

**Consortium on Law and Values in Health, Environment & the Life Sciences**  
**Award Report for the 2017-18 Academic Year**

“Examining Ecosystem-based Approaches to Climate Change Adaptation:  
The Intersection of Gender Capabilities and Biodiversity Conservation”

Anne B. Christianson

Forest Resources / Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences

PhD program

**Project Summary**

My research examined the gender equity implications of ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) interventions in the Mt. Elgon region of Uganda. In particular, I was evaluating the Global Mountain EbA Program, implemented by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the largest conservation organization in the world. I applied the *capabilities approach* to guide data collection that looked at whether EbA programs addressed gender differentiated impacts of climate change. In addition to this work, I examined the conservation potential of EbA programs to explore whether EbA programs, which are primarily implemented to help human communities adapt to climate change, successfully deliver the co-benefit of biodiversity conservation. During my time in Uganda (June - August 2018) I collaborated closely with the IUCN Uganda office in Kampala, as well as with IUCN staff in Mbale. While staying in Kampala, I worked with IUCN staff and the country Director to draft my questionnaires, and coordinate logistics for the field visits. Mbale staff was instrumental in introducing me to local government officials and field research staff in order to complete my work. These individuals ensured that my data collection was rigorous and targeted in order to best inform future EbA work in the region.

**Results**

During my field season, I conducted 69 field interviews and 32 focus group discussions across four villages in the Kapchorwa and Bulumbuli districts of the Mt. Elgon region, as well as four expert interviews. I am currently evaluating the results of this research in order to formulate recommendations for future EbA programs that are being implemented in the region, as well as program expansion globally. This data will also inform the core of the second chapter of my PhD dissertation. In addition, I conducted 200 surveys of villagers in the Kapchorwa district near to the Mt. Elgon National Park in order to examine the conservation potential of EbA programs. This data will be used to inform the third chapter of my PhD dissertation. Both of these chapters, while written for my dissertation, will be submitted to peer-reviewed journals, so at least two peer-reviewed publications will result from this work. These papers are in progress, with a tentative completion timeline of April 2020. After the chapters are completed, I will be seeking opportunities to present this work at conferences and workshops. In addition, I am in contact with the IUCN Washington, DC office to explore potential future collaborations based on this work, such as a presentation at an IUCN meeting, or writing a joint discussion paper. The consortium grant covered the bulk of the costs of this research, and I did not submit, nor do I have plans to apply for, additional funding to complete data collection for my dissertation in this region.

**Future project plans**

The data from this project contributes to both the second and third chapters of my PhD dissertation. The goal to complete the second chapter of my dissertation is Dec. 31, 2019, to complete the third chapter by March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020, with the aim of defending my PhD in May 2020. Each of these chapters will be turned into a peer-reviewed publication, aimed to be published in 2020. There are no concrete plans to conduct further research at this time, however as this research was done in collaboration with the International Union for Conservation of Nature, and the

products produced by this research may prompt comparison studies through the Mountain EbA Program, which has implemented EbA interventions in Nepal and Peru as well, and is planning program expansions into Kenya, Bhutan, and Colombia. The data I collected and my methodology may be utilized to design the new projects, and for ongoing monitoring and evaluation.