

# Nothing for Us Without Us”: Tanzania-Uganda Borderlanders’ Desired Soft Border Management for Improved Livelihoods, Border Peace, Security and A United and Integrated Africa

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*“If we were to redraw Africa’s borders to have each ethnic group in their own country, we would have at least 2,000 countries” [1]*

## Abstract

The African Heads of States established the African Union Border Program in January 2007 aiming at, among other specific objectives, developing, within the framework of the Regional Economic Communities and other regional integration initiatives, local cross-border cooperation for improved borderlanders’ livelihoods, border peace, security and a united and integrated Africa. Familiarity with and adequate knowledge of the role and functioning of formal and informal institutions and mechanisms in regulating cross-border relationships and activities would foster program implementation and increase possibilities of utilizing relevant institutions for more substantial support and partnership. In this paper, I provide qualitative evidence of cross-border cooperation common and specific priorities proposed from four border district on the Tanzania side of the Tanzania-Uganda border. It is concluded and recommended that ‘one size fits all’ projects would neither quench borderlanders’ thirst for social and economic advancement nor rejuvenate their development and integration agency. In order to achieve soft borders managed for improved borderlanders’ livelihoods, border peace, security and a united and integrated Africa, borderlanders’ history, voices, needs, fears, expectations, capacities, initiatives and potentials must be cardinal to cross-border programs and policy across the continent.

**Keywords:** *borderlands, soft border management, Tanzania-Uganda border, cross-border cooperation, Tanzania, Kagera Region*

## 1. Introduction

The Heads of States and Governments established the African Union Border Program (AUBP) at their 8th Ordinary Session of the African Union Assembly in January 2007. The Ministers in charge of border issues adopted the Declaration on the AUBP and its Implementation Modalities in June 2007 [2]. The AUBP’s vision is “A united and integrated Africa with peaceful, open and prosperous borders” and a Mission “The prevention and resolution of border-related disputes and the promotion of regional and continental integration, which constitutes a tool in the structural prevention of conflicts in Africa.”

Specifically, the AUBP aims to: 1) address the problems posed by the lack of delimitation and demarcation, which gives rise to ‘undefined zones’, within which the application of national sovereignty poses problems, and constitutes a real obstacle to the deepening of the integration process; 2) address cross-border criminal activities through pragmatic border management; 3) consolidate the gains made in the regional integration process, as demonstrated by the existence of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and of numerous large-scale cooperation initiatives; and 4) facilitate the development of cross-border integration dynamics, which are sustained by local stakeholders.

The AUBP’s Strategic Objectives are: 1) Facilitating and supporting the delimitation and demarcation of African boundaries where such exercise has not yet taken place; 2) Reinforcing the integration process, within the framework of the RECs and other large-scale cooperation initiatives; 3) Developing, within

the framework of the RECs and other regional integration initiatives, local cross-border cooperation; 4) Building the capacities of member states in border management, as well as in border studies and research; and 5) Advising the Commission and other organs of the African Union on border-related matters.

According to the AUBP implementation strategy, nation states are the main actors in the process of reaffirming borders. Some countries have established joint or independent National Boundary Commissions, manned by representatives from ministries involved including lands, migration, internal affairs, finance and defense. Prime examples that could be implemented in other parts of the continent include the Mali's National Directorate and Nigeria's National Boundary Commission established to handle border issues with neighboring countries; the Lake Chad Basin Commission initiative operating among Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria and The Liptako-Gourma Integrated Development Authority (LGIDA), a borderlands development agency established in 1970 that has successfully resolved long standing border problems among Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso and the Burkina Faso and the Lake Chad Basin Commission initiative operating among Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria [3,4].

The AUBP co-ordinates, supports and monitors all border delimitation and demarcation efforts and activities. The RECs play a vital role facilitating exchange and easing trade at a regional level. International Partners are contributing at different levels to the AUBP. The United Kingdom, for example, funded the re-affirmation of the Sudan-South Sudan border. Germany, through its implementing agency, GIZ, is substantially supporting the AUBP in financial and technical terms since 2008 and exchange with the UN Cartographic Section as well as the UN Mine Action Service are taking place in case of need [5].

Cross-border cooperation initiatives and activities have been implemented on the continent including but not limited to: improving livelihood security in the Horn of Africa dry lands, the Regional Resilience Enhancement Against Drought (RREAD) and the Enhanced Livelihoods in Mandera Triangle/Enhanced Livelihoods in Southern Ethiopia (ELMT/ELSE) as part of the Regional Enhanced Livelihoods in Pastoral Areas (RELPA) program in East Africa. Others initiatives are the Regional Livelihoods Advocacy Project (REGLAP) funded by the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Department (ECHO), The USAID East Africa Cross-Border Health Integrated Partnership Project (CB-HIPP, 2014), the Horn of Africa Wildlife Enforcement Network (HAWEN, 2017), Cross-

border initiative on polio eradication in the Horn of Africa [6], the Borderlands Conflict Prevention and Management in the Mandera Triangle and Karamoja Cluster on the Kenya-Somalia border [7] and the Mutukula Lake Victoria Water and Sanitation as part of the Lake Victoria Environment Management Program [LVEMP].

Commenting on the success of initiatives implemented in the dry lands targeting livestock herders on the Ethiopia-Kenya border, Pavanello (2010) noted, "international engagement and support for effective cross-border interventions remain inadequate ... [And] there is limited understanding and appreciation of the range of cross-border linkages among pastoral communities shared risks and vulnerabilities for drought preparedness, management and response" [8].

Kamazima's [9] and Pavanello's [8] observed that the delimitation and demarcation of borders and the implementation of top-down cross-border interventions uninformed by in-depth analysis of the historical relations and a comprehensive assessment of the opportunities, barriers, risks and vulnerabilities affecting adjacent communities, *per se*, will not ensure borderlanders' livelihoods, peace, security and sustainable development for a united and integrated Africa. Familiarity with and adequate knowledge of the role and functioning of formal and informal institutions and mechanisms in regulating cross-border relationships and activities would foster program implementation and increase possibilities of utilizing relevant institutions for more substantial support and partnership [8,10].

Three perspectives inform and shape the arguments I make in this paper. First, the achievement of AUBP's strategic objective 3 (Developing, within the framework of the RECs and other regional integration initiatives, local cross-border cooperation) requires, in my view, cross-border intervention implementers and other actors to critically pay attention to the border contexts within which integration initiatives are taking place. Similarly, cross-border cooperation actors should tailor activities and programs to the potentials and specific needs of the border or section of the border in question.

Second, the understanding of the border as a differentiated entity, providing different border experiences (that change over time given prevailing circumstances) to the borderlanders on one side of the border and in adjacent sides, to borderlanders on different sections of the same border and to other border actors involved in the process of defining and attaching meanings and functions (through continued

contentions) to the border in question is key to soft border management. For instance, Kamazima (2003) identified four differentiated sections of the Tanzania-Uganda border: Bugabo/Rakai, Kanyigo/Rakai, Missenyi/Rakai and Mirongo/Isingiro that based on their history, that have provided differentiated cross-border cooperation experiences to the (permanent and temporary) borderlanders as recorded from the pre-colonial to post-independence eras. Following Walther and Vollmer (2015)'s observations, the Bugabo borderlanders would need the delimitation and demarcation of the border over Lake Victoria [9], while Missenyi borderland would need time saving border crossing practices (at Mutukula, the main official border crossing point) and enhanced livelihoods in pastoral areas across the border (in Kakunyu area). Enhanced sharing of resources in the Kagera River might be a priority to Kyerwa district residents and authorities.

Kamazima (2003) recommended the two governments develop policies that would encourage and nurture long rooted historical, social and economic interactions that would ensure peace and security for sustainable development in the region. In this view, cross-border cooperation initiatives should be informed by in-depth analysis of the historical relations and a comprehensive assessment of the potentials, opportunities, barriers, risks and vulnerabilities affecting adjacent communities. That is, recognizing and respecting the borderlanders' history, knowledge, interests, fears, expectations and agency in the planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating processes of cross-border cooperation initiatives in Africa.

Third, Walther and Vollmer (2015)'s observation on the need to assess borderlands' potentials in the course of developing cross-border cooperation initiatives informs the arguments presented. Focusing on West Africa, they noted different cooperation areas will have different contexts shaping the development potential of cross-border co-operation and can be mobilized to foster economic development [11]. Certainly, in addition to common needs and potentials available, each border region would require specific interventions targeting cooperation potentials available. The understanding of borderlanders' and borderlands' specific needs, therefore, would facilitate planning and implementing contextualized, efficacious and culturally acceptable cross-border initiatives aiming at improving livelihoods of targeted communities.

The borderlanders cross the Tanzania-Uganda border for several reasons including long-rooted historical ties, intermarriages, predication in markets, cultural ceremonies and taking advantages of resources available across the border [9]. Cross-border

cooperation initiatives observed during the 2002 study [9] included: border peace discussions between border district officials (Bukoba Rural and Karagwe in Tanzania and Isingiro and Rakai in Uganda); cross border markets at Lyabatura (Kakunyu) and Bugango; cross border utilization of social services like health care (Kakunyu, Bugango, Mutukula, Minziro and Kanyigo), education in Bugango, Mutukula, Minziro and Kanyigo, religious services (Bugango, Minziro and Kanyigo); mobile 'bureau de change' services (at the markets and the border) at exchange rates determined by existing circumstances, not the official ones; (batter or for cash) exchange of agricultural and livestock products and sharing available resources like water and pasture. From the borderlands' understanding, therefore, borderlanders' border crossing could not be reduced and regarded as mere illegal and subversive activities.

The same study recorded cross-border cooperation initiatives implemented by the two governments (under the East Africa Region Economic Community) in the border regions including the Lake Victoria Water and Sanitation [LVEMP, Mutukula]; the Kagera Basin Development Project (in the 1970s); the Minziro Biodiversity Cross-border Project (Minziro-Sango Bay, since 1998) and the joint border patrols against subversive activities across the border. Recognizing, respecting and utilizing borderlanders' experiences with such 'top-down' cross-border cooperation initiatives (that preceded the AUBP) are vital for the success of the AUBP's strategic and specific objectives.

Several events and transformations had occurred in the Tanzania-Uganda borderlands between 2002 and 2017/18 that could have shaped the meanings and functions the borderlanders, other citizens and the elite attach to borders and border crossing practices: the re-establishment of the East African Community (July 7, 2000); the creation of the buffer zone along the borderline in Missenyi-Rakai-Isingiro border region; Mutukula, the official border crossing point (in Missenyi-Rakai) has been transformed to a one-stop-border-post (OSBP) with much of social and economic activities taking place on both sides of the border. Further, the borderlands have experienced a shift from "too little" to "too much" state presence: the Kagera Salient and the Kanyigo border regions that were part of the Bukoba Rural district in 2002 constitute the Missenyi district established in 2007 with its headquarters at Bunazi. The Mirongo-Isingiro border region that was part of Karagwe district in 2002 forms the Kyerwa district established in 2010. The delimitation and demarcation of the border took place between 2003 and 2009 including

the creation of a buffer zone in Missenyi-Rakai borderland.

Similarly, prolonged drought (from 2014-2016) and the earthquake that hit Kagera region on September 10, 2016 adversely impacted the borderlanders' (individuals, families and clans) social, economic and political conditions. In addition, heavy rains that poured in the region between February and May, 2017 caused floods in several parts of the borderlands adding salt to the borderlanders' wounds. Following these natural disasters, the borderlanders received minimum (if any) attention from the local and central governments. Finally, the anti-illegal migrants operations conducted in the region between 2002 and 2017/18 have certainly affected social, economic and political relations within the borderlands and between the borderlands and their nation-state headquarters. Tanzania and Uganda are in the process of constructing a 1,450 km Hoima (Uganda) -Tanga (Tanzania) Crude Oil Pipeline. Certainly, the borderlanders in Missenyi-Isingiro-Rakai-Bukoba Rural area will be positively or negatively affected by the implementation of this project. The project will require land access leading to adverse impacts to 'host' communities and the environment that could lead to social, economic and other construction related-problems, including conflicts [12]. These factors, in combination or independently, have triggered and created 'new' cross border cooperation needs and potentials that should be addressed to achieve borderlanders' envisioned soft border management for improved livelihoods; border peace, security and integrated Africa.

Borderlanders propose presented interactions should be recognized and inform the planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation of cross-border cooperation initiatives and activities aiming at improving their livelihoods, ensuring sustainable development and maintaining peace and security between the two nation states through soft border management for a united and integrated Africa.

## 2 Materials and Methods

Findings presented in this paper come from a historical comparative qualitative study conducted on the Tanzania-Uganda border (2017/18). I used a combination of methods to collect data needed: i) *in-depth interviewing*: conducted with borderlanders aged 18 years and above who had lived in the borderlands for a year or more, influential people, health care providers, African therapists, local government leaders, regional and district officials, representatives of NGOs whose activities affect the borderlanders' lives in one way or another. Interview guide questions facilitated generating data on cross

border common and borderland-specific needs; cross border needed interventions and why and borderlanders' recommendations on their envisioned border in the future. Key informants were also asked to make cross border cooperation priorities to the governments and the AUBP. ii) *Participant observation*: I observed the contexts in which the borderlanders operate within the border regions and across the border, activities and behaviors they conduct within the borderlands and across the border and the commodities they move back and forth across the border. Observation data facilitated familiarizing with border life and modifying study guide questions. iii) *Life stories*: collected provided cases that granted an in-depth understanding of what it means to be a borderlander on the Tanzania-Uganda border. Following the establishment of new border districts, the 2017/2018 used four administrative border districts (Bukoba Rural-Rakai, Bukoba Urban-Rakai, Missenyi-Rakai and Kyerwa-Isingiro) as units of analysis. The Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences Institutional Review Board granted research clearance for this study (MUHAS IRB, Ref. No. 2017-09-29/EAC/Vol.XII/73).

## 3. Results

3.1 Perceptions and functions of the border 2017 and after: the desired soft border management, border districts' needs and potentials.

Following the AUBP's Strategic Objective three (3), during the 2017/18 study, I asked the study participants to give a list of borderland-specific and general cross-border initiatives they consider priorities that the AUBP and the governments could embark on to enhance soft border management for improved livelihoods, border peace, security and a united and integrated Africa. Reported priorities per border district were:

### 3.1.1 Bukoba Rural district

*Demarcate the border over Lake Victoria*: as indicated, during the 2017/18 study, the border disagreement over Rubafu peninsula and Lake Victoria was overshadowed by the anti-illegal fishing campaign waged by the government in the lake since 1998. However, some borderlanders and district officials interviewed reported the importance of the two governments to complete the unfinished colonial work. The Rubafu Ward Executive Officer (WEO), for example, reported no one knew where the border was over Rubafu peninsula and the lake urging the two governments "to give priority to this problem so that the borderlanders could continue

supporting each other for better livelihoods in the borderlands” [13].

A Malehe sub-village Chairperson added, “Although the 1999 border conflicts among fishermen over the lake has gone underground, it could erupt any time as the contentions over resources in the lake surface ... The government should save us from what we experienced in the past by demarcating the border over the lake [13]. During the 2002 study, a borderlander and a fisherman interviewed in Katara village noted, “No one has shown us the border ... We move around the lake following the seasonal migration of the fish population in the lake” [14].

*Establish an international fish market or a fish factory at Malehe:* according to the interviews conducted at Malehe in 2002 and on February 5, 2018, Malehe is the leading fishing place in Bukoba Rural district (the second or third in Kagera Region) in terms of the amount and types of fish harvested [13,14]. However, the fishermen and the Rubafu community were not benefiting from their work due to middle businesspersons’ (between the fishermen and the fish market) operations and maneuvers. As such, the fishermen do not know the market prices and thus sell their catch at low prices. A fisherman interviewed wondered “Why do the Ugandans buy a kilo [kilogram] of fish at a price twice higher than that offered by Tanzanian businesspersons? [13]. In the view of these study participants, establishing an international fish market or building a fish factory at Malehe would save them from exploitation they were facing and improve their income. In turn, they would be ready and willingly pay government taxes, thus contributing greatly to the district revenue and the national economic development.

*Revive and complete a colonial unfinished project – ferry services between Rubafu and Kassensero:* the Rubafu WEO and the Malehe sub-village Chairperson interviewed on February 5, 2018, recalled the unfinished (British) colonial project intended to ease transport problems between Tanganyika and Uganda between Kabindi (Bugabo)–Mashaiga (Kassensero) points. In the view of these leaders, following strong historical, social and economic ties that exist between communities in Bugabo and Kassensero/Rakai, there is big traffic of human beings and goods between Bugabo/Malehe and Kassensero. Engine or peddled boats are the main means of transport used, which are not safe when the lake becomes rough. There are memories of cases where boats capsized causing loss of life and property. In the view of these leaders, a ferry operating between the two points not only could save lives by providing fast, safe and guaranteed transport

but would also boost communities’ economy in the two districts and countries alike.

*Control and manage crop disease:* observations and interviews conducted in the border districts studied indicated that all cash and food crop had been affected by diseases. Coffee and bananas, the major cash cum food crops had been affected by coffee wilt disease (CWD) and banana xanthomonas wilt (BXW, commonly known as *Mnyauko* or *Unyanjano* in Kiswahili) respectively. Since its outbreak in 1997, CWD (tracheomycosis or vascular wilt disease) attributed to a fungus *Fusarium xylarioides*, has seriously affected livelihoods of Kagera families that depend on Robusta coffee. In some parts of Kagera, BXW that was first reported in Kagera in January 2006 has claimed 25-100% of the cultivars depriving families of source of food and income. Other crops have fallen in the same trap. One participant reported, “Some households can only afford one meal a day, which has seriously affected our health” [13]. Another participant noted, “Some parents have failed sending their children to school or cover for medical costs” [13]. Other participants associated crop diseases with low nutrition status reported among (children and adults) Kagera residents [13]. A participant interviewed in Bukoba Rural reported that the impact of BXW coupled with low returns from coffee production and diseases attacking other food and cash crops, “have adversely reduced households’ food security and income” [13]. In the view of the study participants, controlling or managing crop diseases was important to save the lives of many Kagera residents affected.

*Harmonize coffee prices:* borderlanders and district officials interviewed recommended Tanzania and Uganda should harmonize differences in coffee prices between the two countries in order to combat on-going coffee smuggling from Tanzania to Uganda. During the 2002 study, the Ugandans bought one kilogram (kg) of Tanzanian unhailed Robusta coffee at Tshs 1000 (\$0.4) compared to TShs 400 (\$0.2) offered by the cooperatives in Tanzania. At the time of the 2017/18 study, for example, the Ugandans and other coffee buyers were reported buying one kg of Tanzanian unhailed Robusta coffee at TShs 1,500 (\$0.7) compared to TShs 1,080 (\$0.5) offered by the Kagera Cooperative Union (KCU). According to FADECO Radio, during the 2017-2018 season the price shot to between TShs 1,700 (\$0.7) to TShs 1,900 (\$0.8) per kg on black markets due to competition among buyers (News at 8:30 pm, April 13, 2018).

While KCU had set coffee price for the 2018/19 season at Tshs 1,000 (\$0.4), the Nguvu Mali Farmers’ Cooperative Society for Karagwe and Kyerwa districts had price set at TShs 1,300 (\$0.6)

(FADECO Radio, News at 8:30 pm, April 13, 2018). Earlier, the Nguvu Mali Farmers' Society and coffee producers in Muleba and Bukoba Rural districts had aired their voiced demanding a price of between TShs 1,500 (\$0.7) and TShs 2,000 (\$0.9) per kg so as to benefit the farmers (pay production costs and profit). A coffee farmer in Muleba district interviewed by FADECO Radio (April 13, 2018) claimed the government should allow private coffee buyers to compete with the cooperatives so as to offer better prices to the farmers. In his view, the price should range between TShs 4000 (\$1.7) and TShs 5,000 (\$2.2) per kg.

*Raise awareness on immigration and border crossing regulations among borderlanders and other citizens:* the borderlanders interviewed observed majority of the borderlanders and other citizens in Bukoba Rural district were unaware of immigration and border crossing regulations. "We cross the border on daily basis for several reasons ... We are the same people ... why should we need to carry travel documents? ... Maybe we are ignorant of immigration and border crossing regulations ... We require this information from the government and Immigration Officials" [13].

*Establish immigration sub-stations within the borderlands or within reach:* the borderlanders interviewed at Malehe reported borderlanders find it difficult travelling almost 57 km at a cost of TShs 5,000 (\$2.2) one way to Bukoba town to apply for travel permits to Rakai, Uganda, which is just across the lake. In their view, having functioning immigration sub-station in Rubafu and other borderlands would alleviate some immigration problems they were currently facing.

*Harmonization of cross border services and resources utilization:* study participants in Bugabo reported residents in that area and other parts of the region take advantage of having relatives, friends or private boarding schools available in Uganda sending their children in that country. The problem is that differences in curricula make it difficult for their children to get registration in higher learning institutions in Tanzania due to differences in grading points/systems. Having harmonized school, college and university curricula and grading systems were among their priorities.

*Provide electricity to all border villages and houses:* study participants in Bugabo ward requested the government to provide electricity to all border villages and houses that would boost the economy and security in the borderlands. The Malehe sub-village Chairperson, for instance, suggested, "[W]e have been pushed out of the lake ... Electricity

availability would enhance security in our villages and allow conducting other economic activities like metal welding and other power requiring activities" [13]. "[E]lectricity would facilitate conducting different income generating activities and thus raising our residents' economic status", stated a young man interviewed in Katare village [13]. Similarly, a Bugabo WEO wondered "why some villages and houses in this ward have no electricity while the government promised supplying electricity to each and every house?" [13].

### 3.1.2 Bukoba Urban district

*Crop disease control and management:* study participants interviewed in Bukoba Urban district stated Bukoba Urban population depends on other districts: Muleba, Bukoba Rural, Kyerwa and Karagwe for food crops sold at markets in Bukoba Township. The district Agricultural and the District Nutrition Officers interviewed, for example, were contented managing or controlling food and cash crop diseases in the Region would ensure food availability and security among residents [13]. Observations conducted at Bukoba, Rwamishenye, Buyekela and Kashai markets revealed much of the food crops sold came from Karagwe, Kyeerwa, Muleba and some parts of Bukoba Rural districts.

*Demarcate the border over Lake Victoria:* referring to the Rubafu border disagreement that began in 1999, the District Official interviewed reported, "I know the two governments [Tanzania and Uganda] have plans to demarcate the border over the lake ending conflicts facing fishermen as they fight over the border ... The Minister for Lands and Urban Development promised to have this disagreement resolved within the next two years" [13]. In the view of a fish vendor at Bukoba Market, "demarcating the border would enable Tanzanian fishermen operate within the country rather than colliding with their counterparts from Uganda and Kenya; ending the problems we are currently facing" [13].

### 3.1.3 Missenyi district

*Establishing disease control center(s) in the district:* study participants in Missenyi district reported human, animal and crop diseases originate in Rakai and 'cross' the border to Tanzania. HIV and AIDS and BXW were reported to have 'originated' in Uganda. Similarly, Ebola and Marbug Virus diseases erupted in Uganda and the DRC respectively threatening Tanzanians' health. A village leader in Kashenye ward, for example, reported "We are requesting for a disease control center in the borderlands, because we stand a risk of being

infected by diseases from Uganda as we have witnessed since the 1980s" [13].

Speaking of community members' perception of Uganda and the DRC sources and conduits of human, animal and crop diseases (HIV and AIDS, BXW, CWD, Marburg Virus and Ebola), the Mugana District Designated Hospital (DDH) Medical Officer in-Charge commented it was true the diseases were reported originating from Uganda and with possibility of 'crossing' the border into Tanzania before the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Children and the Elderly (MoHCDC) has put control in place. Hence, the need to set (emergency) control centers say at Mugana DDH, Mutukula border crossing point; Bunazi, Minziro, Kashenye and Katara Health Centers; Kashozi Hospital, the Regional Hospital and other similar centers in borderlands. He observed, "You know it takes time to have the ministry's decision regarding an outbreak, where the disease could have spread inland" [13].

*Provide electricity to all border villages and houses:* study participants in this district requested the government to provide electricity to all border villages and houses that would boost the economy and security in the borderlands. The Mutukula WEO, for example, suggested, "Electricity would facilitate conducting different income generating activities and thus raising our residents' economy ... Similarly; electricity would enhance security in our villages" [13]. A Kashenye WEO reported, "Some villages and houses in this ward have no electricity ... The government had promised supplying electricity in every village and house ... We are witnessing efforts by the government to supply electricity to Uganda [Nangoma Parish] before meeting our needs [13].

*Control illegal immigration:* the village, ward and district leaders interviewed in Missenyi had an opinion that the government and the AUBP should strive controlling and managing illegal immigrants from Rwanda and Uganda that are threatening peace and security in the district. District officials interviewed at Bunazi and Mutukula, for example, alleged some illegal immigrants participate in political activities, some were village or party leaders; conducted arms trafficking, smuggling, poaching, robbery, car hijacking; caused overgrazing and utilized resources meant for the citizens alone. In their views, controlling and managing these illegal immigrants was a priority to maintain peace and security in the district.

*Allow soft cross-border movements within the borderlands say for 12 hours or a week:* study participants in Mutukula recommended the two governments to reach an agreement where the

borderlanders would cross the border using borderlanders' identity cards (IDs) like the voter's ID or a letter from the village or ward authority. A young man aged 28 interviewed in Mutukula, for example, reported "[W]e cross the border for different reasons and several times a day ... On weekends, for instance, we go dancing on the Uganda side ... Sometimes the Ugandan police arrest us for having no valid documents ... Why can't we be allowed to use the voter's cards to visit the borderlands on the other side of the borders? ... The Ugandans too could use their village cards to visit Tanzania say for 12 hours of a week ... Whoever wants to go beyond the borderlands should acquire legal documents" [13].

*Harmonization of cross border services and resources utilization:* borderlanders interviewed in Kashenye, Minziro, Mutukula and Kakunyu proposed harmonized utilization of services across the border. A female whose children go to a private school in Mutukula (Uganda), for example, observed, "Our governments should make it easy for parents on either side of the border to choose which school to send their children" [13]. A study participant in Kashenye where pupils from Nangoma Parish, Uganda, go to school in Tanzania said "We are aspiring establishing the federation [the East African Federation], why worry who goes to school in which country? ... We need to have harmonized curricula at all levels ... As long as they fulfill education guidelines let them study here [13]. A study participant interviewed at Kakunyu commented, "I do not find any reason why the government should use much force against the pastoralists from Uganda and Rwanda ... Harmonized sharing of water and pasture among the three countries, as we have been sharing, could resolve this problem ... We are all *Bahima*, we should share God-given resources available in our countries" [13].

*Crop disease control and management:* like study participants in Bukoba Rural, Bukoba Urban and Kyerwa districts, Missenyi residents interviewed reported their livelihoods were at risk due to crop diseases that have affected all cash and food crops in the district that need to be put under control or managed. In this district too, some families have lost between 25% and 100% of banana plants. Other crops, coffee, beans, potatoes and cassava are being affected by diseases, which has reduced households' source of food and income to upkeep family members. An interviewee in Nyabihanga, for example, reported; "[S]ome households can only afford one meal a day, which has seriously affected their health and income" [13].

Reporting on the impact of BXW in Missenyi district where farmers have started reinvesting in affected farms, the agricultural expert at MARI explained,

The problem ... we have limited supply of BXW resistant or tolerant cultivars ... It would take six months before planting new crops in the uprooted farms ... It is also expensive for affected farmers to reinvest in the damaged farms. For example, a farmer in Missenyi owning a three acre farm that was damaged by 100% incurred costs as follows: uprooting damaged plants costed TShs 500,000 (\$217.4); waiting for six months leading to a loss of TShs 20,000,000 (\$8695.7); preparing the farm TShs 1,500,000 (\$652.2); buying and transporting organic manure one trip per acre was TShs 500,000 times 3 acres coasting 1,500,000 (\$652.2); buying and transporting mulching glass one trip coasted TSh 250,000 times 9 trips TShs 2,250,000 (\$978.3); buying cultivars at TShs 1,000 each, 1,200 plants coasted TShs 1,200,000 (\$521.7); maintaining the farm for nine months coasted TShs 1,500,000 (\$652.2). The total coast was TShs 28,450,000 (\$12369.6). By February 2018, the farmer had lost 95% of the farm to BXW. How many farmers in the region will be able to undertake similar reinvestment and stand such a loss? [13]

*Harmonize coffee prices:* study participants in Missenyi had a similar suggestion as Bukoba Rural district interviewees that Uganda and Tanzania governments should set similar coffee price to avoid smuggling activities going on across the border. A borderlander and coffee farmer interviewed in Minziro, for example, claimed,

We are producing the same coffee [Robusta] sold at the same world markets as the Ugandans, why is our cooperative [KCU] paying us half a price of that offered in Uganda? ... We never receive any support from the Ministry of Agriculture or the cooperative ... They [KCU and the government] only show up at the harvesting seasons! ... In my view, we should sell a kilo [kg] of coffee at TShs 4000 (\$1.7) ... This price, will at least enable us cover production costs we incur [13].

*Increase borderlanders' and other citizens' awareness of immigration and border crossing regulations:* like interviewees in Bukoba Rural and Kyerwa, the borderlanders interviewed in Missenyi observed majority of them and other citizens were unaware of immigration and border crossing

regulations. A borderlander at Mutukula, for example, claimed, "I do not understand why I need a permit to go just across the border to visit my in-laws ... We are the same people; the border cannot divide us ... We do not need immigration documents like other travelers ... They should provide us more information on immigration and border crossing regulations" [13].

*Establish sub-immigration stations within reach:* similar to borderlanders in Bukoba Rural district, borderlanders interviewed in Minziro and Kakunyu observed borderlanders cross the border illegally on daily basis for various (sometimes on emergency) reasons because they find it uneconomical travelling almost 100 km to Mutukula to apply for travel permits to travel just 10 km Rakai into Uganda. In their view, having functioning immigration sub-stations in Minziro or Kakunyu and other similar areas would alleviate some immigration problems they are currently facing.

### 3.1.4 Kyerwa district

*Crop disease control and management:* like other border districts studied, Kyerwa borderland has been affected by (cash and food) crop diseases that have reduced residents' income and threatening households' food security. A borderlander interviewed at Keisho, for example, reported, "Almost all cash and food crops in this district have been affected by diseases reducing our income and threatening our families' health status ... We hope the district authorities and the government will take measures to save us from this situation" [13]. The Kyerwa DC observed, "Our district is blessed with different types of crops ... We do not expect any citizens to die of hunger this year ... However, we are facing diseases affecting almost every crop ... The district, the region and the nation authorities are taking measures to control or manage these disease" [13].

*Develop Mirongo Tanzania side of the border:* interviewees in Kyerwa district recommended to the government to invest in the development of the Mirongo border area, which is somehow neglected. We observed the present Mirongo market; the Immigration Office and the two border-check points (before crossing the Kagera Bridge into Uganda) are in the midst of forest reserve. The Mirongo market appears to be a mere crop collection point, from which crops sold are transported to Mbarara and other markets in Uganda. Government officials, traders and residents in the neighborhood cross the border on daily basis to get some of their daily needs only available on the other side of the border. The Kyerwa official interviewed in Isingiro had the

opinion that, “The government should develop Mirongo border area similar to or beyond the Ugandans ... This improvement would improve residents’ livelihoods and given its location [forest reserve and hilly surroundings] it would be one of the tourist attractions thus adding to the district’s revenue [13].

*Complete Mirongo International Market Project in Isingiro Ward:* the Isingiro WEO and the district official interviewed in Isingiro had the opinion that the government and or the AUBP should give priority to the completion of the Mirongo International Market Project initiated by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in the 1990s. In their view, the market would enable Kyerwa and Karagwe residents to sell their crops at market prices (on demand and supply basis), control illegal cross-border trade and thus increasing borderlanders’ income and facilitating poverty alleviation among Kyerwa residents. The district official added, “Power is not a big problem ... We have an advantage of using the Joint Kikagati Power Station” [13].

*Control illegal immigration:* on the one hand, the village, ward and district leaders interviewed in Kyerwa reported illegal immigrants a major threat to peace and security in the district. The Kyerwa DC, for example, observed,

Our districts shares borders with Uganda and Rwanda. As such, we have many people from these countries ... Some of them pose a threat to our district and the nation ... We hope to identify them in the course of registering citizen for the national identification cards ... This is the problem that needs joint effort from the three countries [Tanzania, Rwanda and Uganda] to combat ... The African Union would be instrumental in this process [13].

The DC further commended continued formal and informal good neighborhood meetings between and among border district authorities that have been going on to strengthen peace and security maintenance in the Tanzania-Uganda-Rwanda borderlands. A ward official in Isingiro reported, “Rwandan and Ugandan illegal immigrants look similar to our people ... Some are blood-related ... They come and live amongst the villagers, which makes it difficult to identify them ... They utilize our resources on the expense of our citizens” [13]. On the other hand, no borderlander reported immigrants a threat to peace and security; hence not reported a priority to the governments and the AUBP. Instead, they requested the three governments to harmonize the utilization of resources available on each side of

the borders for their improved livelihoods and enhanced cross-border cooperation.

*Harmonize coffee prices:* study participants in Kyerwa echoed a cry made by Bukoba Rural and Missenyi district interviewees that Uganda and Tanzania governments should set similar coffee price to avoid smuggling activities going on across the border. A borderlander coffee farmer interviewed in Keisho claimed,

Coffee smuggling across the borders is a result of different prices offered in Uganda and Tanzania ... KDCU [Karagwe Development and Cooperative Union Limited] pays us much less per kg [TShs 1000 \$0.4] compared to the Ugandans [TShs 4000 \$1.7] Resolving this problem would reduce or end coffee smuggling activities currently conducted between Tanzania and Uganda ... Threats, arresting coffee traders and confiscating their crops and means of transport [vehicles or motorcycles] are not efficacious solutions to this problem at all [13].

*Ferry or bridge on Kagera River to Rwanda:* in addition to Uganda, Kyerwa district also shares the border with Rwanda. According to Kyerwa officials interviewed, citizens from the two countries cross Kagera River (for several reasons) using unsafe (powered or peddled) boats that could cause loss of lives and property. According to the Kyerwa DC, “establishing safe transport between the two countries over Kagera River ... a ferry or a bridge ... would save lives and property lost when the river becomes rough or when the boats get mechanical problems; increase communities’ economy in the two districts and countries via formal trade and tourism” [13].

*Increase borderlanders’ and other citizens’ awareness of immigration and border crossing regulations:* similar to interviewees in Bukoba Rural and Missenyi, borderlanders interviewed in Kyerwa observed many citizens in the district were unaware of immigration and border crossing regulations, which leads the government to perceive their cross-border activities illegal, subversive and threatening national peace and security. A retired civil servant interviewee in Isingiro, for example, narrated,

Basically we are the same people as those in Uganda and Rwanda ... We have long-rooted social and economic ties ... The governments just came in very recently ... but cannot succeed breaking these ties ... We know we have the border [Kagera River] separating our nations not our hearts ... The government and the district

authorities should orient us on immigration and border crossing regulations to resolve conflicting interpretations of the border [13].

#### 4. Discussion

Study findings confirm the Tanzania-Uganda borderlanders' assertion that "nothing for us without us" in the course of establishing and managing soft borders for improved borderlanders' livelihoods, border peace, security and a united and integrated Africa. First, the four border districts studied had similar and differentiated border experiences, potentials and cooperation needs (contexts) that ought to be considered in the course of encouraging cross-border cooperation and initiatives in the Tanzania-Uganda borderlands and elsewhere. Hence, 'one size fits all' top-down interventions might not meet borderlanders' soft border needs and interests. Controlling crop diseases that have shaken households' source of income and food security; harmonizing coffee price between Tanzania and Uganda to combat on-going cross-border coffee smuggling; increasing awareness on immigration and border-crossing regulations among the borderlanders and other citizens and establishing immigration sub-posts within the borderlands distant from the main posts (Mutukula and Mirongo) were common priorities mentioned.

Bukoba Rural, Missenyi and Kyerwa reported supplying electricity to all villages in the borderlands and harmonizing cross-border utilization of resources (education, pasture, water and health) and services available crucial for borderlanders (broadly defined) peace and security. Bukoba Rural and Bukoba Urban districts had demarcating the border over Lake Victoria a priority that would resolve the border disagreements experienced beginning in 1999 [4]. As Walker (2015) correctly observed, "African maritime boundary disputes, unless resolved in a concerted and timely manner, will imperil both the short and long-term implementation of maritime policies and strategies [for] vital maritime economic development to occur" [19].

On the one hand, the Missenyi and Kyerwa political elite had controlling illegal immigration a common priority that the three governments (Tanzania, Rwanda and Uganda) and the AUBP could facilitate implementing. The borderlanders, on the other hand, suggested strengthening amicable cross-border cooperation and interactions that have ever existed at the grassroots level. It suggests that the understanding of borders as barriers, opportunity or both vary with the level of actors involved and the contexts within which the analysis is done. The implication is that a clear understanding of the

historical context of the border or a border region in question should guide the interpretation of how actors understand and perceive the border in manner they do.

Bukoba Rural district had establishing an international fish market or building a fish factory at Malehe and reviving and completing the unfinished colonial Kabindi (Bugabo)-Mashaiga (Kassensero) ferry project priorities for the two governments and or the AUBP. A fish market at Malehe would enable fishermen sell their catch at better prices that would increase their income. The Kabindi-Mashaiga ferry would mean safe and assured transport between the two countries and saving lives and properties from being lost due to the use of often overloaded unsafe engine or peddled boats. Missenyi border district had the establishment of (human, animal and plant) disease control centers in the borderlands and permitting the borderlanders to use non-immigration travel documents like voters' identity card or an official letter from the village/ward authority (as opposed to passports) when visiting borderlands on the Ugandan side for a short period (12 hours to 7 days) priorities. Kyerwa border district set the development of Mirongo border area (Tanzania side) and establishing official border crossing point(s) along the Tanzania-Rwanda border as their priorities.

Following Ebola outbreak in the DRC in May 2018, the MoHCDCE sent a team of health personnel in Kagera region to provide health education on Ebola signs and preventive measures to the borderlanders and other citizens. The media, Karagwe Radio, FADECO Radio in Karagwe district and radios stations in Rwanda and Uganda set airtime for session on Ebola signs and prevention aired in the borderlanders' first languages. This is one of the potentials available that the governments and AUBP could use to conduct health education and communication against human, animal and plant diseases and other programs targeting the borderlands and the borderlanders.

However, the borderlanders' perception and fear of Uganda as origin of crop and human diseases they have been confronting is justifiable. For example, BXW was reported about 40 years back in Ethiopia on Ensete, specie allied to banana. BXW was detected in Uganda in 2001. Since then it has affected all banana producing countries in the Great Lakes Zone: Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and the DRC [20,21]. The disease was identified in Tanzania in January 2006 in Kabale village, Muleba district, Kagera Region [13,22]. Similarly, CWD that previously erupted from time to time in Africa, became vigorous a decade ago sweeping most of coffee growing countries across

Cameroon, Ethiopia, the DRC into Uganda in 1993 where it “wiped out more than 12 million Robusta coffee trees in central and western Uganda regions” [23]. By 2000, CWD had spread to all Robusta zones in Uganda. The disease was detected in Tanzania in 1996 affecting the north-west part of the country; where it is estimated to have infected 2.2% of the farms and 0.7% of Robusta trees in Kagera Region [13]. Major or massive cases of Ebola outbreaks that threatened borderlanders’ health were reported in Uganda in October 2000 to January 2001, December 2007 to January 2008 and June-August 2012. The WHO confirmed Murbug virus outbreak in Uganda on October 20, 2017. Other outbreaks were reported in 2007, 2008, 2012 and 2014. This evidence supports the borderlanders’ fear and their request for establishing (human, animal and crop) disease control/management centers on the Tanzania side of the border.

Clearly, border districts’ priorities presented indicate that although these borderlands are on the same side of the same border, they have recorded different border and cross-border experiences that have changed over time as a function of both internal and external forces exerted on the borderlanders. The borderlands have both similar and specific priorities. The implication is that the context within which cross-border cooperation will take place should be central to the intended initiatives and programs. Harnessing border communities’ experiences and involving them in priority setting and program implementation would greatly foster achieving AUBP’s broad and specific objectives and sustaining achieved outcomes.

Second, six key events that took place within the borderlands: the Tanzania-Uganda (Kagera) war of 1978/79; HIV and AIDS outbreak in the early 1980s; the redefinition of a Tanzanian citizen and citizenship rights (1995 and 1998); the expulsion of *Walalo* and other immigrants from Rwanda and Uganda (2000); the Tanzania-Uganda border dispute, disagreement and the re-identification, observation and intensification of the Tanzania-Uganda 1°00’S terrestrial border (2003-2009), shaped how border actors have constructed and attached meanings and functions to the Tanzania-Uganda border. In turn, these contentions have resulted into contradicting interpretations of the borders and border crossing activities between the nation-state elite and the borderlanders.

On the one hand, informed by the theories of borders as limiting and controlling entities, mere barriers and sources of conflicts, the elite interpret cross-border movements and cooperation illegitimate and trespasses thus putting the borders under permanent

surveillance such as constant police and army patrols and creation of buffer zones. Certainly, with the exception of the HIV and AIDS outbreak, the other five events that occurred in the studied borderlands were informed by this perspective. The implication is that “personal, economic and political interests, rather than history, patriotism and citizens’ dignity, will continue informing African political elite’s decision making over borders, borderlands and the borderlanders” [4], which is not healthy for the creation and maturity of a united and integrated Africa.

On the other hand, informed by the theories of borderlands as conduits [24], areas of convergences and divergences; conflicts and resolutions, barriers and opportunities, the borderlanders have always cooperated within and among borderlands on one side of the border and across the border. Due to the deep-rooted and longstanding social, economic and political ties that exist among cross-border communities along the Tanzania-Uganda border, the six events never set them apart but cemented their relationships and interactions. Study findings showed, for example, that the borderlanders were excluded from the entire process of re-identifying, observing and intensifying the border! Since then, Tanzania and Uganda have continued accusing each other of destroying added border points [4]. The use of borderlanders’ border conflict resolving experience rather than forcing them to police the beacons, perhaps, could have reduced this problem. This approach would not have been unique to Tanzania and Uganda. Elders and villagers in the two villages affected by the demarcation of the Mali-Burkina Faso border, Wanian and Ouarokuy respectively and affected municipal leadership successfully ended the border dispute between the two countries that persisted for more than 50 years [26]. Similarly, elders have been, and still are, instrumental in resolving conflict in many African states like Rwanda (*Gacaca* Courts), Botswana, South Africa, Uganda, Ethiopia and Kenya [27]. The elders have shown high capacity and adequacy in resolving conflicts in the contexts they occur and “the resilience of African justice systems across African States, illustrates that they still occupy a central place in the world of dispute resolution in Africa” [27]. The implication is that in order to achieve soft borders managed for improved borderlanders’ livelihoods, border peace, security and a united and integrated Africa, borderlanders’ history, voices, needs, fears, expectations, capacities, initiatives and potentials must be cardinal to cross-border programs and policy across the continent.

Finally, study findings authenticated soft borders and soft cooperation have always existed in the

borderlands, during peace or conflict. In the view of the author, governments are retarding cooperation under the cover of maintaining peace security and nation state sovereignty. As stated earlier, with the exception of the HIV and AIDS outbreak, the rest of the five key events that shaped border actors' construction and attaching meanings and functions to the Tanzania-Uganda border were politically motivated. The Kagera war resulted from ideological differences between Dar-es-Salaam and Kampala beginning in 1971 culminating into war in 1978/79. The government expelled *Walalo* shortly after the 2000 presidential and general elections; alleging them of participating in voting for the opposition and other subversive activities in Kagera region rather than their stay in the country [25]. Equally, the Tanzania-Uganda border disputes and the re-identification, observation and intensification of the Tanzania-Uganda 1°00'S terrestrial border sidelined the borderlanders' interests favoring the political elite's.

However, evidence from this study indicated: 1) borderlanders enjoy resources and services across the border and meet to resolve common border issues at the grassroots level and 2) border district officials meet to resolve immediate problems (sometimes without directives from the central governments) testify the ever existence of soft borders amongst the borderlanders currently propagated by the AUBP. The implication is that borderlanders' (permanent, temporary and the elite) border-lived experience should be central to 'from border control' to 'border management' transformation programs in Africa.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

As borders are not the same; so are the borderlands contexts. Each section of the border, the borderland or border region, provides different experiences, which in turn, shape the borderlanders' construction and attaching meanings and functions to the border. Borderlanders' history, voices, needs, fears, expectations, capacities, potentials and initiatives must inform AUBP's and adjoining nation-states' programs and policies intended to improve livelihoods, border peace and security in the border regions. That is, the policies and programs ought to be borderlands-centered. As Naish (2017) correctly observed, "[t]his means providing and supporting cross-border access to goods and services, creating investment and employment opportunities in border regions, and advocating for the interests of cross-border communities at the national and regional levels" [7].

It is recommended as "mapping the socio-economic potential of border regions can provide great insights as to where cross-border co-operation could be

intensified in Africa", "social network analysis (SNA) is a powerful tool that helps understand interactions amongst individuals, groups or institutions" [28]. A combination of the two analyses and other borderlands-centered approaches can bring clarity to complex relationships and interactions between border actors that should be central to cross-border cooperation initiatives in Africa. I further recommend the governments and AUBP to plan and implement comprehensive project like The Organization for the Management and Development of the Kagera River Basin Project that intended to improve the living standards of the Tanzania-Uganda-Rwanda-Burundi borderlands discussed in details by Gesarasi (1979). Among intended benefits were (Article 2 of the protocol): increasing arable land in Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi; create employment opportunities for citizens in the riparian states; put efficacious arrangements in place to resolve citizenship problems among the four countries on the project and promoting energy (peat, hydroelectricity, thermal, biogas, solar, fuel-efficient stoves, kilns and boilers and windmills) production and distribution [Article 2 (k)] in the region [29]. Such projects have potential for supporting and advocating for the interests of cross-border communities on the continent.

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