

## **ABSTRACT**

### **OPTIMAL RESETTLEMENT STRATEGIES TO COPE WITH GEOLOGICAL MOBILITY ON MOUNT ELGON, EAST UGANDA**

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We investigate environmental migration as a mobile strategy to cope with geological mobility. Specifically, we look at resettlement strategies of people living in landslide prone areas to less risky areas as a mobile strategy to mitigate landslide risks in Uganda. Landslides are frequently occurring on the deforested and densely populated Southwestern foot slopes of the extinct Mt Elgon shield volcano, in the Mbale district, at the border between Uganda and Kenya. People are encroaching upon the slopes and clearing forest to get access to land for building their houses and generating an income through agricultural production. These anthropogenic factors together with intensifying natural influences trigger geological mobilities with devastating impacts on people and their livelihoods. To arrive at a sustainable development of the area, one absolutely needs to minimize or avoid landslide related damage. In this light, the Ugandan government resettled 610 households out of the risk prone areas in 2010. However, this resettlement was not considered a success story. Currently, the government considers another resettlement of several thousands of people as a potential mobile strategy to cope with landslide risks. This time however, they want to design a relocation strategy that is supported by the local communities. Therefore we analyse (1) the factors that caused the previous resettlement to be flawed (2) the drivers that keep the local population in these hazardous places even if they have been confronted with geological mobilities and (3) under which conditions the population at risk is willing to voluntarily relocate from the landslide prone areas on Mount Elgon to other regions which are less prone to landslides through an experimental setup. The results enable us to give valuable policy advice regarding community supported relocation strategies to cope with geological mobility.