

Community-Level Adaptive Governance in Flood-Prone Rural Uganda

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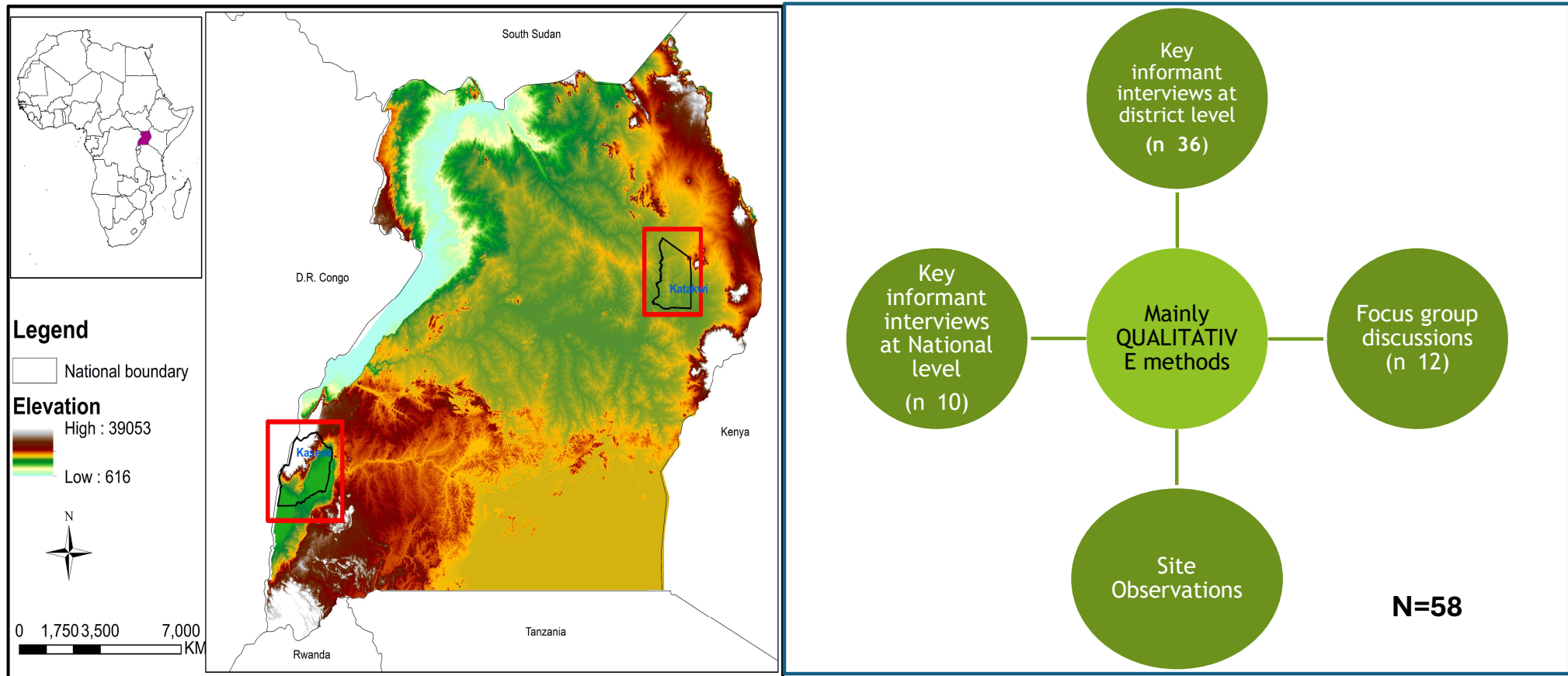
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Background & Objectives

- Floods increasingly disrupt essential services in rural Uganda
- National frameworks exist, but community contributions are under-recognized.
- Adaptive governance explains how communities integrate knowledge, prepare for uncertainties, build interdependence, and maintain legitimacy.
- **Objective:** Explore how communities contribute to adaptive governance in flood-prone health systems.

Study Methods



Findings: Knowledge Integration

Observation

Birds, termites, river
smell
Digital Water
monitors, Weather
fforecasts

Communication

Drums, Megaphones,
WhatsApp Messages
Radio alerts

Action

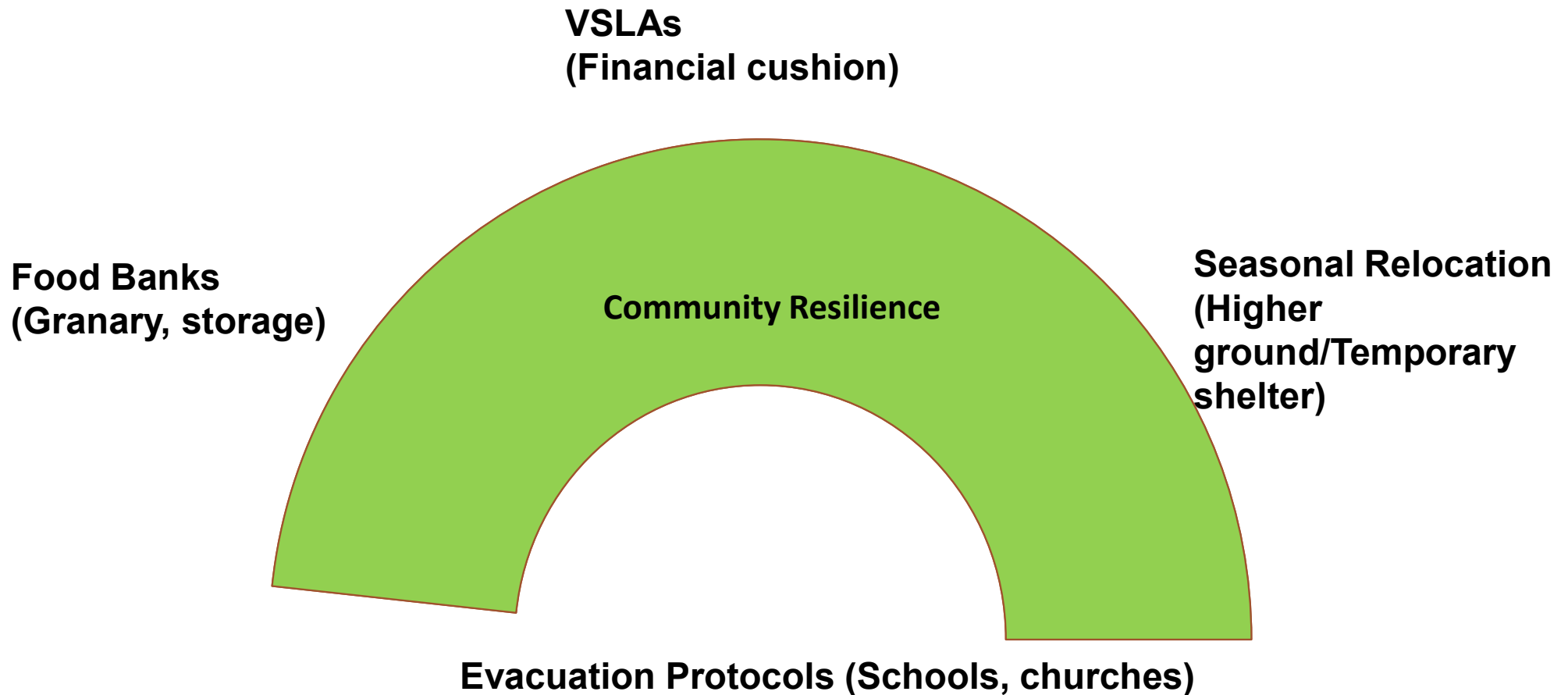
Evacuation to
schools/churches/
Neighbors
Household
preparedness

“We were taught by our mothers to watch the sky, the trees, the animals[...] it means heavy rain is coming.” (FGD, Katakwi)

“By the time the message from the district reaches us, the water is already here. That’s why we still watch the birds, the river, the sky... It is our first warning.” (FGD, Kasese)

❖ **Communities rely on local signs first, then use scientific updates to confirm warnings**

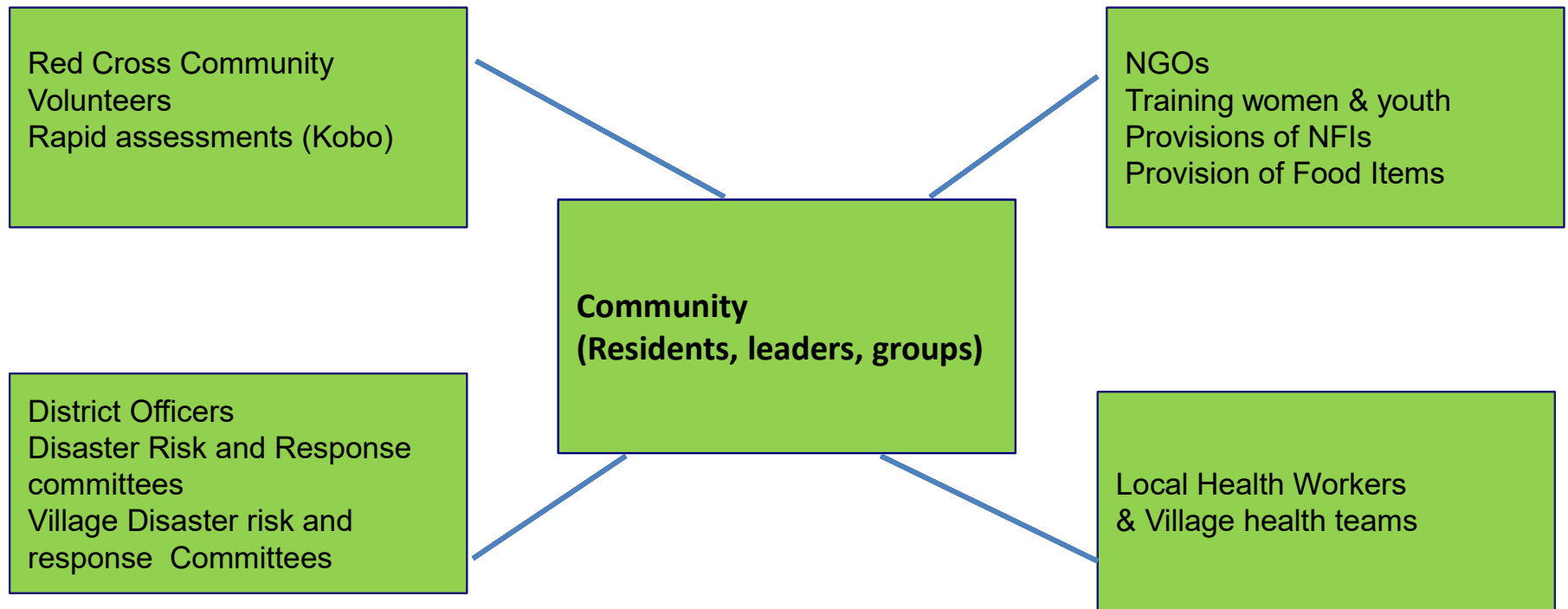
Findings: Anticipation of Uncertainties



“The granary is our safety net. Without it, many families would go hungry during the floods.” (KII, Katakwi)

“When floods happened[...] it was only through our group savings [VSLA] that we borrowed money to buy food and pay school fees.” (FGD, Kasese)

Findings: Interdependence



"We have volunteers in every village [...] they use the Kobo tool to submit rapid assessments. [...] That is how we respond within 24 hours." (KII, Katakwi)

"When Red Cross came with the district officers, they trained us to link what we see with the river and the color changes to alerts from the radio and phones. Now we act faster." (FGD, Kasese)

Findings: Legitimacy

Trusted Governance

Community
Disaster
Committees

Embedded
NGOs

Transparent
Relief
Distribution

Long-term
Engagement

Community Trust

“They do not come only when there is a camera. They have been with us even when no one was watching.” (FGD, Kasese)

“We started with distributing food and clothes, now we are talking about early warning systems, forecast-based action, and seed banks.” (KII, Kasese)

Conclusion

- Adaptive governance is built on:
 - Hybrid knowledge integration.
 - Actions that anticipate uncertainty.
 - Interdependence across actors.
 - Legitimacy grounded in trust and fairness.
- Resilience is fragile: it unravels under corruption, favoritism, and delayed action.
- Communities are the backbone of resilience, but institutional recognition and safeguards are essential.

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