Local Mechanisms Of Managing Conflicts Among Small Land Holders In Agroforestry Systems Of Kenya

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Afforestation programs are challenged by competition for various land uses. Such conflicts arise whenever there are divergent or incompatible uses. Agroforestry is considered an option to reconcile such competition. Small land holdings remain a challenge on adherence to agroforestry techniques and existing land use policies. Non-conformance to these policies leads to conflict among different land users and slow down afforestation efforts. Local innovative mechanisms for management of such conflicts are undocumented. This study explored conflicts arising from tree-planting on farm among different land users, identified the conflict management mechanism adopted by them and evaluated effectiveness on livelihood and reducing conflicts. Focus group discussions with village opinion persons, and Semi-structured interviews were conducted in Kisii County, Sameta Sub-County, where on farm tree planting is heavily practiced and land holdings are small. The main economic activity is tea farming. Content analysis was performed. Conflict between Eucalyptus tree planters and tea and maize growers was prevalent. Little regards was paid to Eucalyptus tree growing guideline and land use policies on the buffer boundary zone of 600m between neighboring farmers. Poor tree configurations on farms elicited most conflicts. This is driven by the high economic value of Eucalyptus and small land holdings. Only 36% of the respondents employed cooperative methods of voluntary negotiations such as shared tree ownership, silvicultural management and compensation. Competing methods such as tree planting to counter the effects of existing adjacent trees were also employed but this displaced crop farming. These findings present informal innovative strategies used in managing land use conflicts under small land holdings. The findings may be used to revise forest and land use policies which suit small land holdings and highly productive landscapes.