



Tropentag, September 10-12, 2025, hybrid conference

“Reconcile land system changes
with planetary health”

Analysing community resilience of rural farmers in Uganda’s extractive industries

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Abstract

Developing the oil and gas industries in Uganda’s Albertine Graben is crucial for the nation’s economic advancement toward achieving middle-income status. However, this industrial growth poses significant challenges for rural farmers, including land displacement, alterations in agricultural practices, and decreased household incomes. This situation creates tension between developing and preserving vital traditional farming practices. The study explored the question: How do socio-economic factors impact the community resilience of rural farmers in Uganda’s extractive industries? To address this question, the study aimed to analyse the effects of socio-economic factors on the strength of rural farmers in the extractive industry while identifying key challenges and opportunities that affect their adaptability and sustainability amid economic fluctuations and environmental challenges. The study employed mixed methods, with the surveys featuring semi-structured questionnaires administered by the researcher, allowing for adaptable data collection. Furthermore, focus group discussions offered qualitative insights, enabling participants to express their thoughts in depth. The combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches provided a thorough understanding of the subject matter. The findings indicate that 68% of the local farmers face significant challenges due to recent extractive industrial activities in Ngwedo Sub-County, Buliisa District. They are increasingly worried about the reduced lifespan of their crops, with cassava now rotting within just six months. This decline is negatively affecting their yields and, ultimately, their livelihoods. The once-fertile lands that provided bountiful harvests are becoming increasingly erratic, causing anxiety about the long-term viability of their farming practices. Farmers worry that this trend could jeopardise their ability to support their families and maintain community resilience. The prevalent top-down approach in agricultural policy formulation and implementation has led to a sustained disconnect between these critical processes. This strategy frequently neglects essential measures required to address challenges posed by extractive industries, thereby producing policies that are often inflexible and unresponsive to local conditions and emerging agricultural issues. Such a disjunction not only hampers effective policy execution but also undermines the overall adaptability necessary for addressing the dynamic nature of farming challenges.

Keywords: Community Resilience, Extractive Industries, Rural Farmers