Development-Induced Displacement in Kiryandongo District: A Case Study of the Karuma Hydroelectric Power Plant

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Development-Induced Displacement in Kiryandongo District: A Case Study of the Karuma Hydroelectric Power Plant

Remington Fritz | School for International Training Fall 2021
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I would like to dedicate this to the community members who were willing to share their life, home and stories with me. I hope that this paper can be a small token of appreciation.

I would also like to dedicate this to my dad, who has always believed in me, and my mom, who’s social work inspires me. This is also dedicated to Laura, who’s love and support made this possible.
Acknowledgement

I would like to thank my academic director, Dr. Charlotte Mafumbo, for her guidance, hard work and patience, especially navigating the complications of COVID. I would also like to thank Dorothy, Paul and Helen for their care and support. I would Genesis Okello played an instrumental role in connecting me with resources, as well as other members of KAHLCO that provided warm guidance and assistance. I would also like to thank Paul Okiror for his direction and hard work.

I am deeply indebted to my fellow SIT students for turning this already wonderful experience into a memorable one and who challenged my view of development. Finally, I would like to acknowledge that this work was possible due to those I mentioned and several others.
Abstract

This paper assesses the effects of the development induced displacement due to the Karuma Hydroelectric Power Plant on the Awoo village and surrounding areas in Karuma Town. Recently, Uganda has pursued several large-scale development projects that have repeatedly displaced people. Despite having strong displacement and resettlement framework, there is a continued pattern of failing to implement such framework, threatening the livelihood and well-being of those displaced.

Interview with key informants from several government agencies, such as the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development the National Environmental Management Authority and Ugandan Generation Electricity Company Ltd have illustrated the political framework and the perceived benefits on the community. Several Focus Group Discussions within the community has revealed that displacement and resettlement framework was poorly implemented or not implemented at all. Corruption, lack of accountability and lack of transparency contributed to the government’s poor implementation. Therefore, displacement had an overwhelmingly negative effect by lowering the standard of living for PAPs, crippling their autonomy as Ugandan citizens and exacerbating rural inequality.

Uganda must take several drastic and immediate changes to their political framework and implementation. The government must rewrite their framework in order to promote stronger and less biased monitoring by hiring a third-party monitoring consultant. Additionally, the government must have a proper plan and funding for RAP and CDAP before starting construction that will have phases for the rollout. Finally, CBO’s like KAHLCO must be used as the primary spokesperson for the community and must be continually and persistently engaged with the framework development and implementation process.
Abbreviations

AfDB – African Development Bank
CBO – Community Based Organization
CDAP – Community Development Action Plan
CGV – Chief Government Valuer
CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility
DIDR – Development Induced Displacement and Resettlement
DRC – Democratic Republic of Congo
ERA – Electricity Regulatory Authority
ESIA - Environmental and Social Impact Assessment
FGD – Focus Group Discussion
HPP – Hydroelectric Power Plant
IRR Model – Improvement Risks and Reconstruction Model
KAHLCO – Karuma Hydropower Project Local Community Organization
LC – Local Council
LEC – Local Elder’s Council
LRA – Lord’s Resistance Army
MEMD – Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development
MP – Member of Parliament
MW – Mega Watt
NDP - National Development Plan
NEMA – National Environment Management Authority
NGO – Non-Governmental Organization
NPA – National Planning Authority
PAP – Project Affected Person
RAP – Resettlement Action Plan
RMI – Rocky Mountain Institute
SIT – School for International Training
UDECL- Uganda Distribution Electricity Company Ltd
UGECL – Uganda Generation Electricity Company Ltd
UGX – Uganda Shillings
UK – United Kingdom
ULC – Uganda Land Commission
UTECL – Uganda Transmission Electricity Company Ltd
UWA – Uganda Wildlife Authority
WB – World Bank
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Introduction

Over the last several decades, Uganda has made a tremendous push towards development, especially utilizing the construction large scale projects to grow their economy. These projects, including three large scale hydropower plants, are key to Uganda’s development plan of Vision 2040. However, many of these projects have come at a cost. Several of these projects have come under fire due to allegations of corruption, lack of transparency and disastrous delays. One of most serious consequences of these projects have been displacement. Although these large-scale development projects can bring benefits to the neighboring communities such as connecting to the national grid and gaining skilled employment, many experts contend that displacement can cause serious and damaging effects to the livelihood of Project Affected Persons (PAPs) (Cernea, 1997, p. 3). In order to mitigate these effects, the Ugandan government has instituted several policies: Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIA) Resettlement Action Plan (RAP), and Community Action Plan CDAP, and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

This paper will first provide background of the Ugandan energy sector, the history of development induced displacement in Uganda, and a brief history of the Karuma Hydroelectric Power Plant (Karuma HPP) and the surrounding region of Karuma Town Council. The next sections will discuss the objectives, literature and justification for research as well as the
relevant research methods and ethics. Then the research findings are divided into three objectives. The first will discuss the development displacement and resettlement framework, such as the ESIA, RAP, CDAP and CSR, for Karuma HPP. The second will discuss the execution of the aforementioned framework, identify the gaps in policy and implementation and the effects on the Awoo village and the last findings section will detail community mobilization and advocacy.

These findings then lead to the broader analysis that displacement by the Karuma HPP fostered poverty, limited local autonomy and exacerbated rural inequality. Finally, the paper will include several recommendations for mitigating implementation gaps and preventing destructive displacement in the future.

Background

Overview of Energy Sector in Uganda

Like many developing countries, Uganda is hungry for power. Under the Vision 2040 policy, Uganda intends to transition from a lower income country to an upper middle-income country.
in thirty years. The crux of this growth rests on energy, recognizing the importance of a developed energy sector as a “driver of socio-economic transformation of a nation” (NPA, 2009, p. 73). Included in the policy, are the goals to increase electricity consumption from 75 kWh to 3668 per capita and provide 80% of the population electricity, almost a seven-fold increase from 2010 levels (NPA, 2009, p. 14). Recently, energy demands have consistently rose per year. In November 2020, Uganda reached a record domestic demand of 736.68 MW (Mbaziira, 2020, p. 4).

However, there is much to be done. Plagued by a history of poor energy generation and distribution, Uganda has struggled to create economic and social development. Since independence in 1962, Uganda’s energy grid has been notorious for frequent blackouts, high power tariffs, and incompetent infrastructure (Ven, 2020, p. 13). In 2005, a sharp decline in energy generation due to hydropower failure led to a massive drop in GDP and widespread power outages (Akena, 2020). During this time, firms suffered a 31% loss in sales due to outages (Ramachandran, Shah, & Moss, 2018, p. 10).

In order to address the prevailing issues of the energy sector and meet both political and practical demands, Uganda has shifted towards commissioning large hydropower plants. The first two National Development Plans focused on increasing energy generation capability, which included commissioning two large dams Bujagali Hydropower Power Plant and Isimba Hydropower Power Plant, as well as starting construction on Karuma Hydroelectric Power Plant, the largest dam in Uganda.
Table 1. 2040 target and actual generation from different energy sources.

According to Vision 2040, hydropower will be the 3rd largest energy source, behind solar power and nuclear energy (NPA, 2009, p. 74). The policy claims that Uganda plans on diverting sources for nuclear development over the next twenty years. However, there is strong reason to believe that hydropower will continue to outpace the other two sources and provide the backbone for Uganda’s energy sector for years to come. Out of the three, hydropower is the closest to its 2040 goal and the sector that currently provides the most energy by a significant amount of over 950 MW in December 2019 (Ven, 2020, p. 13). Additionally, they have been instrumental in providing a revenue source for the government both by increasing domestic access to electricity and exporting surplus to neighboring countries like Kenya and the Democratic Republic of Congo, generating 24.8 billion UGX in profit in 2019 (UGECL, 2019, p. 17).

The Nile River is an enormous energy resource, the Electricity Regulatory Authority estimates that the large-scale hydropower potential along the river is around 2000 MW in total (World Bank, 2021, p. 41). If these dams prove to be successful, Uganda will certainly pursue large hydropower development projects to tap into this vast energy source.
Furthermore, China’s interest in financing Uganda’s hydropower sector can help drive its development quickly, encouraging Uganda to further expand hydropower. China financed both the Isimba and Karuma dam, loaning 85% of Karuma’s cost to Uganda (NS Energy). China remains the top financer for the energy sector, accounting for 33% of projected funding from FY2019/2020 to FY2023/2024 (Ven, 2020, p. 18). Most of the funding will be allocated towards hydropower projects. For example, Uganda’s next huge project, potentially in partnership with POWERCHINA International Group Limited, is Ayago Hydroelectric Power Plant (Biryabarema, 2020). It will provide 840 MW to the national grid and expand Uganda’s energy generation capabilities by 40% (Biryabarema, 2020).

Given that Uganda has several willing partners, most notably China, it’s possible that Uganda will continue to pursue a hydropower centered energy sector for years to come, rather than nuclear or solar power centered one. Additionally, compared to hydropower, nuclear energy and solar power draws little interest or much needed investment in order to develop these industries.

Although hydropower has greatly benefitted Uganda’s generation capabilities, there are distinct patterns across the dams that cause reason for concern. High cost and delays can offset the benefits of large hydropower dams, often pushing Uganda into more debt. All three dams, Isimba HPP, Bujagali HPP and Karuma HPP, all finished construction well after their initial commissioning deadline. Bujagali HPP, due to delays, has cost the Ugandan economy an additional $180 million (Mutaizibwa & Talemwa, 2012). However, the most concerning effect is development-induced displacement.

**History of Development Induced Displacement**

Owen Falls Dam, now known as Nalubaale Power Station, was the first development project that directly impacted. Constructed under British rule in 1952, a decade before
Ugandan independence, it is the first recorded instance of a development project in Uganda that required land acquisition. Nalubaale Power Station had a destructive effect on the surrounding community, leaving Jinja with “empty buildings and decaying streets” due to the sudden influx and then removal of 2000 workers (Nayler, 2020, pg. 408). Although there are no records of development-induced displacement, there is reason to believe that colonial attitudes of the time “may reflect that it was not a particular concern for the colonial administration” (Nayler, 2020, pg. 408). Additionally, the British constructed the dam without conducting environmental and social impact assessments or resettlement plans.

After Ugandan independence, the country continued to construct large scale development projects. In 1992, a multilateral, European donor agency funded a forest management project that led to the violent eviction of 35,000 from the Kibale forest (Cernea, 1997, p. 25). Partly due to non-existent policy regarding development induced displacement and resettlement, the Ugandan government failed to provide services to assist the displaced, resulting in starvation, little shelter and poor hygiene conditions. The rampant and widespread public backlash prompted the Ugandan government to draft national resettlement policy (Cernea, 1997, p. 25).

Uganda worked closely with the World Bank to generate policy that “[protects] the rights of involuntary resettlers”, including clauses to develop the displaced community, provide compensation and protect customary land ownership (Cernea, 1997, p. 3). Additionally, Uganda ratified a new constitution in 1995 which included shifting land ownership from the Uganda Land Commission to private ownership, inducing a “radical change to the legal status of land rights” (Raw, Fisher, & Pandey, 2000, p. 24). Shortly after these sweeping reforms, Michael Cernea, arguably the most influential researcher in DIDR literature, praised Uganda’s reformed resettlement policy, calling it “remarkable progress…in
terms of their policies for relocation operations” and identified Uganda as one of three countries that had the most change in Africa (Cernea, 1997, p. 3).

Since then, several instances of DIDR have tested the political framework, and have subsequently revealed a pattern of government failure to properly execute these policies. Between 2006 and 2010, the government displaced twenty thousand people from the Kiboga and Mubende Districts in order to clear land for the UK-Based New Forest Company plantations (Oxfam, 2011, p. 15). Many displaced community members claimed that the Ugandan military violently and forcefully evicted people from their homes with little to no compensation (Oxfam, 2011, p. 15). This pattern continued into the next decade. From 2010 to 2019, Uganda commissioned Bujagali HPP and Isimba HPP. In the case of both dams, several government agencies claimed that the benefits of the dams were numerous and initiated healthy development within the community. In both instances, the mismatch between government claims and the displaced communities’ accounts is glaring. A study conducted on the 8700 people who were displaced by the Bujagali HPP reported “continued dissatisfaction with the resettlement and consultation processes”, with one community member bluntly noting “the dam had brought no development” and had “[taken the] Bujagali [community]back to where it was before” in terms of poverty and poor standard of living (Nayler, 2020, pg. 408). Communities afflicted by Isimba HPP, a project that displaced 3000 people, reported a similar story (Griffin, 2018). They claimed that they were not properly compensated and are now suffering from pervasive malnutrition.

Karuma HPP continues this disturbing trend. The small, yet significant literature describing the displacement of the Awoo village details stories of forced displacement without compensation (Jansen and Kugonza, 2019, 16). There is currently very little reporting on the design and implementation of the displacement and resettlement framework.
Uganda’s history of violent and destructive development induced displacement coupled with its push for larger, more numerous hydropower projects calls for a close examination of policy surrounding displacement and resettlement in the effort to identify weaknesses in government implementation. This research hope to uncover the pitfalls that policy is exposed to and help build a body of literature that investigates these patterns in hopes of preventing them in the future.

**Karuma Hydroelectric Power Plant**

The Karuma HPP is a 600 MW run of river power plant currently being constructed on the river Nile in the Kiryandongo district (NS Energy). It is located on Karuma Falls next to the Gulu-Kampala Highway, about 270 km north of Kampala, Uganda’s capital city. The project broke ground in August 2013 with the original completion date of July 2019. Due to several delays, the completion date is expected to by June of 2022 (NS Energy).

The project was originally supposed to be developed by NORPAK, a Norwegian company, that had the exclusive rights to develop a 200MW project in 1996. The company had secured approximately 34 hectares to build the project before lack of funding and accusations of corruptions halted the project (NAPE, 2013, pg. 3). The government of Uganda then purchased the project and, after several feasibility studies, decided to commission a project producing 600 MW. The cost of the dam is projected at $1.7bn (NS Energy).

The loan from EXIM is expected to be repaid over a period of 25 years, at an average interest rate of 3% (NS Energy). The developer is the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, the implementing agencies are UEGCL and UETCL and the contractor is Sinohydro Corporation Ltd, who is contracted for several projects in East Africa such as a $2bn unfractured initiative in Ghana (Kyei, 2019). After commissioning, Sinohydro will turn
over the dam to UEGCL. They are contractually obligated to fix any issues for five years after the dam.

The dam will cover 465 hectares of land (NAPE, 2013, pg. 3). A little more than half of the land was acquired from the Karuma Wildlife Reserve. The remaining land was acquired from private owners in villages of Karuma, Awoo and Nora, triggering displacement and resettlement procedures which, as mentioned before, has caused a host of issues and grievances among the displaced. Other issues have continued to plague the dam, creating a highly politically charged discussion surrounding the project. As recently as 2020, UGECL has accused Sinodyro of hiring “incompetent and inexperienced staff with questionable levels of workmanship as senior managers”, resulting in unsafe working conditions and inadequate construction (The Independent, 2020).

As a result of public backlash and numerous allegations ranging from breached contracts to corruption, both private and public discussion of the dam has been highly politicized. It is so politicized that several government workers declined to comment on the commission date, fearing repercussion from the government if the commissioning changes once again. The lack of transparency, abundance of secrecy and numerous problems has clouded the visibility of the progress of the dam. Despite the project spanning a decade, few reports exist on the status of the displacement and resettlement plans and the effects of the dam on the surrounding communities.

The Karuma HPP and surrounding villages is part of the Bunyoro Kingdom in Western Uganda. A minority group known as the Paluo were the original occupants of the land. Many of them fled the region due to wildlife attacks from the Karuma Wildlife Reserve and the tse tse flies that spread sleeping sickness (KAHLCO Member, 2021). The government launched a successful program to get rid of the flies and animals in order to reclaim the land. Several different groups began settling in this area as the number of the
original indigenous group gradually shrank. Starting in the 1950s, the Alur ethnic group began migrating to the Karuma region from Northern Uganda and parts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo due to ongoing conflict. Other Ugandan groups like the Langi and Buloli tribe, as well as Malagoli from Kenya began to trickle into the region. During the LRA’s conflict from the 1990s to the 2000s, several Acholi fled the conflict and settled alongside the Nile (KAHLCO Member, 2021).

Most of them migrated to the Awoo village, one of the 12 villages in the Karuma region and the village that experienced the most displacement due to the dam. Most of the migrants became bona fide landowners (KAHLCO Member, 2021). Under the 1995 Constitution, bona fide landowners, or customary landowners, have the same rights and protections as traditional landowners (Republic of Uganda, 1995).

The main economic activities of the Awoo village and surrounding Karuma town is subsistence farming and fishing. Most farmers grow traditional crops like maize, beans, and cassava. Many farmers own goats, chickens, and turkeys. Some of the wealthier households’ own cows. Those who live along the Nile are fisherman. Besides fishing, there were several economic actives that relied on the river, such as gathering papyrus for making roofs for thatched huts, collecting medicinal herbs, mining sand from the riverside, and collecting water for domestic use. The farmers also frequently diverted river water through irrigation channels in order to water their land.

**Literature Review and Justification**

*Development Induced Displacement Theory*

The study of development induced displacement (DID) originated in the 1990s during the construction of Three Gorges Dam in China and the Sardar Sarovar Complex Project in India (Terminski, 2013, 9) Alarmed by the large scale displacement of the adjoining
communities, many anthropologists investigated the effects of forced removal on the displaced persons. Since then, the study of DID has transformed into development induced displacement and resettlement (DIDR), to ensure the scholarship surrounding this type of displacement includes all stages, before, during and after the project implementation. Scudder and Colson were one of the first to model resettlement in the 1970s and broke down the process into four steps. Many scholars then criticized the model, arguing that displacement and resettlement rarely followed the same steps perfectly across the board. As Chris de Wet, professor and head of the Department of Anthropology at Rhodes University in South Africa puts it, “projects rarely proceed according to plan” (De Wet, 2006, 5)

A little after, Michael Cernea created a new model that demonstrated the effects of DIDR rather than the phases. It is the most widely used by scholars even today and many papers use IRR to model the effects of displacement. He created the Improvement Risks and Reconstruction (IRR) that models “eight interlinked potential risks intrinsic to displacement” (Choi and Satiroglu, 2015, 4). He asserts that there are eight risks inherent of being displaced by development and that scholars must pay careful attention to these risks. Although the model is the most widely used, many scholars have criticized it, claiming that it needs to expand to include educational and basic services loss (5). Others suggest it is too optimistic (5).

Over the years, literature has coalesced into three key unifying conclusions about DIDR. There is a general agreement that DIDR severely negatively impacts the life and livelihood of those displaced, it disproportionally affects the marginalized communities of a country, and displacement and resettlement is often very poorly planned and executed.

However, the literature diverges when it comes to why there is poor planning regarding displacement and resettlement. Cernea argues that the lack of national framework within countries hosting development projects leads to a severe lack of planning, and thus, problematic displacement and resettlement (Fisher, 2000, 105). S. Paramusan, a professor of social science
at the Tata Institute of Social Science, believes that this argument is insufficient, claiming that although good policy is crucial, “the solution rests on the willingness and the capacity of the state to implement these policies” (105). In his book, *The Development Dilemma: Displacement in India*, Parasuraman asserts that the weak execution of policy is the root cause of problematic DIDR.

*Development Induced Displacement in Uganda*

The literature is primarily divided into two key camps: people centered research and policy centered research. Both camps usually study DIDR in Uganda with case studies. However, they differ in objectives, methods and findings. Frank Mugagga, Patrick Byakagaba and Leonida Tibakunirwa, researchers at Makerere University, aimed to find how resettlement packages affects those displaced in the Albertine Garben Region. Frank Ahimbisibwe, and Charles Muchunguzi, researchers at Mbarara University of Science and Technology, studied the effects of compensation dispossession on women in a similar region. Researchers Pieter Jansen and Robert Kugonza studied the experiences of communities affected by the Karuma Hydroelectric Power Plant and the Bujagali Hydroelectric Power Plant.

The people centered studies tended to use more qualitative research. Mugagga, Byakaga and Tibakunirwa, used key informant interviews, focused group interviews and structured questionnaires for their primary data. They then synthesized the data using SPSS. They found that most of those displaced suffered socioeconomically, and that women in particular were negatively affected. These findings were replicated in other research papers as well who used similar research methods. Specioza Twinamasiko, Frank Ahimbisibwe, and Charles Muchunguzi also used qualitative research methods like focus group discussions and key informant interviews, as well as covert observation and documentary evidence. Similarly, they found evidence that compensations did not adequately help “vulnerable groups, such as
women” (Ahimbisibwe, Muchunguzi and Twinamasiko, 2019, 15). Like the other groups, these Jansen and Kugonza documented “narratives [that] clearly show the negative impacts of the hydropower projects on people’s livelihoods and wellbeing” (Jansen and Kugonza, 2019, 2).

Policy centered policy usually focuses on the legislation of displacement and resettlement in regard to development. David Ross Olanya, PhD student at Gulu University, investigated the role of state building and accountability in project implementation. Russell Rhoads, an associate professor of anthropology at Grand Valley State University, and Onesmus Mugyenyi, head of the Environment and Natural Resource Governance Program in Uganda, researched how international resettlement policies and rehabilitation can be applied as national polices and whether they could be effective (Mugyenyi and Rhoads, 2019, 153). They relied less on qualitative research like interviews, and drew from other open data sources like the World Bank, National Planning Authority, and Independent Review Mechanisms of the AfDB. Additionally, their findings were similar, yet through a policy lens. Like the people centered approach, these researchers agreed that the implementation of compensation was largely unsuccessful and displaced populations. One researcher, Eleanor Fischer, argues that Uganda in particular is important to study because of the new constitution and changes to land policy. These policies “mean recognition of the humans rights…and people’s capacity to voice their own rights”, at least in policy (Fisher, 2000, 105). It is important to study “whether this is translated into change in general” (105).

With this in mind, it is disappointing to note that little literature exists on the Isimba HPP and the Karuma HPP. Usually, analyses are imbedded within a case study of the Bujagali and are not the primary focus. Therefore, it is imperative to build on the literature that monitors and evaluates the policy implementation of Uganda’s recent legislation for all development projects, including HPP. My research is important to fill these identifiable gaps.
Objectives
The objective of this study is to investigate the effects of development-induced displacement on the community members of the Awoo village due to the Karuma Hydroelectric Power Plant. This overarching objective is subdivided into three smaller objectives:

1. Examine the framework of Ugandan policies regarding displacement and resettlement and the design of the Resettlement Action Plan, Community Development Action Plan, Environmental and Social Impact Assessments related to the Karuma Hydroelectric Power Plant Project
2. Investigate how the displacement and resettlement framework was implemented
3. Observe the resilience building mechanisms and coping strategies that the afflicted communities developed in response to displacement

Methodology
The author conducted independent research for four weeks with the assistance of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development and KAHLCO (Karuma Hydroelectric Project Local Community Organization). Secondary sources were used to research background information on the Ugandan energy sector, development induced displacement in Uganda and the history of the Karuma HPP. Secondary sources also provided context for Ugandan displacement and resettlement framework, such as the RAP, CDAP, ESIA and CSR. The author focused specifically on the effects of displacement on the Awoo village because they are the village that suffered the most displacement and was the most accessible.

One of the aims of this study was to establish the development of displacement and resettlement framework in regard to the Karuma HPP, therefore key informant interviews with MEMD, NEMA, and UGECL were instrumental in providing information about the history and current state of such policies. These interviews were also cross analyzed with Focus Group
Discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews with members of KAHLCO and the LC1 in order to establish a comprehensive depiction of policy implementation specific to the Karuma HPP. FGDs were conducted with groups of women, unskilled laborers working for Sinohydro, people awarded land in Lapono, those who are currently pursuing court cases, members of KAHLCO and cultural leaders. All these FGDs also provided valuable information regarding the effects of implementation on PAPs, both immediate and long term. The FGDs with KAHLCO members and the cultural leaders were particularly essential in establishing community mobilization and activism.

The researcher also utilized transect walks in order to triangulate findings related to RAP, CDAP and CSR development and implementation. The transect walks also created a deeper understanding of community struggles and the PAP’s perception of the effects of displacement. Two transect walks were conducted with members of KAHLCO.

Limitations

Government accounts often conflicted with the PAPs’ recollections of the events of displacement and resettlement. Therefore, at times it was difficult to piece together the true nature of events. Some of the claims were so contradictory that it was difficult to analyze the implementation of some of the displacement and resettlement framework due to the certainty.

Therefore, further research is required in order to verify certain claims and examine the validity of both community and governmental allegations of what transpired. Due to time and budget constraints, it proved to be difficult to perform these investigations within the research time frame. The researcher attempted to conduct interviews with the Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development and the LC5 of Kiryandongo District in order to verify certain claims of RAP and CDAP implementation, but this was unsuccessful. Sinohydro Corporation LTD was also unavailable to interview regarding claims of working conditions and CSR.
Furthermore, it was difficult to provide a counter point to the PAPs’ overwhelmingly negative account of displacement and resettlement. There are some PAPs who benefitted from the displacement and resettlement, but it proved difficult to reach them.

It is important to note that conducting FGDs required the use of a translator who was a member of KAHLCO. The organization has a history of corruption and, while the corruption has been addressed and the organization has allegedly reformed, his presence may have impacted the FGDs, particularly around topics of corruption and community mobilization.

Admittedly, further research should extend to include people who were displaced in the Oyom District, as the community there occupy a significant percentage of PAPs. However, due to time and budget constraints, it was difficult to access those PAPs.

**Ethical Considerations**

Ethics were carefully considered during research in order to preserve the quality of research and the protect the participants of both key informant interviews and FGDs. The study was submitted to the SIT Human Subjects Review Board and a Consent Form was carefully curated to address the needs of the study and the potential sensitivities of the participants. Firstly, the researcher disclosed the entire consent form to the participant, including the purpose of the study, the expectations of the participants, and to mitigate the participants’ expectation of this research. Many vulnerable groups that are studied may have a hope or expectation of immediate, short-term help. The researcher, through a translator, if necessary, emphasized the academic nature of the study. Verbal consent was required for key informant interviews, such as government officials in the MEMD, UGECL and NEMA. Signed consent was required for vulnerable groups, such as the PAPs in FGDs. For FGDs, a full translation of the consent form was given. If they had any questions or concerns about the study, the researcher gave a prompt and honest answer before the interview started.
Due to the traumatic experience of this vulnerable population, there was clear and repeated emphasis on the voluntary nature of the study and the questions. If a question made a participant uncomfortable, they were encouraged to omit from answering it. Additionally, participants were encouraged to leave if the interview led the participant to feel distressed or uncomfortable. The researcher and translator stressed that there would be no penalty from omitting from a question or the interview. This practice was also extended to key informant interviews. If the participant was unable to sign their own name, they stamped their thumb print on the signature line instead. Small compensation was provided, such as refreshments and a transportation stipend.

The discourse surrounding the dam is highly political, therefore it is important to protect the identity of the FGD’s and the key informant interviewees. Those who work for the government are particularly vulnerable to backlash. Therefore, anonymity is to protect the identities of all participants, and only minimal identifying information (employee of UGECL) is used.

**Findings**

**Introduction**

The 1995 Constitution revolutionized land ownership by overturning nationalized land ownership and granting private ownership back to the citizens of Uganda. Under Article 26, it established several laws that protected people’s land, including instituting protections against development-induced displacement. In order to secure land acquisition from private ownership, the government must go through a lengthy process.
The process includes providing justification for land acquisition, conducting an environmental and social impact assessment, developing a Resettlement Action Plan and Community Development Plan, as well as conducting close monitoring of the process. In compliance with the 1995 Constitution of Uganda, the government can only acquire possession of land if it is “necessary for public use” and must provide a detailed explanation within the project concept note (Republic of Uganda, 1995). Justification is also included in the RAP (MEMD Official, 2021). For the Karuma HPP, the MEMD argued that Uganda is in dire need of power, although there have been recent strides in energy production, energy is still not adequate for the country. Additionally, in order to achieve goals outlined in Uganda’s Vision 2040 and the subsequent National Development Plans, such as supporting industries from small scale processing of crops to opening industrial parks, Uganda must continue developing its generation capacity (MEMD Official, 2021). There are also specific policy initiatives, such as the Rural Electrification Project, that Uganda needs energy in order to implement these policies.

After Uganda awards the contract, consultants come to site in order to conduct the ESIA and RAP, which are done in conjunction. MEMD funds the entire ESIA, RAP and CDAP development and implementation (MEMD Official, 2021). Before the ESIA development, the developer and contractor (MEMD and Sinohydro) will submit terms of reference for scoping of work to NEMA. NEMA checks key details for correct project, correct assumption of impacts and full description of project area. If everything is up to NEMA’s standards, the organization approves it, and the developer and contractors then proceed to carry out the ESIA.

The ESIA is a complete report of all the foreseeable environmental and social effects by the dam on the local community (NEMA Official, 2021). The ESIA identifies negative effects as well as suggests mitigation efforts in order to lessen the effects. In addition to
identifying the negative effects, the ESIA will also include benefits as well as corresponding “enhancement measures” in order to supplement the perceived benefits to the community (NEMA Official, 2021).

Due to lacking in-house experts, MEMD hires third party contractors to conduct the ESIA, RAP and CDAP. To conduct the ESIA, MEMD hired Infratech Company Ltd (UGECL Official, 2021). The consultants will lead the primary field work while MEMD accompanies them. Then, MEMD will include their findings in the final ESIA and will eventually implement the mitigation and enhancement measures either before or during the construction of the dam. During the ESIA field work, local leadership provides additional support. The district local environmental committee, headed by a democratically elected chairperson, reviews and approves the development projects within the district. During the review process, they will visit the sight and sensitize local leadership to the project, who will then in turn sensitize the local community. They may request different project designs depending on the needs and requests of the people or their own perceptions. NEMA will also hire a consultant to visit the community and confirm their knowledge of the project called a “stakeholder consultation”, again using LC1 as the point of contact. They also meet with sub county and district leaders for additional review and input. NEMA approves the final ESIA and may include terms of conditions.

The purpose of the RAP is to mitigate the impact of physical displacement on the affected population (UGECL Official, 2021). One of the most important aspects during RAP development is to include the stakeholders in order to archive “transparency” (MEMD Official, 2021). The PAPs are beneficiaries of the project and should be treated as such (UGECL Official, 2021). Thus, there are several meetings to sensitize the PAPs to RAP development. MEMD will engage the PAPs by making announcements over radio, conduct radio talk shows, write newspaper articles, put up posters and engage LC1 to disperse
information about meetings for RAP development (MEMD Official, 2021). During the meetings, any PAP can join and raise issues or input about RAP (MEMD Official, 2021). In order to help the community, understand, due to language barriers and issues with literacy, the local council attends and the district development officer chairs meeting.

The RAP must comply with the constitution of Uganda

- Explore alternative project designs
- Mitigate negative social and economic impacts of development-induced displacements
  - By providing fair and adequate compensating in a prompt manner
- Improve or maintain the livelihoods and standards of living

After sensitizing the community to RAP development, MEMD will conduct socioeconomic surveys, which determine the standard of living for each PAP, and land surveys, which determine the ownership of land and its assists (UGECL Official, 2021). The type of data collected is extremely detailed. The PAP will guide the surveyor around their land while the surveyor takes notes on coordinates, names of neighbors and details surrounding land such as, what kinds of trees and bushes will be affected and how many. During this stage, the consultant determines households that are “most vulnerable” to negative effects of displacement (UGECL Official, 2021). They are determined to get in-kind compensation, land and new house, rather than getting a choice. The socioeconomic survey also captures the social services and amenities availed to the PAPs, such as access to health care and clean water. The consultant of RAP informs LCs of these surveys and relies on their guidance during the process.

After surveyors, the MEMD will send property valuers (from what organization) to place value on land, crops, buildings and any other amenities on land. For land, they use
current district rates that are updated every year by the Chief Government Valuer. LCs move with consultancy teams to assist the valuation process. During land valuation, the PAPs fill out forms acknowledging that valuation have taken place (MEMD Official, 2021). After valuation, the chief government valuer reviews the proposal of land valuation and checks site. They also review the RAP report and reviews terms of reference. During valuation, the PAPs can choose between land or cash compensation (MEMD Official, 2021). After valuation, auditors from MEMD verify the valuers.

After audit, there is a RAP disclosure. The MEMD and consultant will sensitize subcounty and district level representatives to the final RAP. The consultant and LC first sign the RAP, then the final, approved RAP is disclosed to the community (MEMD Official, 2021). The MEMD conducts talk shows and puts up posters, like announcements detailing the initial RAP meeting. The LC will also sensitize the community to the RAP disclosure date and time. During the RAP disclosure, the MEMD explains the summary of the RAP, explains what houses are affected, at what cost, replacement as well as methodology of surveying and valuing. They explain how the RAP will be implemented as well as community expectations, such as eviction date. Then, MEMD gets final consent from PAPs, including form any children in the household. After a household consents, they are given final payment amount and final notice to leave. After payment, they have six months to leave. At the disclosure meeting, there are banks to sign people up for accounts. Those who already have them bring pay slips. In addition to compensation, the PAPs receive a disturbance allowance that will be added to their bank account. If they opted for cash compensation, PAPs receive financial literacy training. Shortly after disclosure, the cash compensation is paid to their bank account.

If PAPs are dissatisfied with cash or land compensation amount, then are options to go to court to sue for more compensation, with or without a lawyer. If they decide to go to court, their money is held in a serpent bank account until the case is decided. After the court case
ends, the PAPs will receive their compensation. After disclosure, not consent, propel can no longer add things to be compensated, such as crops planted after disclosure. If the compensation is delayed, then there is an “interest” paid on the compensation in order to make up for economic loss, such as skipping planting crops in order to prepare for eviction. In order to follow up with people to make sure they received compensation, the MEMD use LCs to speak for the people.

PAPs must be given full compensation and disturbance allowance before eviction. People remain on their land until they are paid, then they move willingly within the six-month time frame. Once everyone has signed agreement, construction is allowed to start.

During RAP development, the CDAP is also being developed. Like the RAP, CDAP also holds “stakeholder engagement meetings” to invite community to participate in its development (NEMA Official, 2021). The MEMD writes the CDAP and UGECL implements it, who in turn may hire third party contractors. MEMD does consultations with LC1, LC3 and LC5 to assist RAP development. The purpose of the CDAP is to mitigate economic and social displacement, as well as the anticipated population boom. In order to mitigate these problems, the CDAP promises to build hospitals, schools, support fisheries, support agriculture, provide amenities like clean water and electricity and much more. The CDAP should be implemented during the construction of the dam in order to fully address the problems of economic and social displacement.

During RAP and CDAP implementation, MEMD and NEMA conduct monitoring in order to evaluate the success of these plans. NEMA organizes a quarterly monitoring committee that monitors development projects at all levels, from social development to dam construction. It is made up of 14 different organizations, including MEMD, NEMA, UWA, the Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development etc. with NEMA as the coordinator (NEMA Official, 2021). The committee visits the site quarterly or biannually, depending on the availability of
funds. The committee is broken down into subgroups that focus on certain aspects of the project, such as subgroups of ecologists that focus on environmental concerns. During these meetings, these subgroups will use a “checklist” informed by the last visit to make sure that issues identified last meeting were addressed (NEMA Official, 2021). In order to monitor the community, NEMA hired a community outreach officer that directly interacts with PAPs.

Regarding dam construction, NEMA issues certificates during phases dam development to approve permission for construction of certain infrastructure, like quarry or waste disposal area. This ensures safe working conditions and quality construction. The certificates provide the primary discussion during these meetings. PAPs can attend these meetings in order to bring up issues regarding the community or ask for revaluation.

In addition to the committee, NEMA conducts monthly monitoring. Officers will visit dam for five days, inspecting both the dam and the community. NEMA meets with MEMD, Sinohydro and UGECL in order to confirm that they solved issues from last meeting.

An important, yet semi-informal, part of displacement and resettlement is corporate social responsibility. Sinohydro, as the contractor, will provide funding for community development projects such as constructing schools or hospitals for the PAPs. LC5s are responsible for directing Sinohydro to build certain amenities.

An important part of community development is the ability for the PAPs to attain employment by Sinohydro. They are given priority for jobs, both skilled and unskilled. Those who have qualifications to work on the dam receive fresh training before being interview. Those who are interested, yet have no experience are given extensive training before doing an interview. The training is not certificate or university degree level but provides enough hands-on training to perform duties safely and effectively. If community does not have certain specialized workers, then Sinohydro outsources to other parts of Uganda. The Chinese remain
in administrative and management roles, they give Ugandans building capacity by exposing them to their expertise. The Ugandans build what the Chinese direct.

In terms of health and safety, national law will always trump the contract.

In order to ensure safety of the workers, court can stop project because of injunctions.

How the ESIA, CDAP, RAP and CSR was implemented and the effects

The following findings trace the implementation of government framework from the beginning of RAP development in 2013 to the present struggles of resettlement today, including RAP, CDAP, ESIA, CSR, and monitoring and evaluation. This section details how the government implemented the framework, such as if it was implemented, if it wasn’t, or if implementation was subpar, as well as the perceived effects. The report then reveals the true effects of implementation on the community and community response. The findings note an overt and obvious mismatch between the displacement and resettlement policy framework and its implementation during the Karuma HPP project, as well as the concerning disparity between the perception of the government and the perception of the PAPs regarding the success of displacement and resettlement goals.

The Ugandan government seems to have a stance that that RAP and CDAP implementation was a series of accomplishments, one government official claiming that RAP and CDAP implementation had a 98% success rate (MEMD Official, 2021). Another alleged that only 30% of PAPs were unhappy with their compensation (District Official, 2021). Other officials maintain that achieved their goals of mitigating negative effects from displacement and bringing development to the region, touting successes like a growing local economy and employment opportunities.

However, every PAP who participated in this study denied the success of the policies. One stated that the project was a “crime against humanity” committed against those who
were displaced, a sentiment echoed by many others claiming that the dam only brought “misery” and “death” (Cultural Leaders, 2021). Local leaders also lamented the process of displacement, claiming that their community is worse off than before (KAHLCO, 2021). The process of displacement, compensation, and resettlement utterly failed in its directive and plunged PAPs into poverty and development.

**ESIA, RAP and CDAP Community Sensitization**

Problems with implementation and points of miscommunication started at the beginning of the project during the initial meetings with community to discuss the development and implementation of ESIA, RAP and CDAP. As per the political framework, these groups used LC1s in order to sensitize the community to the program and draw awareness to meetings. NEMA also asserts that they conducted sites visits and “stakeholder consultations” in order to verify community knowledge about the project and determine the accuracy of the impact assessments (NEMA Official, 2021).

During these introductory meetings, which took place in 2010, the MEMD informed the community of the displacement and resettlement process (Court Cases, 2021). PAPs were initially very excited about the project and the promise of development. Before the project, many PAPs lacked electricity, running water, adequate health care, formal employment and only some had clean water (Court Cases, 2021). According to the community, the MEMD promised to address of these issues during these meetings, such as hospitals, powerlines and jobs working for Sinohydro. One participant recalled that the project “promised to change their lives” (Lapono, 2021). A district level government official confirms these promises, detailing that the government had promised the community a chance to develop into a city (District Official, 2021). President Museveni himself conducted a meeting in Karuma town, promising to bring wealth to the region (KAHLCO Member, 2021).
These first few meetings set the stage for a confusing and opaque process for three key reasons.

First, many community members believed that all the promises of MEMD made during these meetings would be implemented during the construction. However, at the time of writing this report, only about 10% of the CDAP has been implemented with 98.8% of construction completed (UGECL Official, 2021). Several PAPs believe that they were unfairly robbed due to the lack of infrastructure, amenities and development that they were promised in return for their land. After speaking to almost 30 PAPs, the community expected every school, hospital and public amenity to be built. However, MEMD has a much different understand of the CDAP. One government official informed the study that the CDAP was considered more a “wish list” and that due to funding, it would be impossible to implement everything in the document (MEMD Official, 2021). Other officials also affirmed the issue of funding (UGECL Official, 2021). One stated that money that is allocated for RAP and CDAP constantly disappears, hindering their process (NEMA Official, 2021). At the time of writing, the ESIA, RAP or CDAP are not available online or in any public domain. There were several unsuccessful attempts to obtain a copy, therefore it is hard to verify what conditions were in the original documents. What is important, however, is that the government failed to inform the PAPs that fulfilling all parts of the CDAP was impossible, who would not have given up their land if they were aware of the funding issues (Cultural Leaders, 2021).

The second piece of contention is the PAPs’ perception that MEMD, Energy Infratech and NEMA only met with the LC1 for “stakeholder consultation” (KAHLCO, 2021). For example, KAHLCO, a grass roots CBO that previously worked with NORPAK, Karuma HPP’s initial developer in the 2000s, had plans to help develop displacement and resettlement framework. NORPAK intended to use the organization to be the main point of contact with the community. When the government bought the rights from NORPAK, KAHLCO changed
its organization structure to include more members of the community rather than just elders, intending to capture a more wholistic assessment of PAP’s needs. Like for NORPAK, it expected to the primary spokesperson for the PAPs. In fact, MEMD funded the construction of KAHLCO’s headquarters, indicating to its members that it would continue this role (KAHLCO, 2021) However, many members feel like the MEMD switched stances and undermined KAHLCO’s ability to communicate the needs of the PAPs.

Part of the organization’s constitution is to mandate the membership of LC1s. However, instead of meeting with the entire organization, Energy Infratech, MEMD and NEMA exclusively met with the LC1 during the development of RAP. The organizations also failed to meet with other PAPs, instead focusing on the LC1 as the single spokesperson. According to KAHLCO and several community members, the LC1 failed to assess community needs and greenlit several plans, including parts of the RAP and CDAP, without informing or assessing the community. Miscommunication and the sole reliance on the LC1 continued to be problematic trends throughout the rest of the RAP and CDAP development and implementation.

**RAP Development**

Upon speaking to several government agencies, MEMD, NEMA, and UGECL, these officials are certain that the government made all the compensation payments in full, barring those who sued, and their payments are in the bank until they agree to settle. Under the Constitution, Article 26 those who are being displaced are entitled to “prompt payment of fair and adequate compensation, prior to taking of possession or acquisition of the property” (Republic of Uganda, 1995). The government maintains that they followed the constitution, emphasizing that is it “the constitution is supreme law” (MEMD Official, 2021).
However, several community members ascertain that they were paid very little, paid less than they were promised or not paid at all. At each step, surveying, valuation, disclosure and final payment, there were key breakdowns in implementation that prevented PAPs from receiving their full compensation.

Surveying

During the surveying process, some PAPs had the opportunity to move with surveyors, while others did not, which they believe led MEMD to devalue their land (KAHLCO, 2021). Some received forms to fill out, detailing their land and assets such as fruit trees. Others did not (Court Cases, 2021). Some were told to stay in their homes all day for several days, without knowledge of when the surveyor would appear (Women, 2021). The surveyors were also known to exclude certain details of people’s land. One PAP complained that the surveyors would refuse to count smaller banana stems (Women, 2021). Many believed that they did not receive a fair compensation due to the complex and uneven nature of the surveying process.

Those who were not involved in surveying their land risked local leadership, both LC1s and Town Council members, misrepresenting their land and claiming it for themselves. One example is the survey done on the church. In the RAP, MEMD agreed to build a new church in order to replace the one that would be graded by Sinohydro. According to church leaders, the government did not consult them during the surveying process. Instead, they conducted their own independent surveying process with input from other undisclosed community members. During RAP implementation, the newly built church only received 6 of the original 13 acres it was supposed to be compensated for. As evident in Figure 1, there were over 20 claims to the original church land. One of the claims was filed by the LC1, who
received cash compensation for land that was not his.

**Figure 1.** Survey of Church Land in 2021

There were other cases of local leadership corruption during the surveying process. One-woman did not receive any money for her 8 acres due to someone impersonating her during the verification process (Court Cases, 2021). This man received all the PAP’s compensation and when she went to the LC3 to report the incident, he promised to investigate it (Court Cases, 2021). Eight years later, she still didn’t receive any compensation. They believe that the LC1 bribed the LC3 to overlook the incident, so the impersonator could keep the money (Court Cases, 2021).

**Valuation**

Although the government emphasized the importance of transparency during RAP development, many PAPs did not understand the process of valuation, nor did they feel included. The PAPs were unable to see the results of the survey and only saw the final valuation amount. This created confusion over the compensation figure, and many people felt
like they did not understand how their compensation was determined. Instead of a breakdown of assets with a set value attached, people received a blanket number for their entire land. Many PAPs were unsure what was counted in the valuation but were certain that the government either did not compensate for all their land or its assets or devalued their land (Lapono, 2021).

Although the government claimed to have used district land rates of 2012, 500k per acre, to determine compensation many PAPs do not believe that is not the case. There were several instances of perceived inconsistent valuing, for example one PAP’s acre of land would be valued at 1m UGX and another person’s acre would be valued at 2m UGX (Lapono, 2021). The MEMD valued one person’s land at 200k UGX, yet he had purchased the land at 800k originally (Court Cases, 2021). Another woman’s land was valued at 100k, despite having more than one acre (Women, 2021). Due to the hidden process of valuation, it is hard to determine if MEMD did use the correct district rates. Additionally, the LCs allegedly verified the survey and valuation documents without consulting the PAPs.

**Disclosure**

Due to the frustrating process of surveying and valuation, many PAPs were reluctant to sign for compensation during disclosure. they felt like their compensation was too low and were afraid of losing their land. The government maintains that the PAPs were free to refuse signing for compensation and encouraged to go to court, with or without a lawyer. However, many PAPs reported being intimidated and coerced into signing. LC1s started harassing PAPs who refused to sign, accusing them of halting development and holding the community back (Court Cases, 2021). He allegedly would attempt to intimidate people in their homes.
Shortly after, Sinohydro hired the LC1 as a foreman, the highest position a Ugandan can achieve as an unskilled laborer, calling into question his interest in serving the community. Some PAPs experienced harassments by their own family members who were eager to receive cash (Court Cases, 2021). Some who didn’t sign for compensation sued the MEMD in hopes of winning higher compensation in court. Those who sued received no compensation and are still in court eight years later, reportedly no closer to receiving higher compensation (Court Cases, 2021).

Another confusing part of disclosure was opening bank accounts. Most PAPs did not own bank accounts or have enough initial money to open one. Local leaders and other money lenders offered to loan people money to open accounts, then they would demand 50% interest rate or open the account in their own name and take money before passing off the rest to the intended recipient. As payments began flowing in, many PAPs reported getting less than what they signed for, others reported receiving no money at all. Other frustrations included banks deducting money from people’s compensation due to non-transaction fees (Women, 2021). Due to the distance between Gulu and Karuma and the expensive transportation, many people were unable to travel to Gulu before receiving a massive number of deductions.

Those who received less money than expected were often told to wait until they receive the rest of their money to leave. Some were told to leave after six months after while other Many people believe that the LC1 continued to refuse to behave in the interests of the people, claiming that he must have verified that everyone received the rest of their money before they did, which triggered eviction.

*Paluo Court Case*

The most egregious miscommunication between the government and the PAPs was the Paluo Court Case. During the development of the RAP, the original inhabitants of the region,
known as the Paluo indigenous group, claimed that they should have compensation as well. In court, the judge ruled in favor of the indigenous group, who received partial compensation for the land. However, there are two competing versions of the outcome.

The first perception is that the court represented the PAPs whose land was contested, accounting for about 50% of all PAPs (MEMD Official, 2021). The court ruled a 60/40 split, with the PAPs getting 60% of their valued compensation and the indigenous group receiving the remaining 40% (MEMD Official, 2021).

The second perception is the court case only represented a few Paluo and a few PAPs. Those who had the money and connections to hire their own lawyers were represented, while most PAPs and most Paluo were excluded. The court awarded 220m UGX to be split 50/50 between the PAPs and Paluo represented, instead of being paid to all beneficiaries (KAHLCO Member, 2021). Other PAPs land was contested and were not represented in court received a land valuation of zero. The PAPs who were able to show proof of ownership with land titles were entitled to compensation, even if their land was contested and they were not involved in the court case.

Although it is unclear which version is the most accurate, it is still another example of a lack of transparency. According to the community, most PAPs were not aware of the court case at the time (KAHLCO Member, 2021). Those who were aware are not entirely sure of the outcome. If PAPs were not aware of the court case, this could explain why many complained of only receiving a fraction of their original promised compensation or receiving no compensation at all. Their land could have been contested without their knowledge, thus accounting for a deduction in their compensation for reasons unknown to them.

Eviction
Many PAPs reported that The MEMD gave explicit instructions to not move out until receiving full compensation. Thus, when graders came to destroy their house, many community members were caught by surprise. As a result, chaos ensued. Some reported only being able to grab what they could carry before their homes were set on fire. Some returned to their home surrounded by a wall of stones, unable to enter their homes. Other PAPs had their toilets destroyed, forcing them to move due to sewage waste. Many reported instances of military committing acts of violent against PAPs, something the government vehemently denies. Those who owned livestock struggled to gather their animals together. Livestock was not counted in valuation, thus a loss in them would directly impact their family’s livelihood. One man, who had over forty turkeys and lost all of them, due to thievery,

The sudden and violent eviction forced to move with little preparation, coupled with low compensation led many people to rent or buy land dramatically smaller than they previously own. Due to the dramatic loss of land, livestock and assets, most people were unable to return to the lifestyle they once had.

MEMD intended for the jobs available at the dam to help develop the community and improve the livelihood of PAPs by providing a more lucrative and stable income to households, who would then spend the money on additional goods and services and boost the local economy. However, it had the opposite effect. The only job that PAPs qualified for was unskilled labor, a dangerous employment that often-disabled workers for a scarce salary. In order to be considered for employment, PAPs had to pay 250k to 300k shillings (Sinohydro Workers, 2021). Once they were accepted to work on the dam, there was hardly any adequate training. These laborers were expected to work several types of jobs, often the same day, such as first working as a welder, then a machine operator. The lack of training
caused numerous accidents, disabling a multitude of workers.

<table>
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<th>Name</th>
<th>Duration</th>
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<th>Disability</th>
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<td>Nail Pressed by Metal</td>
<td>Back Aches</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Chest Problems</td>
<td></td>
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**Table 2.** Feedback on injuries and disabilities of workers.

Allegedly, 100 workers died on the dam (Sinohydro Workers, 2021). Their families did not receive any compensation despite government claims about adequate insurance. The most common disability was chest pain and lung damage due to dust. The workers were forced to buy their own equipment, their own lunch and medical treatment, drastically reducing their pay. An unskilled laborer might be paid 500k per month but earn 300k instead due to expenses at the dam (Sinohydro Workers, 2021). One worker said the pay was virtually worthless (Sinohydro Workers, 2021). Many complained about being unable to work manual labor, citing chest and back pain, and feel like a burden to their families. The
dam took more than it gave and left many PAPs physically and economically worse off than before due to extreme disabilities and expensive medical bills.

Households that were particularly vulnerable were selected for in-kind compensation. They were promised land and a newly constructed house within six months of being displaced. Eight years later, they have yet to be resettled and have received no cash compensation in the meantime, leaving them impoverished. As they were already identified as being particularly vulnerable, many of them have died waiting to be resettled. Two years ago, the government finally purchased land in Lapono to resettle them but have yet to hire consultants or contractors to start building. Many of them have lost hope and doubt that they will ever receive the compensation that was promised to them (Lapono, 2021).

Community Mobilization and Resilience

Until recently, there has been a profound lack of community mobilization in Karuma town, including among the PAPs. Corrupt local leadership and a lack of NGOs and CBOs has stunted the community’s ability or desire to organize and advocate for PAPs’ needs and issues. LC1 and the Karuma Town Council acted as opportunists rather than community leaders during the project, focusing on their own monetary gain rather than the well-being of their constituents. LC1s, being the most localized form of government, provide the backbone for community organization. Without their support, rallying the community is difficult and chaotic. Community members were reluctant to attend town council meetings, due to resentment and distrust towards Town Council members. Attendance to this day remains low, only about 30% of the 12 village of Karuma Town attend the monthly meetings (KAHLCO Member, 2021).

The biggest community organization is KAHLCO, who wasn’t a strong advocate until its reformation two years ago. Although there are SACCOs and other CBOs like the Boda Boda
Association that supports community development, KAHLCO is the only organization dedicated to assessing the issues of PAP’s and advocating for them to the government.

One of KAHLCO’s biggest issues is to get community members to join their organization for two main reasons. The first is that many people are reluctant to resist the government. At the beginning of the project, people were harassed into being quiet either by local or national government. Intimidation and coercion forced many people to sign away their land and left them with little livelihood. Scared and destitute, many PAPs preferred pushing through their poor living conditions rather than risking government backlash. PAPs have right to fear organization for several reasons. For example, a protest organized by teachers and students to rally against the government’s decision to renovate the school rather than build a new one (Cultural Leaders, 2021). The police broke up the protest and warned them to not do it again. The MEMD then threatened to fire all of the teachers. Additionally, the proximity of army barracks with the dam limits coupled with the trauma of experiencing violent forced eviction have led many to fear the government. Many people view the government as the “boogeyman” and won’t organize to advocate against the government (KAHLCO, 2021).

Another reason PAPs are resistant to join KAHLCO is due to KALHCO’s limited and corrupt role in the beginning of the project. At the start, KAHLCO was bypassed by the LC1 who, as a member of KAHLCO and local leadership, abused his position for financial gain at the expense of the community. Infiltrated by corruption and poor execution, no one either trusted KAHLCO or was motivated to join their cause. KAHLCO didn’t reorganize until two years ago, when the former LC was voted out. The organization still feels the effects of its checked past.

KAHLCO still struggles to establish connections with the government. The former LC1 destroyed or hid all documents related to the ESIA, RAP and CDAP (KAHLCO, 2021).
Therefore, KAHLCO and the rest of the community have little understand of what agreements between the project implementors and the LC1 transpired and what the consequences were. The former LC1 intentionally left the current leadership in the dark, presumably to hide his illicit activities but also inadvertently (or not) weakened current leadership. The MEMD views them as opportunist and corrupt who don’t have the community’s best interest at heart. Ironically, the MEMD and NEMA used the former LC1 as a community spokesperson to sign off on certain legislation. During MP visits, the LC1 would brief the members about KAHLCO and warn them to not interact with the CBO. As a result, the MPs would pretend to not know what KAHLCO was.

They only stopped until KAHLCO began contesting these agreements and meetings and implored government officials to start using the current LC. Like the hidden forms that documented the LC1s relationship with MEMD, KAHLCO has little clue what these meetings were about.

Many government officials don’t view KAHLCO as serious community advocates, stating that KAHLCO has yet to declare itself a former organization to the MEMD. KAHLCO is currently in the process of renewing their certificate as a CBO and has mentioned several letters written to the MEMD. Although the MEMD claims to take all letters from concerned organizations and community members regarding the project seriously, the MEMD’s failure to recognize KAHLCO as a CBO may indicate that the ministry picks and chooses the letters that they deem important.

Despite MEMD’s negative perception of KAHLCO, KAHLCO is slowly building more and more credibility with the community and national government. They have consistently organized meetings with the district’s MPs, calling tirelessly for change and assistance. During their most recent meeting in November, KAHLCO submitted several
forms detailed challenges of the communities and argued for the MPs to address these “injustices” in court (KAHLCO, 2021).

As a testament to their effort, the MEMD has started to gradually use KAHLCO as mediators and community spokesperson. MEMD solicited KAHLCO to conduct an audit of those who were awarded land in Lapono. KAHLCO was able to construct a newer and more accurate report, reducing the number of ghost beneficiaries. KAHLCO also mediated

Regarding assisting the community, KAHLCO has pushed for a petition for the government to re survey the land. Last month, the government finally sent surveyors to reevaluate the former Church of Uganda’s land. Upon speaking to the reverend during this study, KAHLCO is confident that the church will receive the lost compensation and return to its original 12.9 acres.

Despite making incredible strides the past couple of years, KAHLCO has a limited role in changing the community. There are several key forces beyond their control. In addition to local corruption, district and national corruption has crippled community advocacy. LC5s and Karuma’s Members of Parliament have failed to advocate for their community. In comparison to Oyom, Karuma has struggled a lot more. All the grievances with the dam are reportedly from Karuma, even though 30% of PAPs were in Oyom district (UGECL Official, 2021).

This can be attributed to the power and influence of their MPs, who are Ministers and judges. They wielded their power to improve their community. Karuma lacks these connections and has “no strong ties to state home”. Thus, Oyom got a new school and Karuma’s primary school was only renovated.

Another example of national corruption is the compensation regarding the Karuma reservoir. Due to potential flooding along the Nile from the dam, the government bought land along 35km upstream (NEMA Official, 2021). Many powerful Ugandans, such as several
judges, Ministers, and lawyers, anticipated the value of land to raise exponentially and bought land accordingly. Now, the MEMD has already completed the RAP and started processing payments. Allegedly, this compensation process is efficient and lucrative. Partially due to the high land value and partially due to the influence of those being compensated. If the villages of Karuma, particularly Awoo, had inhabitants sitting in parliament and, perhaps those PAPs would receive prompt and generous compensation as well.

Currently, there are plans to develop an industrial park next to Karuma. Powered by the dam, the government advocates for the industrial park assures to bring development and improved livelihoods to Karuma, much like the hydropower project once promised to do. Some KAHLCO members are concerned while others are excited, all agree that this will test the power of KAHLCO as a community advocate.

Analysis of findings

Government implementation of the displacement and resettlement policy framework was fraught with corruption, lack of transparency, and lack of accountability. Despite promising to maintain the livelihood and socioeconomic status, the government failed to both implement the necessary policy to preserve PAPs’ livelihoods as well as adequately monitor the little political framework that was implemented, which resulted in subpar execution. That created conditions of poverty, severely eroded the autonomy of those who were displaced and exacerbated rural inequality. The process of displacement and the failure of the government to adequately compensate people resulted in the loss of their livelihood. The pinnacle of displacement was the widespread loss of land ownership, a key asset that the entirety of the PAPs’ livelihood depended on.

The corrupt nature of the LC and Town Council led to several PAPs losing their compensation. Additionally local leadership, including the Local Council One and Karuma Town Council was weak and corrupt at the time of RAP development, undermining the original
government framework and crippling the resettlement of hundreds of people. Many community members believe that there is reason to suggest that the national government aided and abided this local corruption in order to further their own agenda and circumvent certain aspects of the RAP and CDAP. Despite public backlash, the government failed to verify compensation adequately, resulting in LC1s and Town Councilmen successfully depriving people of land.

The lack of transparency surrounding surveying and valuing land led many PAPs unable to contest compensation, as they were unsure what exactly they were contesting. Many were unaware of the Paluo court case, if they had been, there is a chance they could have either contested the verdict or became of beneficiary of the 220m shillings.

Before when ppl had their own land, they reported being self-sufficient. Although they were poor, many had adequate space to farm maize, cassava, beans, sweet potatoes and a host of other plants. The farmers reported selling the crops to feed their families, pay school fees and medical bills. One person reported having a jackfruit that would provide a $1m shillings a year. That jackfruit remains on the dam land, yet he can’t access it because it is illegal to cross into the dam’s space. Now without land, they struggle and report a worse socioeconomic status than before. Most rent both to live on and to grow crops, saddling themselves in hundreds of thousands of shillings in debt. Some who bought land don’t have enough to grow crops to feed their family and end up renting as well. The debt accumulation cripples their ability to provide for their family, as any income is directed towards paying off loans rather than school fees or food.

Many PAPs report worse health than before, due to stress of losing land and malnutrition from not affording food. Divorce has skyrocketed, as more and more families contend with the loss of livelihood. Children especially have suffered. Due to the newfound poverty, many have dropped out of school in order to make money. Some stone crush while others steal scrap metal from the dam, risking getting shot by the army. Teenage girls are
especially vulnerable to dropping out of school. Many have turned to sex work and have gotten pregnant or contracted HIV/AIDS. Socioeconomic indicators like health and education have plummeted. It is possible that without immediate government intervention that these PAPs are in danger of being stuck in a cycle of poverty.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Health (physical or mental)</th>
<th>Clean Water</th>
<th>Crime</th>
<th>Family Dynamics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workers</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural Leaders</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Court Cases</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Women</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3.** Aspects of Socioeconomic Status that has worsened since the dam.

Many of the perceived benefits, such as Sinohydro employment and the influx of thousands of people proved disastrous instead. Employment on the dam may have killed more than 100 unskilled laborers and disabled thousands more, many of them PAPs. These men were often the breadwinners of their household. In addition to losing their land, many households lost a source of income due to the father’s death or disability. Those who were disabled often felt like a liability to their family in two keys ways. Firstly, chest pain, back pain and general loss of strength hindered their ability to pursue manual hard labor. Unable to farm the little land they had (if at all), these men turned to stone crushing. As discussed before, stone crushing is a meager income, unable to cover school fees and food purchases. Secondly, the cost of frequent hospital bills and medication put an even greater strain on these already destitute families. Purchasing pain killers is a financial burden let alone the cost of transportation to Gulu, where the doctors who can treat these disabilities reside. Many of these men did not receive compensation and those who did have complained that it hardly helped their condition and did little to address their dire economic problems.
MEMD failed to adequately monitor working conditions and protect the safety of those working on the dam. Several whistleblowers fell on deaf ears. Many workers themselves complained of inadequate training and reported such concerns to their respective safety officers, but such complaints were never followed up. NEMA noted that one of most persistent problems during the project was occupational health and safety. Despite reporting mitigation efforts, NEMA acknowledged that safety issues continued to be a problem, citing oil and waste management. Last year, UGECL accused Sinohydro of hiring “inexperienced staff…as senior managers” and endangering those working on the dam (The Independent, 2021) They wrote a letter to the MEMD describing these concerning conditions. MEMD accused UGECL with acts of sabotage and sided with Sinohydro, describing their work on the dam as “impressive” (The Independent, 2021). Had MEMD taken these allegations, ranging from workers to government agencies, seriously and held Sinohydro accountable, it may have prevented the harsh conditions that caused destruction to the community.

The government misled the community, whether deliberately or not, regarding the development of RAO and CDAP. Had the government been more honest about the process by stating the issue of funding and clarifying that the CDAP was a wish list rather than a government document outlining a series of projects intended for the community. Had the community been aware, they may have been able to make better informed decisions for themselves and their community, rather than risk displacement without adequate support.

Recommendations

• Provide a detailed plan that is available and well distributed, as well as several sensitization sessions
  o Establish funding before the start of construction for RAP and CDAP
• Conduct accessible and well-funded monitoring
  o Use third party to reduce bias
  o Have real and tangible punishment for organizations and individuals that do not comply
• Involve local community-based organizations in development and implementation of displacement and resettlement framework
  o Don’t rely on one individual, such as LCs, to act as the community spokesperson

Conclusion
The push for development in Uganda is accelerating, and many development projects rely on the consistent generation, transmission and distribution of power. Museveni’s Vision 2040 and National Development Plans makes it clear that development is here to stay, but a question remains: who is the development for?

In Karuma, the development project did not serve the community and brought destruction, rather than growth, to the region. The destruction due to development induced displacement is avoidable and can be mitigated. Uganda must make a conscious and deliberate effort to include the marginalized groups in the process of development.

Displacement, other than being morally wrong, is dangerous for the future of the country. Displacement causes poverty, crime, malnutrition and poor education; all factors that contribute to an unhealthy and unproductive society. If Uganda wants to achieve their Vision 2040 goal rather than on paper, the government must reform its displacement and resettlement framework. The government must find a way to reduce corruption and increase accountability and transparency in all levels of government, then Uganda will have a clear way forward to development that is inclusive to everyone.
Citations


Court Case Focus Group Discussion (2021, November 18). Personal communication [Focus Group Discussion].

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KAHLCO Member. (2021, November 9). Personal communication [Key Informant Interview].


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MEMD Government Official. (2021, November 9). Personal communication [Key Informant Interview].
MEMD Government Official. (2021, November 26). Personal communication [Key Informant Interview].


NEMA Government Official. (2021, November 15). Personal Interview. [Key Informant Interview].


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UGECL Government Official. (2021, December 2). Personal communication [Key Informant Interview].


Women Focus Group Discussion (2021, November 20). Personal communication [Focus Group Discussion].
Appendix

Tables and Figures.

Figure 2: Survey of church in 2021

Figure 1. Monthly System Peak Demand from January 2019 to December 2020 | ERA
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Temporary Injury</th>
<th>Disability</th>
<th>Disability Compensation</th>
<th>Termination</th>
<th>Termination Compensation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Three Years</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chest Problems</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Two Years</td>
<td>Steel Fixer</td>
<td>Nail Pressed by Metal</td>
<td>Back Aches</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Six Years</td>
<td>Jackhammer Operator</td>
<td>Almost Broke Back</td>
<td>Chest pain, Back pain, leg pain</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Three and a Half Years</td>
<td>Drilling Machine Operator, Steel Fixer</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chest Pain, Back Pain</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Two Years</td>
<td>Drilling Machine Operator</td>
<td>Electrocuted by Machine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Five Years</td>
<td>Carried Cement</td>
<td>Coughing Blood</td>
<td>Chest Pain</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>One Year and Five Months</td>
<td>Welder, Machine Operator, Driller, Steel Fixer</td>
<td>Coughing Blood</td>
<td>Lost tooth, part of finger, part of toe, General Weakness</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Nine Months</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chest Problems</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

**Table 2:** Feedback on injuries and disabilities of workers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Health (physical or mental)</th>
<th>Clean Water</th>
<th>Crime</th>
<th>Family Dynamics</th>
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<td>Women</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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**Table 3.** Aspects of Socioeconomic Status that has worsened since the dam.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source generation</th>
<th>Target for 2040 (in MW)</th>
<th>Actual in December 2019 (in MW)</th>
<th>Actual in December 2014 (in MW)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hydropower</td>
<td>4,500</td>
<td>1004.3</td>
<td>695</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geothermal (cogeneration)</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>96.2</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear</td>
<td>24,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solar</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>50.8</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biomass</td>
<td>1,700</td>
<td>0.043</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peat</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thermal (HFO + diesel)</td>
<td>4,300</td>
<td>102.7</td>
<td>100.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>41,800</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,254</strong></td>
<td><strong>833.9</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1. 2040 target and actual generation from different energy sources.*
PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT TEMPLATE

Title of the Study: Development Induced Displacement in Kiryandongo District: A Case Study of the Karuma Hydroelectric Power Plant
Researcher Name: Remington Fritz

My name is Remington Fritz I am a student with the SIT Global Development Studies program.

I would like to invite you to participate in a study I am as part of the SIT Study Abroad program in Uganda. Your participation is voluntary. Please read the information below, and ask questions about anything you do not understand, before deciding whether to participate. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form and you will be given a copy of this form.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to find out how the construction of the Karuma Hydroelectric Power Plant affected local communities, assess the implementation of compensation and determine local participation in the process.

STUDY PROCEDURES

Your participation will consist of answering and will require approximately an hour and half of your time.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There are a few foreseeable risks if you choose to participate. Some questions may cause painful or uncomfortable feelings or memories about your experience. There are no penalties should you choose not to participate; participation is voluntary. During the interview (focus group) you have the right not to answer any questions or to discontinue participation at any time.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

The anticipated benefits of participating in this interview is giving your experience a bigger audience and may reach people who can help your situation. Beyond that, there are no other direct benefits.
PAYMENT/COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION

Refreshments during the interview and compensation for travel will be provided.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any identifiable information obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential.... I will omit the real names of participants if they wish in the final paper. Additionally, only I and my advisors will have access to real names and will not share it. Data will be kept in a password protected computer that is only accessible by me. After publication, I will continue to omit sensitive information about participants if there are any direct inquiries about my research. I will also neglect to include said information if I choose to continue this data in future research and will obtain consent before I use this information for future research.

When the results of the research are published or discussed in conferences, no identifiable information will be used.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Your participation is voluntary. Your refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

“I have read the above and I understand its contents and I agree to participate in the study. I acknowledge that I am 18 years of age or older.”

Participant’s signature _________________________________ Date __________

Researcher’s signature _________________________________ Date __________

Initial one of the following to indicate your choice:

_____ (initial) I agree to participate in the interview.
_____ (initial) I do not agree to participate in the interview.

Consent to Quote from Interview

I may wish to quote you from the interview either in the presentations or articles resulting from this work.

Initial one of the following to indicate your choice:

_____ (initial) I agree to be quoted.
_____ (initial) I do not agree to be quoted.
Consent to Audio-Record Interview

Initial one of the following to indicate your choice:

_____ (initial) I agree to be audio recorded.
_____ (initial) I do not agree to be audio recorded

RESEARCHER’S CONTACT INFORMATION
If you have any questions or want to get more information about this study, please contact me at (email) or my advisor at (email)

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT – IRB CONTACT INFORMATION
In an endeavor to uphold the ethical standards of all SIT proposals, this study has been reviewed and approved by an SIT Study Abroad Local Review Board or SIT Institutional Review Board. If you have questions, concerns, or complaints about your rights as a research participant or the research in general and are unable to contact the researcher please contact the Institutional Review Board at:

School for International Training
Institutional Review Board
1 Kipling Road, PO Box 676
Brattleboro, VT 05302-0676 USA
irb@sit.edu

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