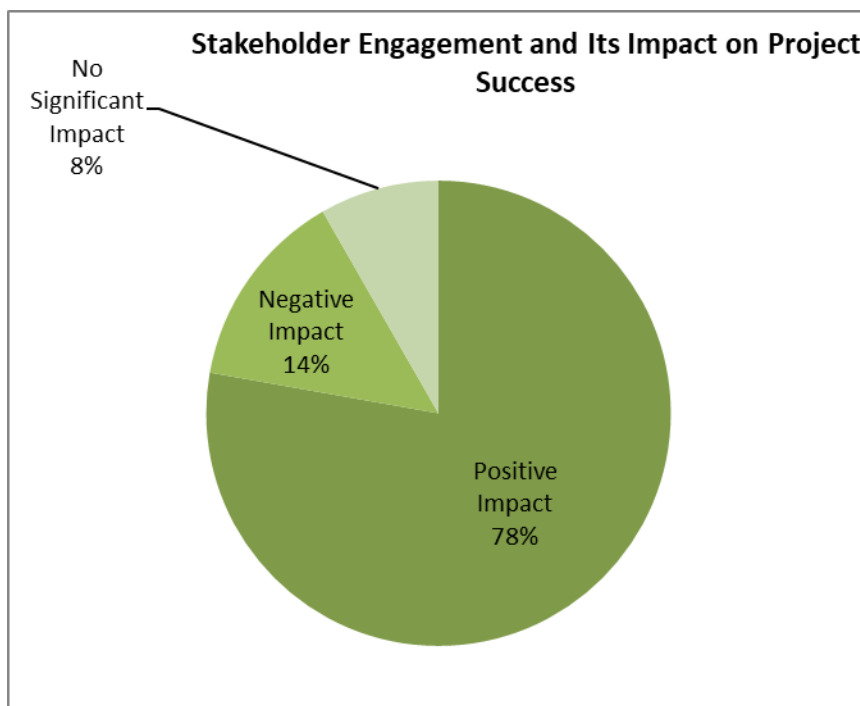


Figure 9: Stakeholder Engagement and Its Impact on Project Success

Furthermore, 8.3% reported no perceptible effect, explaining it by the disinvestment of some stakeholders, in spite of the included efforts. These findings emphasize the role of purposeful stakeholder management in conflict mitigation and disengagement coupled with utilization of the collaborative advantages in pursuit of project objectives.

#### 4.3.4 POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE OUTCOMES OF STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Interview results show an array of positive and negative consequences resulting from stakeholder engagement. On the one hand, policy harmonization based on stakeholder engagement has allowed more efficient implementation of projects and thereby mitigated clashes. Community forest ownership in this country has increased markedly, principally through local direct benefits such as new employment opportunities. Further, the increased transparency has loaned credibility and backing to the community that is essential to the project's viability. Ample resources contributed by stakeholders have also allowed for the improvement of facilities and training for community members, ultimately leading to better project outcomes.

Positive Outcomes	Negative Outcomes
<p>Aligning policies with stakeholder inputs has led to smoother project implementation and fewer conflicts.</p> <p>Community forest resources ownership has improved as locals see direct benefits from the project, like increased job opportunities.</p> <p>Greater transparency has led to community trust and support, which are critical for the project's success.</p> <p>Increased resources from stakeholders have enabled better facilities and training for community members.</p> <p>Greater transparency has led to community trust and support, which are critical for the project's success.</p>	<p>The decision-making process has slowed down due to the need for consensus among diverse stakeholders.</p> <p>Resource distribution issues have led to frustration among certain groups, affecting their engagement levels.</p> <p>The decision-making process has slowed down due to the need for consensus among diverse stakeholders.</p> <p>Conflicts have arisen, especially regarding resource allocation, slowing down our progress.</p>

Figure 2: Positive and Negative Outcomes of Stakeholder Engagement

However, several challenges have also been identified. Due to the delay needed to achieve consensus among multiple stakeholders, the decision-making process has slowed, which has had a negative effect on the momentum of the project. Problems in REDD+ project benefit sharing has caused displeasure amongst some stakeholders, led to their disengagement and have set the stage for conflict. Disputes, particularly over resource allocation, have further slowed progress, highlighting the complexities of balancing stakeholder interests in collaborative initiatives. These results highlight the combined effect of stakeholder participation and the importance of successful management to leverage benefits and minimize challenges.

#### **4.3.5 SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS TO THE CURRENT STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PRACTICES**

As the respondents say, the steadily increasing amount of training and seminars, particularly for representatives of the community, could have a significant impact on project deliverables. It is hypothesized that this approach will not only help involve local stakeholders in the respective decision making and implementation process, but will also be an additional step to significantly involving them and changing their role in the fieldwork process. One interviewee from the Forestry Department said:

*“The greatest influence may also occur from the delivery of an increased amount of training and workshop facility to community delegates. It would give them the ability to engage in discussions and decision making, and achieve better collaboration and consequently, better project success. As soon as people realize they are sufficiently prepared and feel confident, it is simpler to achieve resolution to conflict and everyone can gain from the project”.*

Training and pre-requisite knowledge to community actors for this strategy may help to build partnerships, facilitate collaborative decision-making and help to prevent problems, such as competing for resource allocation, and abandonment. In theory, the same type of capacity-building projects is seen to achieve more cohesive and lasting project outputs.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

The findings presented in this chapter highlight the critical role of stakeholder engagement in the success of the Luangwa Community Forest Project (LCFP). The demographic analysis of survey respondents revealed a balanced representation across gender and age groups, ensuring diverse perspectives in the data. Most participants demonstrated a strong awareness of stakeholders and their roles, underscoring the project's effectiveness in community outreach and communication. Key stakeholders such as BCP, local community leaders, and government officials were identified as pivotal in driving project activities through their involvement in areas like environmental awareness, conflict resolution, and resource allocation.

The methods and frequency of engagement, such as workshops, capacity-building activities, and regular monthly interactions, reflect a structured and inclusive approach. These engagements have been largely effective, with a significant majority of participants acknowledging their positive impact on project outcomes. Notable successes include improved social and economic resources, increased environmental awareness, and reduced deforestation, all of which align with the LCFP's objectives of sustainable development and environmental conservation.

However, the findings also revealed challenges, such as conflicts over resource allocation, delays in decision-making, and issues with benefit-sharing mechanisms. These challenges, while significant, provide valuable insights into areas for improvement, particularly in stakeholder management and consensus-building.

The data underscores that stakeholder engagement is both a strength and a challenge for the LCFP. While it has enabled meaningful achievements, ongoing efforts to refine engagement practices, address conflicts, and enhance capacity-building initiatives are essential. By building on these findings, the project can continue to balance community needs with conservation goals, ensuring long-term sustainability and success.

## **CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter summarizes the key findings of the study. The overall research aim was to evaluate the nature of stakeholder engagement and its effect on community project outcomes, specifically, the Luangwa Community Forest Program in Zambia. Results of the present study demonstrate a strong correlation between successful stakeholder engagement and superior community-based project outcomes. The inferences made from the analysis are highly consistent with the aims of the study and produce direct answers to the overarching question of the role played by stakeholder engagement in the achieve and longevity of community-led programs. This study highlights the need to actively involve local communities, authorities and environmental agencies in the designing and implementation process to secure not only the effectiveness but also the sustainability of the project results. Further, the chapter describes recommendations for future research, which provides some directions for future research.

### **5.2 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS**

Demographic assessment shows an equal-sized group with nearly equal gender proportions (198 males, 187 females) and age structures. The largest cohort was 26–35 years (26.5%, 102 respondents), followed by 36–45 years (24.9%, 96 respondents), 21–25 years (24.4%, 94 respondents), and 46–65+ years (24.2%, 93 respondents). Gender distribution varied slightly across age groups, with males predominating in the 21–25 years category (60 males vs. 34 females) and females slightly outnumbering males in the 36–45 years category (53 females vs. 43 males). There is such heterogeneity that it guarantees a broad spectrum of concepts and in turn a higher inclusiveness and thus the reliability of the survey data that is collected.

According to the findings, there were high levels of awareness on the part of survey participants regarding the components of the project for example, for stakeholders involved in Luangwa Community Forest REDD+. Overall, in the 385 subjects 378 (98.2%

know people involved in the project, 7(1.8% do not know the people involved in the project). That indicates that the respondents at least have some level of familiarity with not only the project itself but also with its protagonists, and this may be considered a measure of how valid the communication and sensitization work should be to a more participatory community and a stronger backing of the project.

The findings also reveal a deep analysis of the multifaceted involvement of stakeholders in the Luangwa Community Forest REDD+ project. The functions were clearly defined as routine activities in the areas of environmental awareness, in conflict resolution, in resource distribution and in project implementation as potential important factors to consider for the sustainability of the Luangwa Community Forest REDD+ project through strengthening, encouraging collaboration, and providing facilities as well as monitoring to create equilibrium between community requirements and environment sustainability.

According to the results, BioCarbon Partners (BCP) as the direct interface of the Luangwa Community Forest REDD+ Project to 381 respondents, or 99.0% of all responses. This is a testament to the centrality of BCP in both project management and stakeholder management, which probably stands to do with its capacity to steer processes and offer support in performing direct tasks. Local community leaders also demonstrated a high degree of involvement, with 187 responses (48.6%, which emphasized their crucial involvement in grassroots coordination and promotion of community participation. Several health care officials (181 responses, 47.0% with responsibilities for oversights and regulatory support for operation of this project in accordance with governmental policies)

These results highlight the network nature of stakeholder involvement in the sense that each stakeholder contributes its own unique set of "valuable skills" to the success of the project. Nevertheless, the high centrality of BCP leads us to the question of the balance of stakeholder power, the inclusiveness in decision making, as well as the fairness of benefit distribution. This context implies that sustained attention will be needed to sustain the active involvement of all participants including, and perhaps especially, the local communities, across the entire project, governance and results.

With regards to the methods of engaging stakeholders, the survey results from the project demonstrated a wide array of stakeholder engagement involved in the project. The workshops and meetings, each repeated up to 84 times, turn out to be the most feasible techniques, with a focus on their ability to promote communication and sharing of knowledge. Capacity-building activities (78 times) reflect the emphasis of this project on the talent and/or skill development of stakeholders. Assessments (75 times), denoting the role of data collection and project assessment, are contrasted with FPIC (Free, prior, and informed consent) interactions (64 times), which illustrate an effort to demonstrate community agreement and involvement in decision-making. Together, these approaches demonstrate a balanced model combination of formal engagement, ability building and participatory decision-making, alongside one another.

The data of stakeholder interactions provides evidence of a plan in place and strategically applied communication in the project. Interpersonal interactions prevail (58.96% that take place per month, which highlights the role of periodic updates and prolonged collaboration between the parties involved. This refers to the fact that attendance is conferred upon the continuity and the resolution of issues in a reasonable time frame. Quarterly work (21.30% is the second most common period, which is probably about periodic review work and project progress and results evaluation. Weekly interactions (13.77% reflect more focused participation at specific points in time, situations where intensive supervision and scrutiny are required. The activity of the year past (5.97% least frequent, likely comprising only senior meetings, strategic planning or long-term, fundamental appraisal) is described. In general, the evidence about the frequency resonance of engagement suggests the need for a balanced strategy, periodic check-ups, focused interventions and occasional updates, as appropriate, for the desired outcome and to control the course of the project.

Results show that project stakeholder engagement is widely seen as productive, as 83.6% of respondents contributed productive ratings. A minority 11.9% judged the engagement as ineffective, with 4.4% neutral. These findings illustrate the effectiveness of the solution in general, and the beneficial side effect of the engagement solution.

Stakeholder engagement has been a success in the Luangwa Community Forest REDD+ project to deliver its impact on several scales. The most reported effect identified (by 143 respondents) is the increase in social and economic resources. This reveals that the community has been substantially enhanced in socioeconomic development and access to basic household needs due to this community development scheme and that the overarching goals of the project - poverty alleviation and sustainable livelihoods - are manifest in the community.

Analysis and findings demonstrate the importance of stakeholder engagement in the success or failure of the Luangwa Community Forest REDD+ project. Most respondents (77.8%) highlighted positive results of stakeholder engagements and explained that such engagements often lead to achieving the project objectives as important outcomes. This is in line with some findings by scholars like Reed (2008) who concluded that stakeholder engagement plays an overwhelming role in the field of REDD+ projects aimed at reducing the impacts of climate change by decreasing carbon emissions resulting from deforestation and forest degradation (Reed, 2008). Effective stakeholder engagement is pivotal for the success of REDD+ projects by involving collaboration with diverse groups, including local communities, indigenous peoples, government agencies, NGOs, and the private sector. This partnership is critically important to enable sustainable and equitable attainment of the objectives of the project (Tacconi et al., 2012).

However, some issues have also been raised as 13.9% of respondents felt that stakeholder engagements have some negative impacts due to conflicts that may arise due to some disagreements when making decisions. Additionally, 8.3% observed no significant impact, attributing this to the disengagement of certain stakeholders despite efforts to involve them. These findings highlight the importance of well, structured stakeholders, management in conflict resolution, disengagement, and to realize the possibility of shared benefits, which are required to achieve project goals.

Furthermore, the results also show that stakeholder engagement in the design-and-decision process helps to build community confidence and community support, all of which are key to the long-term viability of the project. Further support from stakeholders have also contributed to a broader capacity of the community facilities and training

programs further enhancing the effectiveness of the project and to a greater generality of the results. Literature has also validated this analysis that engaging stakeholders is very critical, since it builds trust, encourages transparency, and improves overall efficiency and sustainability of the initiatives for better community outcomes (Doe, 2024).

However, the findings also highlight several challenges. This need for consensus among the different parties involved in the project has resulted in a delay in the decision-making and, consequently, that of the project's pace. Conflict between strata due to disagreement on benefit sharing has led to frustration in some strata and discouraged the involvement of those strata and might lead to their disagreement. Resource allocation conflicts have also made them more severe and clearly show how competing needs of participants in a collaborative project need to be reconciled. Despite the beneficial effects that stakeholder engagement of a REDD+ project has had, there remain some challenges that should be tackled in a responsible manner. Effective management techniques are required to realize the full impact of stakeholder engagement and to mitigate the potential for hidden conflicting interests.

## **CONCLUSION**

Results of this study pointed out the high importance of stakeholder engagement for the achievement of the Luangwa Community Forest REDD+ Project.

Stakeholders' engagement is multidimensional, ranging from environmental education and conflict mitigation, to administering of resources and to achievement of project management, signaling their irreplaceable role in sustainable development. BioCarbon Partners (BCP) become key players in the system, with active endorsements from their local champion and the mayor, and a focus on working together. Nevertheless, due to the high centrality of BCP, in some form or other, there is a question not only to ensure inclusivity and equitable sharing among all stakeholders.

The stakeholder engagement activities of the project like workshops, capacity-building and FPIC demonstrate an approach which is a blend of systematic and participatory strategies. Continuous interaction like monthly meetings, ensure a continuous interaction

and adaptability, high proportion of positive rate of adoption (83.6% who attest that the idea is effective, to allow building trust and adherence to the agreement).

Project achievements are obvious in terms of both improved conditions and achievements such as increase of community resources, heightened environmental sensibility, and reduction of deforestation, depicting the deep interconnection between social and environmental aims. Moreover, programmatic congruency with national and global guidelines ensures the project meets regulatory criteria and extends the lifetime of the project.

Despite these successes, challenges persist. Conflicts regarding resource prioritization, decision delays, as well as exclusion of some stakeholders raise the issue of specific management requirements. Paper explains how important continuous 'raining/ capacity-building programs are, so that actors at the local level. are trained to participate and those conflicts are tackled.

In general, the Luangwa Community Forest REDD+ project demonstrates what is required for sustainable project outcomes, including inclusive and collaborative engagement with stakeholders. Looking forward, dealing with present proven problems plus strengthening capacity building activities will contribute to building partnerships and to achieving equity while advancing the potential of the project on both community livelihood and environmental sustainability.

## **CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.1 CONCLUSIONS**

The purpose of the study was to assess stakeholder engagements and their impact on community project outcome using the Luangwa Community Forest Program as the case study. Chapter one provided an overview of the study including the statement of the problem that is under investigation. Aims, objectives and research questions of the study and the definition of the key terms were also discussed as well.

Further, chapter two looked at several studies and it highlighted that stakeholder engagement is an integral part of an optimal delivery of project outputs as a well-executed community engagement process enables the stakeholders to collaborate towards the betterment of mankind, mitigation of undesired environmental impacts, and achieving economic sustainability of the project (Maina, 2013) and thus stakeholder engagement should be taken as an integral component in every sustainable development project.

Chapter three discussed the methodology used in the study, which is a mixed method combining both qualitative and quantitative aspect. Simple random and convenient sampling were used as sampling methods to select the respondents. Data collection was done using a questionnaire and an interview guide. The data analysis employed statistical analysis and thematic analysis providing a structured and systematic approach to interpret the collected data.

The findings of the study were presented in chapter four, and the discussion was done in chapter 5. The findings highlighted that stakeholder engagement plays a critical role in the success of any project and thus it should be considered by all implementers before any project starts so to ensure not only positive outcomes but also as a way of ensuring sustainability. Literature has shown that engaging stakeholders in community development projects at the initial stages is not standard practice among many implementers which has led to many projects not being appreciated by the communities. Therefore, it is very imperative that stakeholders, especially communities, are engaged from the beginning and throughout the project life cycle. This finding is in line with some

research that indicated a positive correlation between stakeholder engagement and project success and this relationship is further enhanced by empirical evidence. Turner and Müller (2005) have pointed out that project success depends on the indicators provided by critical stakeholders, and their expectations and requirements need to be appropriately satisfied or managed.

In summary, the study concludes that's stakeholders, especially grassroots, are in a better position to mobilize community needs and provide rapid feedback as this enhances chances of collaboration. Development policies must encourage projects that empower and enhance the capacities of the local communities as development projects that strengthen capacities of beneficiaries become more sustainable.

Importantly, findings also show that stakeholder engagement is both a strength and a challenge for many projects. While it has enabled meaningful achievements, ongoing efforts to refine engagement practices, address conflicts, and enhance capacity-building initiatives are essential. By building on these findings, the project can continue to balance community needs with conservation goals, ensuring long-term sustainability and success

## **6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Results of the study point out both LCFP successes and LCFP challenges related to the engagement of stakeholders. Despite the substantial progress made in building partnerships, building awareness, and generating livelihood improvement, ongoing issues surrounding resource management competition, delay in decision making, and capability building shortfalls point to further development needs. To mitigate these challenges and capitalize on the achievements, the following suggestions are made to increase stakeholder involvement and promote the long-term sustainability and success of the project.

### **6.2.1 RECOMMENDATION ONE**

- The research needs to examine the ways in which gender dynamics affect participation, decision making, and benefit-sharing for the REDD+ project. Identify

the specific challenges and the specific opportunity for various genders during the stakeholders' engagement process. This also encourages equity and inclusion as the depth of understanding gender-related challenges and opportunities means that all stakeholders, irrespective of gender can be included meaningfully in the project. It also deals with systemic inequalities, guaranteeing equitable access to benefits and power to make decisions for women and marginalized populations.

### **6.2.2 RECOMMENDATION TWO**

- Increase the number and range of education programs targeted at community leaders to promote their skills for effective involvement in decision-making and project management. In workshops and training sessions, the emphasis must be on the nuts-and-bolts aspects of sustainable management of resources, conflict resolution, and leadership skills to strengthen communities. By providing community representatives with an ability to lead, sustainably manage resources, and resolve conflict, they can play an active role in decision-making, contributing to their voices being heard and their needs meeting the needs.

### **6.2.3 RECOMMENDATION THREE**

- Enhance monitoring and evaluation procedures to monitor the advancement of stakeholder contributions and the project's general impact, as well as use feedback from community participants and other stakeholders to continually refine project activities and manage emerging concerns. It is of great value to collect feedback/suggestions from community members/other stakeholders which will give them valuable information about what they have experienced and how they perceive the project. It allows us to determine the presence or absence of problems/challenges which may not have been expected from the beginning of the project.

#### **6.2.4 RECOMMENDATION FOUR**

- The development of the program will urge maintaining congruence between project activities and national policy actions such as the Zambia Forestry Act and Wildlife Act, but while also providing specific context for the evolving needs of local communities, and to work in conjunction with policymakers to address discrepancies or gaps in current legal arrangements that impede Project implementation. Alignment of project activities with national policy is key to achieving legal compliance, a prerequisite for legitimacy. It enables the operation of the REDD+ project within the bounds designated by the authorities to avoid any potential conflicts with the law and to ensure that the activities happen in line with the national law. This compliance helps in maintaining the credibility of the project both locally and internationally.

#### **6.3 RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

- Future research should explore additional factors that may influence the impact of stakeholder engagement on community project outcomes, as this study examined only a few factors. Moreover, the study did not address the role of gender dynamics in stakeholder engagement and their effect on project outcomes, highlighting an important area for future research.

## REFERENCES

Agrawal Chhatre, 2011. Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, Annual review of environment and Resources,

Anupama, G., 2022. Data collection instruments and tools in Research. International journal of creative Research thoughts (IJCRT).

BioCarbon Partners Limited, 2023. Impact Report, Lusaka.

BioCarbon Partners, 2021-2024. BCP Strategic Plan, Lusaka.

Boon, E., Bawole, J. N. & Ahenkan, A., 2012. Stakeholder participation in community development projects: an analysis of the quadripartite model of the International Centre for Enterprise and Sustainable Development (ICED) in Ghana. pp. 1-17.

Bollen, K. A. (1989). Structural Equations with Latent Variables (pp. 179- 225). John Wiley & Sons.

Brouwer, H., 2013. Analysing stakeholder power dynamics in multi-stakeholder processes: insights of practice from Africa and Asia.

Burn , N. & Groove , S. K., 2003. Understanding nursing research. 3rd Ed. Philadelphia: Saunders Company:

Cresswell, J. & Plano Clark, 2011. Designing and Conducting mixed method research,

Creswell, J. W., 2014. Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches.

Daniel, L., 2021. Survey4 Kash Sample Size Calculator.

Douglas, M., 2015. Sources of data. [Online]  
Available at: <http://www.onlineetymologydictionary/data>

Fox and Bayati, 2007. A guide to managing Research.

Garima Malhotra, 2017. Strategies in Research. International Journal of Advance Research and Development.

George, T., 2023. Mixed Methods Research | Definition, Guide & Examples. [Online]  
Available at: <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/mixed-methods-research/> [Accessed 2024].

Goundar , S., 2012. Research Methodology and Research.

Hooghe, L., & Marks, G. (2001). Multi-level Governance and European Integration. Rowman & Littlefield

International Finance Corporation (IFC), 2007. Stakeholder Engagement: A good practice Handbook for companies doing Business in Emerging Markets, Washington DC: International Finance Corporation.

Jaffer, K. A., Alamelu , R. M., Nithya, S. & Kanniga , P., 2023. Research Methodology (Methods, Approaches and Techniques). UK: San International Scientific Publications.

Kalaba , F., 2018. Partnerships and the Role of Conservation Organizations in REDD+ in Zambia: A Case Study of Frankfurt Zoological Society. Environmental Management. pp. 62(3), 420-432.

Kirsi , A., 2024. Stakeholder Engagement: Theoretical and Methodological Directions for Project Scholarship.

Kujala, J. 2022. Stakeholder Engagement: Past, Present, and Future. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00076503211066595>.

Loganathan, R., 2013. The influence of Leadership styles on Job Satisfaction at a Cellulose Pulp Mill in Kwazulu Natal: A case study. Durban: Durban University of Technology.

Mugenda, O. M. & Mugenda, A. G., 2003. Research Methods: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches. Nairobi Kenya: Act Press.

Narayan, D., 1995. Contribution of People's Participation: Evidence from 121 Rural water Supply Projects, s.l.: ESD Occasional Paper Series 1. World Bank.

Never, M., 2016. Sampling in Research.

Oino, P., Towett, G., Kirui, K. & Luvega, C., 2015. The Dilemma in Community-Based Projects in Kenya. Global Journal of Advanced Research, pp. 757-768.

Paul, S., 2007. Community participation in development projects, Washington DC: Word Bank.

Plan Kenya, Homa Bay PU, 2015. County Strategic Plan Review, Nairobi: Plan International, Kenya Country Office.

Pritha Bhandari, 2021. Ethical Considerations in Research, Types and Examples,

Rahman, A. & Alzubi, Y., 2015. Exploring Key Contractor Factors Influencing Client Satisfaction Level in Dealing with Construction Project: An Empirical Study in Jordan.

International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, p. 109–126.

Rajeev, S. & Kothai, P. S., 2014. Study on the Influence of Stakeholders in Construction Projects. Journal of Construction Engineering and Project Management, pp. 8-11.

Sara, J. & Katz, T., 1997. Making the Rural Water Supply Sustainable: Report on the Impact of Project Rules. UNDP-World Bank Water and Sanitation Program.

Rashid , H. A., 2023. Research Philosophy: Positivism, Interpretivism, and Pragmatism.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. & Thornhill, A., 2009. Research Methods for Business Students, 5th Edition. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Schwardt, 2007. Research Design and Methodology,

Shivani, K., 2020. Research Designs: Definition, Types and Characteristics. [Online] Available at: <https://www.scribd.com/document/485583637/Research-Design-definition-types-and-characteristics>

Sindhu, V. & Karthiyayini, 2016. Study on Cost Overruns in Construction Projects-a Review. International Journal of Applied Engineering Research, p. 356–363.

Sunderline, W. L. & Duchelle, R., 2014. How are REDD+ proponents addressing tenure problems? Evidence from Brazil, Cameroon, Tanzania, Indonesia, and Vietnam.

Sunderlin, W. L. & Cronkleton, P., 2014. Engaging local stakeholders in REDD+: The role of local leadership in conservation projects.

Tseng. C. & Penning-Rowsell. E.C. (2012). Micro-political and related barriers to

stakeholder engagement in flood risk management. *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 178, No.3, pp. 253–269

Upagade, V. & Shende, A., 2012. *Research Methodology 2nd Edition*, New Delhi: S. Chand and Company Limited Ram Nagar.

Zazueta, A., 1994. *A matter of Interests: Participation and Equity in Environment Policy Making*. Washington, DC: World Resources Institute, Center for International Development and Environment.

Zimba, P., 2018. *The Role of National Institutions in REDD+ Implementation in Zambia. Forest Policy and Economics*. pp. 90, 30-38.

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1: ITEM-TOTAL STATISTICS FOR THE FIVE SCALES OF MEASURE USED

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Stakeholder Importance	7.92	2.613	.615	.399	.831
Stakeholder Engagement Effectiveness	7.58	2.589	.690	.560	.739
Stakeholder Engagement Satisfaction	7.83	3.186	.774	.618	.700

**APPENDIX 2: LETTER OF PERMISSION FROM THE UNILUS ETHICAL COMMITTEE  
TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**



**SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES**

Plot No. 37413, Off Alick Nkhata Mass Media. P. O Box 36711, Lusaka.

Phone: +260211258505, 258409 Fax +260211233409; Cell

+260976075850,961917862,

E-mail:unilus@zamnet.zm,ictar@zamnet.zm

**UNILUS-RESEARCH**

**ETHICS**

Ref no: FWA00033228-4811/24

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> November 2024

**STUDENT NAME:** Constance Nyawa phiri

**STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENTS AND ITS IMPACT ON COMMUNITY PROJECT  
OUTCOME, A CASE STUDY OF THE LUANGWA COMMUNITY FOREST REDD+  
PROJECT**

The above research was submitted to the research ethics committee for review. The study has no major ethical problems and is approved subject to the following:

1. The study cannot be changed without express permission of the UNILUS research ethics committee.
2. Approval from the necessary authority should be sought.

**The committee wishes you success in your work.**



---

**Professor Kasonde Bowa**

MSc(Glasgow),M.Med(UNZA),FRCS(Glasgow),FACS,FCS,DPH(LSTMH),MPH( UCL)

Chairman- UNILUS REC

Professor of Urology and Consultant Urologist Deputy

Vice-Chancellor – Research and Innovation

Executive Dean - School of Medicine and Health Sciences

## **APPENDIX 3: QUESTIONNAIRES**

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, PARTNERS, LOCAL LEADERS,  
CRBS

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENTS AND THE IMPACT OF THESE ENGAGEMENTS ON  
THE ACHIEVEMENT OF COMMUNITY BASED PROJECTS, A CASE STUDY OF THE  
LUANGWA COMMUNITY FOREST REDD+ PROJECT.

Interview Guide: Interview Guide:

I. Participant Background: I. Participant Background:

What is your role within the organization/community?

What is your gender? (Optional - explain why this is being asked)

What is your age range? (Optional - offer ranges to maintain privacy)

What is your highest level of education?

How many years have you lived/worked in this area?

II. Specific Contributions and Involvement: II. Specific Contributions and Involvement:

Can you describe your particular contributions to [mention the project/initiative]?

How long have you been involved in this [project/initiative]?

What were your key roles and responsibilities?

How did you view these responsibilities?

III. Collaboration and Engagement: III. Collaboration and Engagement:

Which stakeholders did you collaborate with during this [project/initiative]?

What methods were used to engage with these stakeholders? (e.g., meetings,  
workshops, surveys, social media)

How frequently did these engagements take place?

How effective do you think these engagement methods were? Why?

In your opinion, what were the most effective engagement methods?

What effect did this participation have on the overall effectiveness of the [project/initiative]?

IV. Outcomes and Impacts: IV. Outcomes and Impacts:

What were the positive outcomes of this [project/initiative]?

Were there any negative outcomes? If so, what were they?

What improvements would you suggest for future engagements?

V. Overall Effectiveness and Stakeholder Influence: V. Overall Effectiveness and Stakeholder Influence:

How would you rate the overall effectiveness of the stakeholder engagement? (e.g., on a scale of 1-5)

To what degree does stakeholder involvement have an effect on the [project/initiative]'s outcome?

Could you provide specific examples of positive influence from stakeholder engagement?

Could you provide specific examples of negative influence from stakeholder engagement?

How did local administrators (such as the village headman) and/or government staff play a role in this [project/initiative]?

How could engagement be improved to enhance outcomes?

VI. Specific Questions for Headmen/Government Officials (If Applicable):

What is your role in the community/government?

How were you involved in this [project/initiative]?

What were your contributions?

What are your perspectives on the effectiveness of stakeholder engagement?

What recommendations do you have for future projects?

VII. Closing: VII. Closing:

Thank the participants for their time and valuable insights.

Reiterate confidentiality and anonymity.

Provide a quote on the results (if applicable).

Answer any remaining questions from the participant.

## QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS

### STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENTS AND ITS IMPACT ON COMMUNITY PROJECTS OUTCOME, A CASE STUDY OF THE LUANGWA COMMUNITY FOREST REDD+ PROJECT

I am conducting research as a Master of Science in Project Management at the  
University of Lusaka

#### **PLEASE NOTE:**

All responses will be kept completely anonymous and confidential. Your honesty will  
be highly appreciated.

Please check the boxes at the end of the questions where you are asked to provide  
an explanation, and in the answers to the questions where you are asked to elaborate,  
please provide a rationale.

#### **SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

1. What is your gender

Male

Female

2. Indicate your age in years

21-25

26-35

36-45

46-65+

3. Level of education

Primary

Secondary

Tertiary

Never been to school

4. How long have you lived here?

1-3 years

4-7 years

4. How long have you lived here?

1-3 years

4-7 years

8-10 years

11 years +

**SECTION B: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

5. Do you know any stakeholders involved in the Luangwa Community Forest REDD+ Project?

Yes

No

6. If yes, please list the stakeholders you are aware of. (Separate the stakeholders with a commas)

.....

7. From your understanding, what roles do these stakeholders play in the project?

.....

8. Which stakeholders do you interact with the most regarding the project? (Select all that apply):

Local community leaders

Government officials

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)

Private companies

Donors/International organizations

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

9. On a scale of 1 to 5, how important do you think the role of the stakeholders is in the project's success?

Not important

Moderately important

- Not important
- Moderately important
- Neutral
- Important

Very Important

10. Does BCP engage you in any of their programs?

Yes

No

11. If your answer to question 10 is, yes? Indicate the methods of engagement

- Community engagement meetings and workshops
- Capacity building
- Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)
- Assessments

Other, specify .....

12. How satisfied are you with the overall level of engagement when implementing REDD+ Project?

Very satisfied

Satisfied

Neutral

Dissatisfied

Very dissatisfied

13. Please just your answer chosen from question 12.....

**SECTION C: IMPACT OF STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT ON COMMUNITY PROJECT OUTCOMES**

14. What do you consider the most impactful success achieved by the Luangwa Community Forest REDD+ Project because of stakeholder engagement?

.....

15. What is your recommendations on how best stakeholder engagement on the project can be enhanced?.....

## APPENDIX 4: WORKPLAN

#	Activities		Aug 2024	Sep 2024	Oct 2024	Nov 2024	Dec 2024	Jan 2025	Feb- Mar 2025
1	Proposal writing								
2	Submission of the proposal								
3	Data collection								
4	Data analysis								
5	Writing of the final report								
6	Submission of Thesis								
7	Presentation of findings								

1/20/25, 4:11 PM

The University of Lusaka Mail - Approval of submission of Dissertation -Student Constance Phiri



Constance Phiri <mscpm23117944@stud.unilus.ac.zm>

---

### Approval of submission of Dissertation -Student Constance Phiri

---

Mohammed Bayat <mohammed.bayat@unilus.ac.zm>

Mon, Jan 20, 2025 at 12:08 PM

To: Abby Nakalinda <abby.nakalinda@unilus.ac.zm>

Cc: Constance Phiri <mscpm23117944@stud.unilus.ac.zm>, nyawa phiri <nyawaphiri90@gmail.com>, Mohammed Bayat <mbmsaheed@gmail.com>

Good Day Ms Abby Nakalinda

This is to confirm that I had problems with my electronic signature and have thus granted Ms Constance Phiri permission to submit her dissertation for examination.

I trust that this email confirms my approval

Kind Regards

Prof Mohamed Bayat  
0837861326

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?ik=7a0d514de8&view=pt&search=all&permmsgid=msg-f:1821762117935789322&simpl=msg-f:1821762117935789322>

1/1