



The Poverty Environment Network

A CIFOR Project

- A comprehensive regional and global analysis of tropical forests and poverty
- A global dataset of more than 9000 households from 26 countries across the tropics
- Careful recording of all environmental income in four quarterly household surveys
- Partnership-based research involving more than 50 PEN research partners
- Refining research methods and providing capacity building
- Enhancing policies for reduced poverty and better forest management

The questions

Forests and other natural resources are crucial to the livelihoods of millions of poor people worldwide. But just how important are forests for poverty alleviation? To what extent do forests help lift people out of poverty, or are they mainly useful as gap-fillers and safety nets preventing extreme hardship? Which types of forests and products are most useful for the poor? How do different management regimes and policies affect the benefits poor people derive from forests? How can we design effective forest-based strategies to alleviate poverty? Answers to these questions are essential for designing effective policies and meaningful projects based on natural resources. Yet, we have surprisingly little solid knowledge to answer the questions adequately.

What will PEN achieve?

PEN aims to fill this gap in knowledge through the systematic collection of socio-economic data in a variety of tropical ecosystems. The global and country level analyses of the role of forests in poverty alleviation will build a knowledge base to help formulate national and global policy, build capacity among researchers in developing countries, and assist conservation and development agencies to better achieve pro-poor outcomes. The project will play a major role in putting forestry issues onto the poverty agenda. PEN will provide pathways to disseminate research results, exchange information and experience, including hosting workshops to facilitate collaboration during the analysis and synthesis work.

Who is in the network?

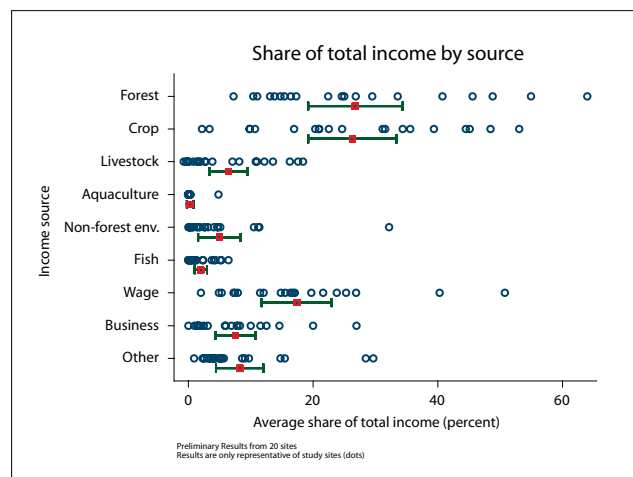
PEN is a collaborative effort among CIFOR, universities and regional and international institutions from various countries. The 35 PEN partners, mainly doctoral students, were responsible for the data collection. About 10 CIFOR staff and associates are involved as supervisors and in project management,

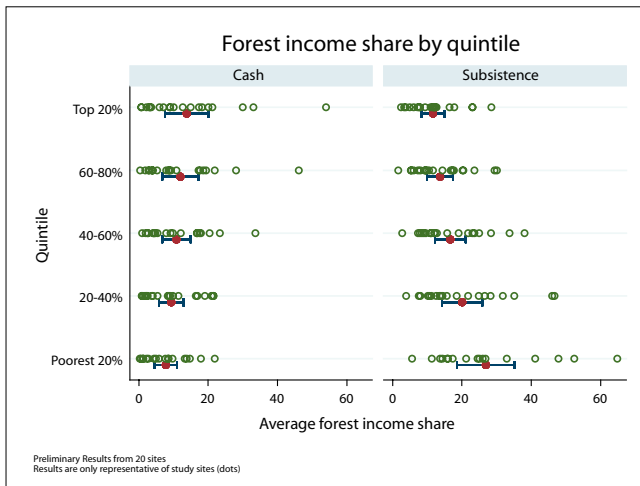
while another 10 external professors and senior researchers at universities or research institutes serve as resource people.

Data collection and the global dataset

The core of PEN is the tropics-wide collection of uniform, quality socio-economic and environmental data at household and village levels by 38 partners. Data collection was completed in 2009, and has generated a comprehensive global dataset with more than 9000 households and 360+ villages from 26 countries. The data collection involved a careful recording of all forest and environmental uses. All income data were collected through four quarterly surveys to shorten recall periods and increase accuracy. The study sites were chosen to obtain widely representative coverage of different geographical regions, forest types, forest tenure regimes, levels of poverty, infrastructure and market access and population density.

Preliminary results





- Large variation across the sites
- On average 1/4 of the household income is from forests
- Poor households depend relatively more on subsistence forest products
- Better-off households have higher relative and absolute cash income from forest products

Capacity building and improved research methods

PEN seeks to improve the overall quality of policy analysis related to forest-poverty links through capacity building and the development and testing of new research methods. Fieldwork and data collection guidelines have been developed, along with a prototype questionnaire for data collection, all available on the PEN website in various languages (see link below). Annual workshops are held to

provide training, to refine methods and to discuss and synthesise results. More than 2/3 of the PEN partners are doctoral students from developing countries.

Timeline

Launched in September 2004, PEN is a 7-year research project divided into three phases:

2004-2005: Preparatory work to develop research methods

2005-2008: Fieldwork and data collection by PEN partners

2007-2011: Data checking, analysis and writing: case studies, thematic groups and global syntheses

For further information contact PEN coordinator Arild. Angelsen@umb.no, or go to CIFOR's PEN web site at www.cifor.cgiar.org/pen

PEN research countries

Latin America

Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, Guatemala, Peru

Asia

Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, Vietnam

Africa

Burkina Faso, Cameroon, DRC, Ethiopia, Ghana, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Uganda, Zambia



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