

# Demography, im(migration) and movement of labour: A case of oil and gas sector investments and its effects on natural resource bases in Bugoma landscape



Policy brief, 2023



The oil and gas sector is considered a positive venture to the development of the region and the country at large. However, willful displacement of people from their land coupled with high demand for food and services have potential to pose too much pressure to the community and natural resources in the region.

## Recommendations

1. Although the Bugoma landscape population growth in general and the youth bulge in particular can create an opportunity because of the potential demographic dividend from cheap labour and future demand, this must be properly harnessed to derive the dividends. Targeted interventions by Government of Uganda (GoU) are required otherwise, the pressure of the youth bulge will push the young population to areas with potential opportunities, such as the Bugoma landscape with oil and gas activities.
2. The respective investment projects need to in-build the management of impacts of in-migration in the overall design. In this way, the impacts on biodiversity resulting from unplanned agriculture, settlement, hunting, fishing, fuel wood collection and charcoal making can be minimised.
3. There is need for the oil and gas proponents to undertake proper analysis of how petroleum development activities can be implemented together with other sectors (forestry, fisheries, and tourism) and local communities, understanding impacts to the different sectors and making workable recommendations on how they can be addressed.
4. There is need to scale up social protection schemes to prevent vulnerable households from having to resort to vices such as child labour as a solution against negative shocks. To mitigate such scenarios, timely and thorough labour related projections are needed and interventions that work are implemented to avoid long term negative impacts.

## Main findings

1. In the Bugoma landscape, all four districts making up the landscape i.e Hoima, Kikuube, Masindi and Bulisa have had an upward population growth over the years with Hoima district having the biggest population projected at 387 thousand by mid-2021 up from 306 thousand in 2014. The high level of population growth is likely to exacerbate pressure already being placed on agricultural land by oil and gas project-related influx given that land is fixed.
2. The youth population in the landscape is projected to increase from 7.5 million in 2014 to 13.5 million in 2030. This indicates an annual growth rate of 3.6 percent, which is higher than the 3.0 percent for the general population. The youth (18 – 30 years) is a significant segment of the population with potential to spur production, but only when properly planned.
3. Total migration by sub-regions showed that Kampala had the highest rate of 42% followed by Bunyoro sub-region representing the Bugoma landscape with 22 percent. This means that 22 percent of the population in Bunyoro as of 2014 migrated into the area (over 19% from other sub-regions and over 2% from other countries). On the other hand, in-migration rate was still highest in Kampala at 39 percent but with Bunyoro at 19 percent (more than double its out migration rate). Bunyoro had the highest net internal migration of 12 percent (that is the difference between in-migrants and out migrants), the highest across all the 15 sub-regions.
4. Bunyoro employed the second highest proportion of professionals (10%) higher than the national average of 6% and only second to Acholi sub-region that had 11%. High proportion of professional occupations in the region may be explained by significant investment in economic activities that require specialised occupations as a result of oil exploration and hence driving attraction of workers with high skills. However, there is high anticipation of job losses in the investment activities which may drive more of the population to agricultural, forestry and fishery work to earn a living. A study by UBOS on child labour in Hoima and Buliisa areas in 2019 showed that 26 percent of total children aged 5-17 years were involved in Child Labour.
5. Around the Bugoma Forest, land has been largely transformed for subsistence agriculture, resulting in increasingly scarce natural resources. The in-migration has impacts on biodiversity resulting from settlement, harvesting of fibre from wetlands, hunting, fishing, fuel wood collection, charcoal making and increased livestock numbers.
6. The bugoma landscape hosts one of the largest refuge settlements in Uganda. The Kyangwali settlement camp, hosts refugees from neighboring countries and beyond. Once settled, the refugees are integrated within the communities.

## Objectives

1. Assess demographic changes in the bugoma landscape over the years and compare before and after oil and gas activities
2. Analyze in-migration and out-migration especially those related to movement of labour specifically due to oil and gas sector
3. Analyze pressure created on other sectors (e.g. natural resource bases, agriculture, forestry etc.) in the Bugoma landscape
4. Assess the cause and effects of movement of labour to both social-economic balance of the area and to natural resources.
5. Explore impacts of in-movement and out-movement either willfully (local migrations) or un-willfully (refugees) in the area

## Methodology

The study covered the Bugoma landscape in the four districts of Hoima, Masindi, Kikuube and Bulisa. However, for a better understanding the growth sectors of oil and gas, demography, Im(migration) and movement of labour, the country at large was put into perspective. This paper is based on review of available information and published materials in research reports and similar documents mainly available on authentic and trusted websites of government and non-government agencies. Data relevant to the study were analyzed and any need for addition primary data related to the study was sought. Several checks were made with related topics in journals, newspapers, and other publications. During the analysis, some data were combined or recomputed to generate required information for the study. Where necessary, consultations were made with critical sources of information. Syntheses were done in a consultative manner interplaying between the growth factors and pressure created on other investments that affect natural resource bases in the study area.

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