



Can Safeguards Guarantee Gender Equity?

Lessons from research on women in early REDD+ implementation



Anne M Larson, Therese Dokken and Amy E Duchelle

“Participation” is an insufficient measure to safeguard women’s interests. Rather, gender-responsive analyses are needed to understand real and perceived gender differences in interests and needs, and to anticipate threats or risks.



READ THIS BRIEF IF...

- You want to ensure that REDD+ does not perpetuate gender inequities.
- You are designing safeguard policies.
- You want to understand why improving women’s participation alone is insufficient to protect women’s interests and needs.
- You want REDD+ to benefit women.



KEY MESSAGES

- Research suggests that women are not as informed about REDD+ or initiative activities as their male counterparts from the same village.
- When women are involved in REDD+ implementation, their participation is more superficial than men’s.
- Important gender gaps in information, knowledge and decision making are likely to affect the distribution of future benefits and burdens.
- Interventions that do not seek to address imbalances at the outset may be doomed to perpetuate them.



THE PROBLEM

Researchers and practitioners have amply discussed the potential effects of REDD+ on forest-based communities, but less attention has been paid to its gender dimensions. Given the tendency to see “communities” as undifferentiated, even REDD+ policy makers and proponents sensitive to the needs of forest-based peoples may fail to understand or address the specific needs of women related to forest and REDD+ policies. As a result, women must struggle on two fronts: even if “communities” are taken into account and have opportunities to benefit from REDD+, women may still be left out.

Ensuring that REDD+ helps rather than harms women requires understanding the gendered processes and variation on the ground. The research results presented in this brief were generated by CIFOR’s Global Comparative Study on REDD+ in early project implementation (2011–2012) at 77 villages in 20 REDD+ sites across 6 countries (Brazil, Cameroon, Indonesia, Peru, Tanzania and Vietnam). The findings suggest that promoting “women’s participation” alone is an insufficient solution.



CONTEXT

While women are still largely peripheral to REDD+ debates, several organizations have called for greater attention to gender issues (Gurung and Quesada 2009, Peach Brown 2011, UN-REDD 2011). The World Bank's Forest Investment Program (FIP), which provides funding to support REDD+ in developing countries (such as REDD-readiness and pilot activities), refers to women in a footnote in the 2009 FIP Design Document: "For the purpose of the FIP 'indigenous peoples and local communities' includes tribal communities and implies equal emphasis on the rights of men and women" (Climate Investment Funds 2009: 4). A more recent FIP document on the grant mechanism for indigenous

people and local communities refers to an overarching principle that includes gender equality and twice mentions ensuring the participation of women (Climate Investment Fund 2011).

The second version of the UN REDD+ Social and Environmental Safeguards (SES) features gender issues much more prominently than its previous version and more than other safeguard standards (Mackenzie 2012, REDD+ SES 2012). The UN-REDD+ Programme's *Guidance Note on Gender Sensitive REDD+* (UN-REDD 2013) takes its gender recommendations beyond the discussion of safeguards.



FINDINGS

The findings presented here are based on results from two sources: focus group interviews with mixed (66% male) groups of villagers (on knowledge of and involvement in REDD+ or the local initiative) and focus group interviews with women (on knowledge of and involvement in REDD+, perceptions of participation in village decisions and decisions on forest use, and sex-differentiated forest use).

“ Interventions that do not seek to address gender imbalances at the outset may be doomed to perpetuate them. ”

Knowledge of REDD+

Overall, the data demonstrate that the women's focus groups appear less informed about REDD+ than the mixed groups: 41% demonstrated a basic understanding of REDD+ compared to 67%, respectively (Table 1). Given that we interviewed people in the early phase of the initiatives when proponents were just introducing their REDD+ activities, it is important to compare groups within the same villages. For example, in all villages sampled in Brazil, both the women's and the mixed groups demonstrated a basic understanding of REDD+, whereas in Cameroon, Peru, Tanzania, and Indonesia, the women's group demonstrated a basic understanding in fewer villages than the mixed group (neither group demonstrated an understanding in the Vietnam site).

Of those groups that demonstrated a basic understanding of REDD+, the proportion of mixed groups that participated in the decision to implement (55%) or were involved in the design or implementation of the local REDD+ initiative (35%) was still higher than in the women's groups (43% and 30%, respectively), although the gap narrows. Furthermore, the type of involvement among mixed groups included not only attending meetings and training events, as was the case for the women's groups, but also clarifying tenure arrangements, monitoring forests and improving rule enforcement, although overall these were not mentioned frequently.

Table 1. Knowledge of and involvement in REDD+ in women's and mixed groups.

	Demonstrated basic understanding (n=73*) (# and %)	Involved in decision to implement (# and %)	Involved in design or implementation (# and %)	Type of involvement
Women's focus group	30 (41)	13 of 30 (43)	9 of 30 (30)	Attending meetings or training events
Mixed (male-dominated) focus group	49 (67)	27 of 49 (55)	17 of 49 (35)	Attending meetings, training events, clarifying tenure arrangements, monitoring and rule enforcement

*no data available for 4 villages in one site. Source: Larson et al. (in press)

Understanding women's participation

We hypothesized that, relative to the mixed groups, women would demonstrate similar knowledge of REDD+ initiatives if one or more of the following held true:

(1) ...if women have a strong voice in village decision making

We found that 64% of the women's focus group participants

agreed that women were sufficiently represented in important village decision-making bodies, 65% agreed that they were usually able to influence village decisions and 79% agreed that women participated actively in meetings. Yet there was no correlation between this perception and women's knowledge of REDD+.

(2) ...if women have a strong role in forest rule making

Less than half (47%) of the women's focus group participants agreed that women actively participated in making village rules for forest resource use. However, overall, the share of women that agreed that women are actively participating in making village rules for forest resource use was 30% higher in the villages where the women's and mixed focus group demonstrated the same basic understanding of REDD+ (though the correlation still does not hold in all villages).

(3) ...if women use forest resources as much or more than men

According to the women's focus group in 56% of all villages in our sample, men went to the forest more often than women, there was no difference between women and men in 33% of villages, while in the remaining 11%, women went into the forest more often. There was no correlation between the relative use of forest and knowledge of REDD+.

“ Even REDD+ policymakers and proponents sensitive to the needs of forest-based peoples may fail to understand women's specific needs related to forest and REDD+ policies. ”

(4) ...if REDD+ initiatives take an explicit gendered approach

Data from interviews with REDD+ proponents were examined to see whether they were planning to consider women's specific needs. At the time of these early interviews, five proponents listed fair benefits to women as an equity goal. By the time of the field research, however, at only one of those sites did women and mixed groups exhibit a similar basic understanding of the initiative.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, the data demonstrate that fewer women have a basic understanding of REDD+ relative to the mixed groups, even for many women who have a vested interest in forests and when initiatives are concerned with gender equity. These results have potentially significant implications. Important gender gaps in information, knowledge and decision making are likely to affect the distribution of future benefits and burdens. The findings suggest that “participation,” while a central demand

of indigenous and other local communities more generally, is only a partial solution to addressing women's strategic needs in ways that could strengthen their position in REDD+. Rather, gender-responsive analyses are required to understand real and perceived gender differences in interests and needs, and to anticipate threats or risks. Interventions that do not seek to address gender imbalances at the outset may be doomed to perpetuate them.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- Relative to mixed (male-dominated) village groups, fewer women's groups demonstrate a basic understanding of REDD+ in early REDD+ activities, even when:
 - » Women believe they have a strong voice in village decision making
 - » Women perceive that they use forests as much as or more than men
 - » Initiatives have an explicit goal of supporting gender equity.
- Where they are involved in REDD+ implementation, mixed groups attend meetings and trainings, and in some cases also clarify tenure arrangements, monitor and enforce rules, whereas women's groups only attend meetings and trainings.
- Differences in understanding between mixed and women's groups emerged in the villages studied in Cameroon, Tanzania, Peru and Indonesia; groups demonstrate similar understanding in study villages in Brazil (basic understanding).



REFERENCES

- [CIF] Climate Investment Funds (2009) *FIP Design Document for the Forest Investment Program, a Targeted Program under the SCF Trust Fund*. Washington, DC: CIF. Accessed 17 October 2014. www.climateinvestmentfunds.org/cif/node/111
- [CIF] Climate Investment Funds (2011) *Design for the Dedicated Grant Mechanism for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities to be Established under the Forest Investment Program*. Washington, DC: CIF. Accessed 17 October 2014. www.climateinvestmentfunds.org/cif/sites/climateinvestmentfunds.org/files/FIP_Design_Proposal_DGM_for_IPs_and_%20LC_FINAL_November2011_0.pdf
- Gurung JD and Quesada A (2009) *Gender-differentiated Impacts of REDD to be Addressed in REDD Social Standards*. Arlington, VA: CARE International and the Climate, Community and Biodiversity Alliance (CCBA).
- Larson AM, Dokken T, Duchelle A, Atmadja S, Resosudarmo IAP, Cronkleton P, Cromberg M, Sunderlin W, Awono A and Selaya G. In press. The role of women in early REDD+ implementation. *International Forestry Review*.
- Mackenzie C. 2012. *REDD+ social safeguards and standards review*. Burlington, VT: Forest Carbon, Markets and Communities Program.
- Peach Brown H. 2011. Gender, climate change and REDD+ in the Congo Basin forests of Central Africa. *International Forestry Review* 13(2):163–76.
- [REDD+ SES] REDD+ Social and Environmental Standards (2012) *REDD+ SES Social and Environmental Standards Version 2*. Washington, DC: REDD+ SES. Accessed 17 October 2014. www.redd-standards.org
- [UN-REDD Programme] United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (2011) *The Business Case for Mainstreaming Gender in REDD+*. Geneva: UN-REDD Programme.
- [UN-REDD Programme] United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (2013) *Guidance Note on Gender Sensitive REDD+*. Geneva: UN-REDD Programme. Accessed 17 October 2014. http://www.unredd.net/index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&gid=1044

This brief is number 4 in a set of REDD+ Safeguards Briefs.
See the full set here: CIFOR.org/safeguards



RESEARCH
PROGRAM ON
Forests, Trees and
Agroforestry

This research was carried out by CIFOR as part of the CGIAR Research Program on Forests, Trees and Agroforestry (CRP-FTA). This collaborative program aims to enhance the management and use of forests, agroforestry and tree genetic resources across the landscape from forests to farms. CIFOR leads CRP-FTA in partnership with Bioversity International, CATIE, CIRAD, the International Center for Tropical Agriculture and the World Agroforestry Centre.

