

***RAPID APPRAISAL OF SELECTED FOREST
COMMUNITIES' CAPACITIES TOWARDS CONTROLLING
ILLEGAL LOGGING IN CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA***

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1 INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

- .1 Deforestation in Cross River State, where more than 50% of Nigeria's largest block of tropical rainforest is located, has reached an exponential stage; impacting on the livelihoods of poor rural dwellers. DIN's socio-economic surveys (1996 – 99) emphasise that rural people in Cross River State, Nigeria, depend upon the forests for up to 78% of annual household cash income by harvesting and selling bush mango (*Irvingia gabonensis*) seeds and afang (*Gnetum africana*) leaves as well as some bush meat.
- .2 With support from the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Development in Nigeria (DIN) and Rainforest Research and Documentation Centre (RRDC) will jointly facilitate a village forest monitoring programme that aims to develop the capacities of community based organisations, in order to control illegal logging¹ from community forests and other forests held in common.
- .3 A component of the programme involves research and gathering baseline information about target communities' capacities to control illegal logging from community forests and other forest commons. Funded by Cordaid, a series of participatory rural appraisal (PRA) exercises was carried out in the communities targeted for the forest monitoring network programme.
- .4 The 6 communities – namely: Abinti I, Abo Ogbagante, Balep, Biajua, Opu and Otchakwe - located in northern and central Cross River State were selected to reflect differences in management capacities and the varying scale of logging intensities in the State.
- .5 This report summarises data collected from the series of PRA exercises carried out between February 21, 2003 and April 11, 2003. The report is organised according to the principal objectives presented in **8** below. The first two sections of the report give introduction to the PRA exercises and the study communities, followed by Section 3, which focuses on land and resource practices in the study communities in general. Section 4 discusses exiting opportunities for effective implementation of the proposed forest monitoring network programme.

1. For the purpose of this study, illegal logging was defined as no-compliance with the single tree-permit guidelines issued by Cross River State Forestry Commission

GOAL

- .6 Each PRA exercise aimed at collecting background information to guide the identification of possible opportunities where the proposed programme's assistance could be most beneficial to target communities, especially those related to controlling illegal logging.

OBJECTIVES

- .7 The objectives of the PRA are listed below:
 - *To collect relevant socio-economic information from the target communities;*
 - *Identify land and resource use practices in the study communities*
 - *Identify possible opportunities for implementing the proposed forest monitoring network.*

APPROACH AND METHODS

- .8 The approach adopted focuses on the capacities and needs of local people and seeks to encourage them to reflect on their current conditions and to identify areas of common concern and to take their own action. By reason of the approach chosen, very simple, low-cost tools were used. Brief descriptions of the PRA tools used in data collection and analysis are presented at the end of this report. The use of simple techniques fostered the active participation of villagers.
- .9 An average of three days was spent in each community gathering and analysing information about each community. The objectives presented in 7 above guided information gathering and analysis.
- .10 The PRA team comprised mainly local participants who represented a wide range of interest groups including Chiefs and Elders, men, women and youths. The selection of local participants ensured that people with a good knowledge of the subject were included in the team. These included hunters, timber dealers, FMC members, afang (*Gnetum africana*) and moi-moi leaves (*Thaumatococcus daniellii*) collectors.
- .11 Complemented by DIN and RRDC research staff and field workers, the team represented a wide range of disciplines including geography, environmental studies, agricultural science and mass communication. In each community visited, Chiefs and Elders, representatives of women and youth groups and members of the respective FMCs took part in the study.

Problems and difficulties encountered

- .12 The following problems and difficulties were encountered during field work:

(a) *Difficult schedule*

The fieldwork schedule for the first two PRA exercises conducted in late February between the communities of Abo Ogbagante and Biajua coincided with farming season and National Identity Card Registration. As a result, community members had limited time for the PRA exercises. Due to the difficult schedule, community mapping, an important tool for representing local ideas of resource availability, was suspended at this phase. It was also difficult to collect and analyse comparable amount of information for each community visited. Relying on existing information base (e.g. community forest management plans developed by a DFID funded Community Forestry Project implemented between 1999 and 2002), we have filled some of the information gaps.

(b) *Apprehension on the part of community members*

Despite explanations at the beginning of each PRA in the respective communities, some communities remained apprehensive of the purpose of the study. This difficulty had an effect on community members' willingness to divulge sensitive information about timber trade and illegal logging in the area. Interviews held with sympathetic informants in each of the study villages helped in overcoming this difficulty.

(c) *Forest management committee (FMC) predisposition and conflict of interest*

In almost all the communities visited, FMCs were perceived by local people as belonging to the government as the committees were constituted by the Cross River State Forestry Commission. While the FMC is seen by local people as belonging to the government, community based Village Forest Protection Organisations (VFPO) existing in the communities of Balep, Abinti I and Opu are perceived as belonging to the community. This misunderstanding affected the overall success of Balep PRA where an internal conflict between FMC and VFPO, where as a result of conflict of interest, some members of VFPO excluded themselves from the exercise. Since the PRA team placed emphasis on representation of the entire community, self exclusion of some members of the VFPO from the PRA had little impact.

2 SOCIOECONOMIC PROFILE OF THE COMMUNITES

ABINTI I

General Description

- .1 The community of Abinti I with an estimated population of about 6000 persons, is about 60 kilometres northeast of Ikom, its Local Government Headquarters. It is precisely located in the coordinates of 06° 14.38' N and 008° 39.92' E
- .2 A road that formerly linked Ogoja with Ikom and Calabar runs through the village providing trading opportunity between neighbouring communities. The community contains a town hall, a playground, a timber market, a garri processing unit, a leprosy colony, 3 churches, 3 medicine stores and 15 general stores. At the time the PRA was conducted, a primary school building was still under construction. Inhabitants currently acquire school education outside the village.

Community Administration and Village Institutions

- .3 Abinti I is made up of 8 villages; each headed by a village Chief. As is the case in all the study communities, there is a 'government Chief' appointed by the government and a 'traditional Chief' appointed by the community. While the 'traditional Chief' retains his cultural position as the leader of the community, the 'government Chief' represents the village in dealings with the government and ensures that law and order prevails.
- .4 The following village institutions exist in Abinti I community:
 - A village council consisting of the Chiefs and Elders of the community;
 - A youth council;
 - Age grades;
 - Abinti I Women's Association;
 - Traditional Rulers' Association;
 - Health Committee;
 - Land Allocation Committee;
 - Forest Management Committee;
 - Environmental Sanitation Committee and
 - Village Forest Protection Organisation, supported by RRDC

Means of livelihoods

- .5 The people of Abinti I live by farming, hunting, gathering of forest products, fishing, timber trade, and government employment. The major economic activity in the village is farming; producing cassava, yam, cocoa, banana, plantain, cocoyam, melon, okro, etc. Cassava is the main staple and also constitutes the main source of agricultural income.
- .6 Major forest products extracted for household consumption and for income generation include bush mango, timber, salad, oil palm and hot leaves/bush pepper (products of *Piper guinensis*). During a PRA session, local participants ranked salad, bush mango and timber as the most important forest products based on percentage contribution to the household economy and livelihood security in general. Salad was considered the most important based on the fact that it is available all year round.

ABO OGBAGANTE

General Description

- .7 Abo Ogbagante with an estimated population of about 4500 persons 'touches' the Obudu-Ikom Highway and the Cross River National Park (CRNP) enclave. It is about 50 Kilometres southeast of Obudu, the closest town in the northern part of the State. Abo Ogbagante, which is located in coordinates 06^o 09.39' N and 009^o 01.32'E, is bounded by Kanyang community in the north, Abo Obiso in the south, Abo Mkpang in the east and Abo Emeh in the west. Lying close to the Nigeria – Cameroon border, the village is an important centre for interborder trade in non-timber forest products, particularly bush meat, afang and bush mango.
- .8 Abo Ogbagante falls within Abo/Bashu Clan in Boki Local Government Area. Other communities within the Clan are Abo Emeh, Abo Obiso, Abo Ebam, Abo Bonabe, Abo Mkpang, Bashu 1, Bashu 2 and Bashu 3. The 6 Abo villages share common ancestors who once belonged to one village called Kangkang located at the top of a hill, which dominates the landscape wherever one may be on Abo land. The Abo Bashu Clan jointly owns a large area of community forest that is contiguous with Okwangwo Division of the Cross River National Park to the north and the Afi Forest Reserve to the east.
- .9 The community contains a health centre, a primary school, a secondary school, a Police Station, religious groups, a playground

and an *Ekpe* hall, several general stores and a weekly market that holds every Wednesday.

Village Institutions

- .10 The following special purpose committees and other village institutions exist in Abo Ogbagante:
 - Village Council;
 - Age grades;
 - Traditional Rulers' Association;
 - Health Committee;
 - Town Planning Committee;
 - Forest Management Committee;
 - Salad Committee
 - Task Force Committee
 - Timber Committee
 - Works Committee
 - Women Association
 - Youth Council
 - The Ekpe, a male secret society found in most Boki and Ejagham communities that contributes to maintaining law and order.

Means of livelihoods

- .11 The main economic activity in the village is farming; producing yam, cassava, banana, cocoa, melon, okro, maize and cocoyam, etc. A socioeconomic survey carried out by Emily Fripp (2002), a consultant to the DFID-funded community forestry project indicates that agricultural products (banana and cocoa are the most important sources of income for households in the area amounting to about 56% of their annual household cash income.
- .12 According to the study, forest products contribute 44% of household cash income. Of this forest income, 50% comes from bush mango (*Irvingia gabonensis*), afang (*Gnetum africana*) contributes 31% of forest income and timber contributes 3%. In 2002, when the DFID-funded study was carried out, about 91% of households in Abo/Bashu Clan were involved in the collection of bush mango.
- .13 Bush mango was ranked by local participants during the PRA as the most important forest product to the community. Earlier studies in the area (e.g. in 2002, Emily Fripp led socio-economic survey, community forest management planning involving a DIN staff) support the finding that contribution from bush mango

represents about 50% of the total household cash income derived from forest products.

BALEP

General Description

- .14 Balep with a population of about 4000 persons is located in the coordinates of 06⁰ 07.34' N and 008⁰ 41.23' E. The village lies close to the bank of Afi River and is about 30km northeast of Ikom. It is within a 5-minute walking distance from Opu, one of the study communities in this project.

- .15 Balep belongs to Ejagham, a dominant ethnic group in the central part of the State. The community is made up of 12 villages, namely: Balep I, Balep II, Mpam Morok, Amuri, Oroam Mpam, Agbokim, Ogep, Okurike, Nkanko, Oyonghe-Emir, Atatal and Ettah Akpege.

- .16 The community contains:
 - An *Ekpe* Hall, which also serves as the community hall,
 - A Playground,
 - Primary school
 - Secondary school
 - Health centre that serves both Opu and Balep communities;
 - 9 Churches
 - 3 pharmacy stores
 - 11 general stores
 - A small timber market

Village Institutions

- .17 The following special purpose committees and other village institutions exist in Balep community:
 - Town council, which is made up of 12 Chiefs and all age grades
 - Traditional rulers council/Elders council
 - Women Association (Balep)
 - Balep youth Association
 - Young farmers association
 - Cocoa farmers association
 - Forest management committee,
 - VFPO,
 - Environmental health committee,
 - village executive committee,
 - Education committee
 - Town planning committee
 - Land allocation committee

Means of livelihoods

- .18 As is the case in all the communities visited, farming is the main economic activity of the people of Balep. The principal food and cash crops produced are: cassava, yam, banana, cocoyam, melon, cocoa and maize. Local farmers ranked cassava as the most important source of food and household cash income.
- .19 Other means of livelihoods include gathering of forest products, hunting, fishing, extraction of sand and gravel, government employment, etc. Local members of the PRA team identified bush mango, salad, oil palm and timber, in order of importance, as the most important forest products that contribute to the household economy.

BIAJUA

General Description

- .20 Biajua, with a population of about 6000 persons, is located in the coordinates of 06° 00.29'N and 009° 00.28'E. Situated adjacent to the Cross River National Park, its territory borders Abo Obiso in the north, Agbokim (Ikom Local Government Area) in the south, Danare in the east and Abontakon in the west. The community's history of settlement dates back to about 1914 when Biajua ancestors migrated to the present place as a result of the murder of J. C. Francis at a village near Bebuo Kelumboka.
- .21 The community contains a health centre, a primary school, a secondary school, an adult education centre, which was not functioning at the time the study was carried out, 11 churches, a playground and an *Ekpe* hall, several general stores and a weekly market that holds every Wednesday.

Village Institutions

- .22 The following special purpose committees and other village institutions exist:
 - A Village Council;
 - Age grades;
 - Traditional Rulers' Association;
 - Health committee;
 - Town Planning Committee;
 - A Forest Management Committee;
 - Salad Committee
 - Task Force Committee
 - Timber Committee
 - Works Committee
 - Women Association

- Youth Council
- The Ekpe, a male secret society found in most Boki and Ejagham communities.

Means of livelihoods

- .23 Farming and hunting are the principal means of livelihood in Biajua community. The major crops grown for food and cash income are: yams, cassava, banana, cocoyam, melon, maize and cocoa. Some members of the community earn salaries; working as civil servants for the Local and State Government. During the dry season, some members of the community are involved in extraction of salt from a local salt lake as a means of livelihood.
- .24 Among the forest products listed as sources of food and cash income were salad (*Gnetum africana*), bush mango (*Irvingia gabonensis*) and timber, ibaba (*Mucuna pruriens*), kegbudu (*Pleurotus tuberosus*), oil palm (*Elaies guineensis*), otashi (*Gongronema latifolium*), achi (*Brachystegia eurycoma*), etc. Salad, which is mostly harvested by women, was rated the most important source of income to households. Bush mango and timber trailed behind in second and third positions.

OPU

General Description

- .25 Opu, with a resident population of about 3800 persons is located in the coordinates of 06° 07.11'N and 0080 41.80'E and shares boundary with Eko Nde to the north, Balep to the south and west, and Bendeghe Afi to the east.
- .26 Made up of 13 villages, Opu belongs to Bafendor Clan in Akparabong Ward, a political unit in Ikom Local Government Area of Cross River State.
- .27 The community contains a primary school, a health centre shared with the neighbouring community of Balep, 11 churches, 5 medicine stores, 11 general stores and a weekly market that holds every Wednesday

Village Institutions

- .28 The following institutions exist:
- Community Forest Management Committee
 - Village Forest Protection Organisation
 - Youth council
 - Town council
 - Opu Women Association
 - Parents Teachers Association

- Council of Elders
- Age grades (18 groups)

Means of livelihoods

- .29 Farming is the major means of livelihoods, producing cassava, yams, cocoa, plantain, banana, maize and melon. Cassava is the main staple and the major source of agricultural income. Some household members extract sand and gravel during the dry season for cash income to meet minor household needs. Other means of livelihoods include fishing and trading on bush meat, liquor, banana and cocoa, etc.
- .30 A ranking of the major forest products harvested for food and cash income generation shows indicates that oil palm (*Elaies guinensis*) and salad are the most important forest product based on their contribution to the household economy. Bush mango and timber follow close by in second and third positions, respectively.

OTCHAKWE

General Description

- .31 Otchakwe, with a population of about 490 persons belonging to 42 households is a small community that is located in the coordinates 06° 25.31' and 009° 14.8' E, Otchakwe shares boundary with Yangwabe to the north, Okwa to the south, the Ranch Hills to the east and Buabre to the west.
- .32 Lying on a ridge system adjacent to the Cross River National Park, a protected area, and on a ridge system, the village of Otchakwe is difficult to access, except on foot. It is connected with the other 11 villages of Bumaji by track roads.
- .33 The community shares joint ownership of forest resources with neighbouring Bumaji villages. Members of other Bumaji villages are allowed to collect non-timber forest products from the primary forest together. However, the community does not share farmland with neighbouring communities. Land conflict cases with Buabre community were reported.
- .34 The community contains a town hall, a primary school located in Yangwabe, a 4 bed health centre located in a rented room, 3 churches, 3 pharmacy stores and 3 small general stores.

Village Institutions

- .35 The following village institutions exist:

- A village council consisting of the Chiefs and Elders of the community;
- A youth council;
- Age grades;
- A women's association;
- Traditional Rulers' Association;
- Education committee;
- Lakumbo, a male secret society

Means of livelihoods

- .36 The people live by farming, hunting, gathering of forest products, fishing and palm wine tapping, etc. Due to the problem of accessibility, bulky and heavy agricultural products (e.g. banana and plantain) make little contribution to the household economy. Farmers head load bunches of banana approximately about 20 kilometres to meet buyers in Bakie, one of the Bumaji villages.
- .37 In 1997, DIN carried out a macro level survey of forest and farm products, which sought to establish what forest resources households harvested and the extent to which they relied on these resources for livelihoods security, showed that households realised 42% of their annual cash income from forest resources, 44% from farm products and 16% from off farm activities (e.g. trading and government employment).
- .38 During the PRA, local participants in the exercise identified bush mango, bush meat and salad as the most important forest products. Due to the difficult terrain timber extraction meets local needs (e.g. house construction) only.

LAND AND RESOURCE TENURE

- .1 Each of the study villages claims the forest belongs to the community. Forests, which are still intact, belong to the entire community and every member of the community has the potential right to use forestland with the approval of the village Chief.
- .2 Plots within community lands acquired for farming by those who first cleared them belong to those individuals, their families and descendants. Timber and other trees including NTFPs growing on those plots belong to the farm owner and his descendants.

LAND USE

- .4 Findings from the PRA exercises indicate that farming, hunting and gathering of forest products are the major land use types in the 6 target villages
- .5 Past land use has had a profound effect on the forest and stream conditions. Change in the natural resource base, which was identified as an issue of great importance, is reflected in the following:
 - a) Declining oil palm and timber population;
 - b) Scarcity of mature ' wood' (i.e. timber);
 - c) Species loss (examples include the giant pangolin)
 - d) Resource scarcity (examples, firewood and salad reflected in distance women cover in search for these resources)
 - e) Streams drying up longer than in the past,;
 - f) Shrinking forest size

LEVEL OF AWARENESS AND USE PRACTICES

- .6 With the awareness raised in some of the communities, for example, Opu, Abinti I, Balep and Abo Ogbagante, where a number of projects have been implemented the level of awareness about the impact of unsustainable land use practices has increased considerably.
- .7 RRDC has been mobilising community groups in the villages of Opu, Abinti I and Balep. As a result of the awareness that has increased, Abinti I insists that outsiders can not log their wood. They have established a fully operational timber market for processing of wood by local timber dealers and the community.
- .8 Also in Abo Ogbagante, where WWF and DFID funded community forestry projects between 1991 and 2002, the community resisted WEMPCO's interest in the early 1990s when the company moved into Ikom, about 60 Kilometres away.
- ..9 In contrast, Otchakwe, remote from motorable roads, demonstrated the least level of environmental awareness. During

a PRA meeting, community leaders openly declared that if a timber company offers them timber in exchange for a road that will link them up with other villages and towns; they will give out their forest for logging.

- .10 Level of awareness is also reflected in community leaders' craving for immediate benefits. In Biajua, where extensive logging was going on, individuals and the village's authority were involved in logging on behalf of WEMPCO, which entered into an agreement with the community. Youth, who appeared to be more informed about the impact of illegal logging, were helpless since they must adhere to what their elders say.
- .11 The great majority of timber in most of the study villages has already been harvested. This is particularly the case in Abo Ogbagante, where Ikobi Brothers Saw Mills operated in late 1980s and early 1990s. There has been little progress in enrichment planting. Some community members plant timber seedlings occasionally, while a majority maintain timber stands on farm plots and bush fallows. None of the communities visited had a community tree nursery.
- .12 Apart from Otchakwe, forest management committees (FMCs) have been formed in all the communities. One of the respective communities' FMCs is control of timber harvesting.
- .13 In almost all the communities visited, rules and regulations have been established to guide the use of forest resources. These included:
 - a) Access fee paid by traders on forest products (e.g. bush mango, salad), with Abinti I as an exception in the case of bush mango trade;
 - b) No plucking of salad with the root to ensure sustainability;
 - c) No climbing of bush mango stems for plucking to avoid being shot by a hunter and to give every community member equal access to bush mango found in the forest;
 - d) No indiscriminate bush burning;
 - e) No use of chemical poisons in fishing;
 - f) Controlled felling of the most important timber species to the communities (e.g. iroko, *Milicia excelsa*) which was rated as one of the most preferred wood species in all the communities visited; and
 - g) Only collection of non-timber forest products is allowed in community owned forest reserves.
- .14 The level of compliance with these rules and regulations is questionable as were reported during the PRA exercise.

- .15 It was reported that restriction is placed on timber harvesting in community forest reserves, farming is also not allowed in the reserve. The community FMCs ensure that rules related to timber exploitation (e.g. issuance of permits and owners consent before felling) are observed.
- .16 After registering with the community as a timber dealer, the dealer intending to harvest timber obtains a permit from Charge Offices of the Forestry Commission, alongside owners consent from the community.
- .17 According to local informants, timber harvested from the area mostly end up in the cities of Port Harcourt, Aba, Ikot Ekpene, Kano and Kaduna

4 EXISTING OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- .1 This Section highlights existing opportunities that the programme could take advantage of.

FMC and other village institutions

- .2 As highlighted in 3.11 above; with the exception of Otchakwe, FMCs have been established in all the target villages. However, in the author's opinion, most of the FMCs are elitist and male dominated. It would improve governance if the FMCs were more representative of their communities.
- .3 The respective communities look up to the FMCs and VFPOs for direction and guidance in sustainable forest and land usage. Considering the fact that most of the FMCs depend heavily on the government, and the communities perceive FMCs as belonging to the government, the capacity of FMCs requires strengthening. Specific needs of FMCs identified during the study include:
 - a) Environmental education (i.e. the need for members of FMCs to be educated on forest management issues)
 - b) Financial needs (e.g. contributing to FMC running costs)
 - c) Internal cohesion, this is particularly the case in communities with both an FMC and VFPO. During the PRA, Balep community expressed interest in merging the FMC and VFPO.
- .4 A programme for strengthening (FMC) through training workshops and exchange visits could be developed for the second phase of the programme.
- .5 It is also recommended that environmental education as a tool for creating awareness about unsustainable forest resources usage should be carried out primarily in the communities of Biajua and Abinti I, where pressure from WEMPCO and local timber agents is heaviest. The community of Otchakwe with relatively intact timber resources, but desperate for a road in exchange for timber

resources could also benefit more from an environmental awareness programme.

- .6 The proposed paralegal training on environmental law could fit in well with the environmental education programme proposed in this report.

Community livelihoods options

- .7 A number of communities expressed interest in domestication of bush mango and salad as sources of income for most households. All communities visited, reported an interest in bush mango domestication. The communities of Abinti I, Abo Ogbagante, Balep and Otchakwe rated bush mango as the most important forest product for household livelihoods security.
- .8 Women in all the communities expressed interest in salad domestication. However, Biajua community, which rated salad as the most important source of household cash income, may benefit most from a training programme on afang domestication. It is suggested that the training be carried out in Biajua, but meant for a selection of women from all the target communities.

Basic education

- .9 An opportunity for extension of DIN's adult literacy programme exists in the community of Biajua that once had a functional adult literacy centre and a local instructor.
- .10 Adult literacy programmes could be extended to the community of Otchakwe, which is the remotest from motorable roads. Adult literacy could also form a component of an environmental education programme, which DIN has been involved in and intends to sustain if funding continues.

CONCLUSION

- .1 The PRA and the project in general generated a lot of useful data that will guide the adjustment of strategies identified for implementation of the village forest monitoring programme. A valuable lesson learnt in the process, though not surprising, is that the actual needs of communities often differ from what donors and implementing agencies propose.
- .2 With the identification of real needs by the respective communities using a consensual approach, the programme's partners (i.e. DIN, RRDC and community groups) are in a better position to implement the programme.

A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PRA METHODS USED DURING FIELDWORK

This section of the report describes the major PRA tools that were adapted for data collection and analysis. These included: preference or pair wise ranking, seasonal calendars, time lines, Venn diagramming, a wide of range of individual and group interview methods.

PREFERENCE OR PAIRWISE RANKING

This is a practical method which can be used to confirm local people's categories, criteria, choices and priorities. During the PRA exercise, pair wise ranking was used to encourage dialogue about community preferences. Pair wise preference ranking was used to integrate team members' divergent views about the value of forest products. Here, the major forest products and cash income sources were compared pair by pair, and informants were being asked to choose which product is preferred of the two, and why the preference.

SEASONAL CALENDARS

These explore seasonal constraints and opportunities by depicting changes throughout the year. Drawn linearly with 12 months to depict a typical year, the team used this tool to show the timing of harvest and flow of farm/forest products throughout the year.

TIME LINES

Time lines provided histories of major recollected events in the respective study communities with approximate dates. The team used time lines to guide discussions on changes in forest management that have occurred over time.

VENN (INSTITUTIONAL) DIAGRAMS

A Venn diagram was used as touching or overlapping circles of various sizes to depict interaction between the community decision-making institutions in the respective communities. Each circle represented an institution and the size of the circle indicated relative importance. The circles were used to indicate the degree of contact or overlap in terms of arriving at, and implementation of decisions. As it is conventional, touching circles indicate information sharing and overlap of function / membership. While small overlaps point to some cooperation, large overlaps mean considerable cooperation in decision-making and implementation.

INTERVIEWS

Interviews were used extensively to collect information on a wide range of subjects (examples include settlement history and the local economy). Semi structured interviews - guided interviewing and listening in which only some of the questions and topics are pre-determined, and questions arise during the interview - were held with a few key informants (e.g. elderly persons) who were not included in the PRA team. Individual interviews were held with some members of the team who could not express their views during the group discussions. Group interviews were used extensively to guide group discussions on several subjects of interest (e.g. forest usage and timber exploitation).