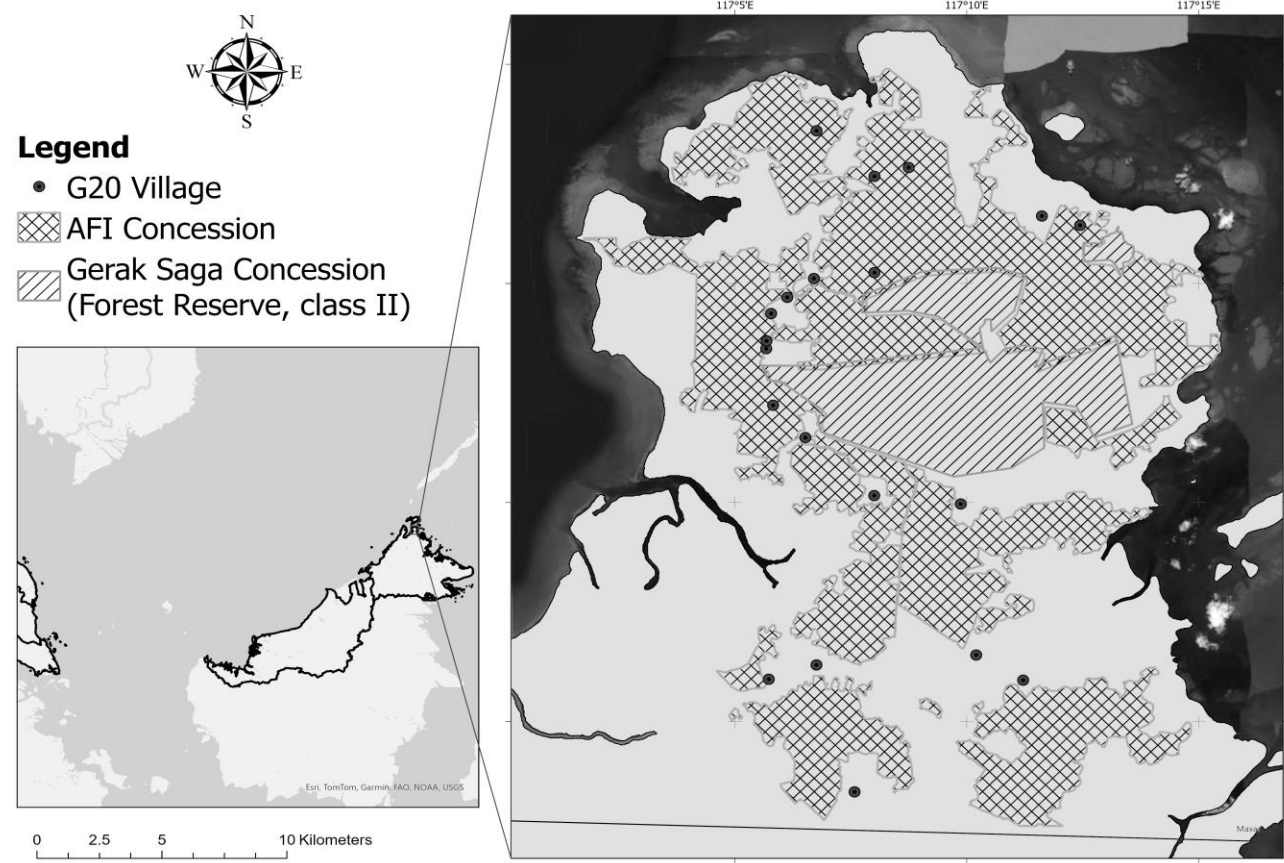


Introduction

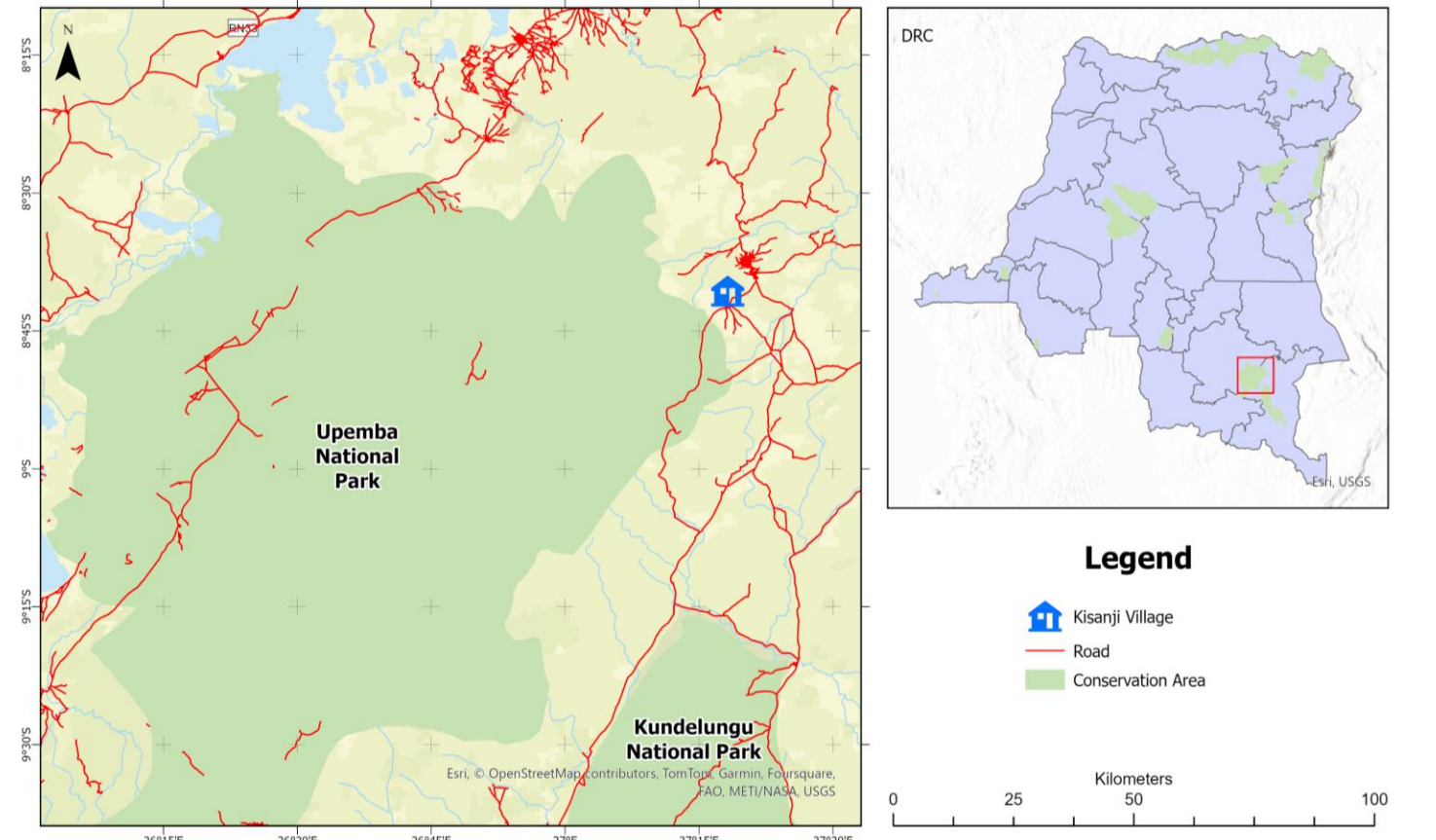
Sabah

- ❖ The most concerning issue in Sabah is the recognition of Indigenous peoples' rights to their traditional land use, property, customs, culture, and beliefs.
 - ❖ In 1981, residents of fifty-nine Sabah, Pitas District villages agreed to participate with their customary lands in a tree plantation project developed by the Sabah Forestry Development Authority (SAFODA) with a promise to return the land after the first harvest. However, even though the first harvest was done, the land has not been returned to the villagers.
 - ❖ After decades, the lived realities of these communities under the development initiative have not met expectations. Thus, this paper examines local well-being as well as ecosystem service in spaces of contestations over land and development.
- ❖ 20 out of 59 villages in Pitas, referred to as G20/ *gabungan 20 kampung* (coalition of 20 villages), a coalition that continues to actively advocate reclaiming customary land rights



D.R. Congo

- ❖ Despite ongoing conservation efforts, socio-ecological crises like deforestation, resource overuse, climate change, and mining pollution continue to undermine ecosystem protection.
 - ❖ UNP promotes biodiversity conservation for people and nature through community collaboration, moving away from fortress-style conservation.
 - ❖ This study examines local reliance on natural resources as a critical factor in aligning conservation objectives with community well-being and fostering long-term sustainable human-nature relationship.
- ❖ Situated in the southeastern part of the Democratic republic of Congo, Upemba National Park (UNP) was created in 1939 for its high biodiversity value.



Methodology

- ❖ Participatory mixed methods to understand how local communities in Pitas and around UNP live and use natural resources.

(1) The household survey helps us to understand households' lives, jobs, land use practices, perceptions, and views on access to resources, as well as the benefits they get from nature; (2) the FGDs gave us local perceptions on three different focuses; (3) and for transect walks, they can be viewed as a mobile interview with the key informants by using the power of observation, which provided us with data to understand the relationship between land use change and ecosystem services (ES) from the community's perspective.

Household survey (HH) (77 in Sabah, and 33 in Congo)



HH survey participants were interviewed in Pitas (left) and Kisanji (right)



HH survey participants ranked the ES cards in Pitas (left) and Kisanji (right)

Focus Group discussions (7 in Sabah, and 6 in Congo),



Male group discussions on perceptions on well-being in Pitas



Discussions on drivers of change, land use practices, and perception on well-being in Kisanji

Transect walk (4 in Sabah, 2 in Congo)



Walking together with key informants to understand the relationship between land use change and ecosystem services in Pitas (left) and Kisanji (right)

Results

Sabah

Economic situation over the past 12 months: a) Income source; b) Amount of Income; c) HH Assets

- ❖ Families' livelihood are largely based on agriculture, where cash crops (90%) such as oil palm and rubber are the main source. However, traditional farming practices have nearly disappeared due to this practice no longer suitable given the current political situation.
- ❖ Almost half of the participants (44%) reported earning higher, however, their income remains far below Sabah's minimum annual wage of RM18,000 (USD 4,202)
- ❖ The public facilities such as roads and electricity, where initially created for SAFODA's development' program, have improved various aspects of life, especially social relationships.

