







# 3

## GENDER MATTERS IN COMMUNITY- BASED FOREST TENURE

**It** appears that focusing on the dynamic relationships between men and women (rather than solely on women) has a higher probability of providing guidance for changes to institutions, policies, and practices relevant for transforming gender inequality. Such a focus must, however, avoid a zero-sum struggle between men and women. To effect change, the role of gender research is to unpack 'farmers' and 'choices'; to identify opportunities for leveraging empowerment and inclusive change; and to engage with the various actors of change such as government, civil society and the donor community.

---

**Delia Catacutan (with others)**

Southeast Asia Regional Coordinator, World Agroforestry (ICRAF) (Catacutan et al. 2014b, ix)

## STATE OF GENDER EQUALITY WITHIN COMMUNITY-BASED FOREST TENURE

---

The process of forest tenure devolution has resulted in forestlands coming under the local control of IPLCs through *de facto* legitimate rights, policy or legal measures. Such forested lands can be said to be under community-based tenure, collective tenure or communal tenure. These terms are used interchangeably. This type of tenure involves a group of people jointly using a forested area based on agreed rules (be they formal or informal) for access, use, management and so on. Where forests are managed under this form of tenure, the term ‘community-based forestry’ is typically used in an all-inclusive sense. In practice, however, the details of community-based forest rights in terms of scale, management, autonomy and duration can vary considerably from country to country, and even from area to area. It can range from weak devolution where communities are participating in, say, nature conservation activities organized by the government or an NGO for a few years, to strong ownership rights where communities have full legal authority to autonomously manage the forestlands in perpetuity for multiple purposes based on their own governance

structure (see Figure 21) (see Ewers 2011; FAO 2019c; Larson et al. 2010).

Therefore, it is essential to zoom in on what the specific governance mode is, and what types of rights and responsibilities in the tenure bundle have been established. These may be formal ones written down in bylaws or they may be commonly understood practices that prevail in a day-to-day way. A term such as ‘community-based forestry’ can include forested lands which remain under the jurisdictional control of the government or it can include those forested lands which are under the full ownership of the community with rights to sell, mortgage and lease. The term ‘community’ also needs to be carefully examined: what are the presuppositions in a specific context about what makes a ‘community’? It can be a customary community in which some new migrants or settlers have made their home; it can be a “user group” made up of members of different adjoining villages who use a particular forest tract; or it can be a community in which a number of diverse clans who live and govern

★ <b>WEAK DEVOLUTION</b>	★★ <b>MODERATE DEVOLUTION</b>	★★★ <b>STRONG DEVOLUTION</b>	★★★★ <b>OWNERSHIP</b>
<b>Delegated</b>	<b>Shared and partly devolved</b>	<b>Fully devolved</b>	<b>Owned</b>
<p>Participatory involvement in program-led activities</p> <p>Little authority to make decisions</p> <p>Some rights to harvest forest resources such as fuelwood, fodder or other NTFPs</p>	<p>Share benefits from government-owned forests</p> <p>Established through policy framework</p> <p>Shorter or insecure tenure duration</p> <p>Limited community authority</p> <p>Some employment opportunities in government's forest management work</p> <p>Rights to use certain forest products with controls on timber harvesting</p>	<p>Collective management of forests involving devolution of rights to use, manage and regulate</p> <p>Established through legal framework</p> <p>Enduring rights in perpetuity</p> <p>Autonomy</p> <p>Devolution of rights based on approval of a forest management or operational plan</p> <p>Specified rights to sell timber commercially</p>	<p>Full title to customary lands including forest areas</p> <p>All responsibility to use and manage lies with community</p>
<p>Large-scale afforestation projects</p> <p>Community protected-area management</p>	<p>Joint forest management</p> <p>Community forestry</p>	<p>Community forestry</p> <p>Local community forestry concessions</p>	<p>Native or peasant community</p>
<p>Sri Lanka</p> <p>Cambodia</p>	<p>India</p> <p>Thailand</p>	<p>Nepal</p> <p>Democratic Republic of Congo</p>	<p>Peru</p>

**Figure 21.** Spectrum of devolution level in community-based forest regime.



their lives in village clusters come together into an administrative ‘village’ defined by the government as a unit. The details are crucial for understanding how gender dynamics work within varied types of community-based forestry regimes.

Women’s dependencies on a multitude of forest resources have largely been invisible in the formal world of forest management. Initially, concern about women’s involvement in local forests began in the 1980s as a result of fuelwood shortages that led to a growing interest in how women and men use forest resources differently (Hoskins 2016). Today, even though there are some generalizable portrayals of the typical interest women and men have in forests (see Sunderland et al. 2014), it is imperative to understand the specific types of gendered division or overlap in responsibilities that are at work (see Larson et al. 2016b). For example, tree tenure is very important for women because they seek to have control over those species that they need for household food, fodder, fuel or for income generation (Fortmann 1985; Bruce 1989; Rocheleau and Edmunds 1997). Careful understanding will make clear what kind of knowledge and perspectives are brought to the table when greater numbers of women formally participate in tenure governance institutions. In this way, their foundational contribution to forest management becomes part of authoritative decision-making and benefit sharing (individual or collective) for both women and men in the community.

It is clear that where there is a functional governance structure and well-crafted management regulations, devolution can produce benefit streams for both women and men in the community, as well as improve the forest condition. Much has been achieved through direct management by those who have strong rights to the forests in their locality (Gilmour 2016). That said, terms such as ‘community’, ‘collective’ or ‘communal’ are also opaque in that the issue of who they include; which women and men hold authority and decision-making control needs to be properly understood to promote

gendered fairness and inclusiveness. Establishing community-based forest governance is not enough; democratic innovations in the governance processes and the principles that guide rule development and implementation are essential (Smith 2019). This requires commitment to the process of designing forest tenure regimes in ways that bring everyone together on the path to sustainable development. That said, many among communities will see the introduction of new principles such as gender equality as an external imposition infringing upon local sovereignty. Therefore, sensitive experimentation is worthwhile: simply emulating what another community has done will leave the important issues neglected. All in all, only talking in terms of ‘community’ rights is not adequate from a gendered perspective.

Another important dimension of community-based forestry to consider is the scale at which it takes place. Not all of it happens at the village scale. Terms such as ‘collaborative forestry’ (used in Nepal) refer to larger forested areas involving multiple government administrative units (in which there may be hundreds of villages) where the government and local communities work together to manage forests for high-value timber production as well as subsistence, fuel and fodder needs. The manageability of tenure governance is also affected where the geographical size is larger and therefore the numerous disparate communities do not engage in regular face-to-face interactions, and build trust among themselves.

All community-based forestry regimes go through phases of change: adjusting their regime to respond to new challenges and emerging lessons, both internal and externally driven (see Farjam et al. 2020). At some stage in this journey comes a broad-based recognition that gender equality is essential for all involved. It then becomes useful to determine what the overall general condition of forest governance is in terms of gender fairness. Figure 22 sets out the different stages in the level of gender responsiveness of community-based

forest governance starting from ‘minimal’ level through ‘improved’ to ‘good’ level. While this is a simplified portrayal, it is a first step to encapsulate the type of challenges that will be faced.

In most places, however, mobilizing participatory approaches in community-based forests has not automatically meant that gender equality has been accepted. Typically, gender concerns, be they in terms of gender sensitization or the more transformative gender-responsive goals, have not received much attention besides some lip service (Sun et al. 2012). Not only are women’s rights to access forest products not formally recognized in the way men’s rights are, but women do not have much say in forest governance. If there was greater acknowledgement of research that underscores the importance of secure tenure rights, social equity and cohesion, and democratic and equitable governance to successful community forestry, more action on gender equity would be initiated<sup>13</sup> (see Baynes et al. 2015; also Coleman and Mwangi 2013).

Even in countries, such as Uganda, that have recognized the importance of gender concerns in forests since the early 1990s, women have largely been kept out of decision-making arenas (Banana et al. 2013). That said, the Ugandan picture is not completely bleak: for example, more than 50% women are actively participating in forest decision making in Lamwo (with registered communal land associations). This contrasts to Masindi (with customary lands that overlap with state forests under restricted access) where women’s participation is very low (Monterroso and Larson 2019). In Latin America, little attention has been given to gender issues in the now significant literature on community-based forestry (Schmink and García 2015). Partly, this is because the need to obtain legal territorial recognition for indigenous people or community rights

has been at the forefront of the political agenda (the ‘community trumps gender’ phenomenon) and, partly, this is due to the focus on large-scale commercial operations in community forestry.

Where there have been relatively substantive achievements in moving toward gender equality within locally managed forests, it has been the result of support by federations, NGOs (community forestry, gender or development related) or civil society groups. For example, in Nepal, it was FECOFUN, the national federation for community forestry, who set the policy platform in place in the mid-1990s by making 50% women membership in executive committees mandatory, as well as ensuring rotating office-bearer positions among women and men (see *Her His Forest Tenure Insight No. 6*) (Chapagain 2012; Giri 2012).

When promoting gender equality in community-based forests, all too often the focus tends to be on changing formal rules in bylaws or local conventions. Clearly, changing the formal rules through the forest governance institution is of central importance. In practice, however, because women’s rights of access, use and management are often based on socially accepted norms or are informally negotiated (involving a mix of community-level, intra-women-level, and household-level engagement), the reality on the ground may not match formal rules or management plans. Therefore, in analyzing the reality of gender and forest tenure in community-based forestry, much attention has to be given to these informal practices that make up ‘institutional bricolage’ (see Friman 2020) and how they can be moved toward gender fairness. For example, women often have to pay the forest guards to be able to enter a forest to collect firewood and fodder, or they have to negotiate with men for the right to collect *sal* (*Shorea robusta*) leaves (for making an NTFP product),

---

<sup>13</sup> In one study, five interconnected success factors for community forestry were identified (Baynes et al. 2015). This was based on the experience in Mexico, Nepal and the Philippines primarily but also considered other country experiences in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The five success factors are: secure property (tree and land) rights; reduction of socioeconomic differences and gender-based inequality in order to reduce conflict and improve cohesion; intra-community forestry group governance forms which are democratic and equitable in terms of leadership, voting and benefit sharing; government support to community-based forestry (such as enabling legislation or positive incentives) and material benefits to community members (such as income from NTFP sales, employment or payment for environmental services).





while men retain rights to its timber. Additionally, women may play a stronger role in decisions over forest and land use in the household than they do in forest governance bodies (see for example, Larson et al. 2016b)<sup>14</sup>. Beyond the formal realm of a forest governance body, identifying other decision-making arenas that will influence forest use and management patterns is essential. Specifically when it comes to conflict or war zones, women and men are at the mercy of the leader of the territory or area, and donor or aid agencies are rarely able to provide support to protect tenure rights needed for basic subsistence. Understanding what happens to tenure rights in such areas is vital for providing humanitarian relief and supportive services.

In reality, many women among IPLCs perceive their forest rights to be insecure for a host of reasons. Where forest tenure insecurities of different kinds exist, dispute is highly likely (see Oyerinde 2019 for a discussion of collective violence and common land in Africa). Tenure insecurity is not simply about the absence of clear policy or legal frameworks in support of forest tenure arrangements (Doss and Meinzen-Dick 2020). Rather, a feeling of ‘secure enough’ tenure is an aggregate perception among women and men that is based on a mix of factors such as community acceptance of gender norms, broad-based awareness of gender-equal tenure rights or how trustworthy the government is in implementing policies and laws (Figure 23). Sometimes one event creates a cascading effect of insecurity, for example, when community-based forest tenure is eroded through individualization and sales of land sanctioned by the forest governance body leading to marginalization of some community members.

Forest tenure systems are not static and, when they change, the way in which participation takes place

and how benefits are distributed also change. For example, when a REDD+ project is initiated, there are typically considerable differences in understanding of the project between affected women and men (Larson et al. 2016a), and women’s involvement is more superficial than that of men (Larson et al. 2014). A careful analysis of tenure and gender dynamics under REDD+ can play a pivotal role in improving the success of REDD+ initiatives (for customary tenure systems, see Tebtebba 2018 for example). A range of factors can result in changes in the policy orientation and specific rules governing community-based forests including: agricultural expansion, individualization of forest lands, commercialization and external investment, transportation infrastructure, demographic pressures, elite capture, new legal and governance frameworks, and resource-based conflicts (Fuys et al. 2008). For example, male outmigration (see *Her His Forest Tenure Insight no. 8* below) in rural areas could alter women’s ability to participate, for good or bad, in forest tenure institutions. Similarly, as more women hold influential positions in the local or national government, there is growing interest in how this will create a positive knock-on effect in further strengthening the gender equality agenda in forest tenure.

Going forward, there is a need to go beyond simplistic gender analyses so that better insight into the causes and effects of gendered social norms and practices can inform strategic thinking (Asher and Varley 2018). There is no such thing as overall improvements in gender equality: how some women will benefit and other women will get further left out needs vigilant attention. As much as gender-disaggregated data are obviously needed, their role is not simply to report on relative imbalances but rather mobilize further gender acceleration through a richer picture of social dynamics and power relations (Asher and Varley 2018).

---

<sup>14</sup> Some of the earlier and more recent work on gender and rural household negotiations can be useful for understanding decision making and empowerment for community-based forestry. See, for example, Agarwal (1997), Locke and Okali (2010) and Seebens (2011).



**Figure 23.** Factors affecting perception of 'secure enough' forest tenure for gender equality.

Source: Adapted from: Caron et al. (2014); NRC and IFRC (2014); Doss and Meinzen-Dick (2020); Prindex (2019, 2020); Scalise and Giovarelli (2020).



### FURTHER READING

[FAO and RECOFTC] Food and Agriculture Organization and The Center for People and Forests. 2016.

*Mainstreaming Gender into Forestry Interventions in Asia and the Pacific. A Training Manual.* Rome and Bangkok: FAO and RECOFTC.

Hecht SB, Yang AL, Sijapati Basnett B, Padoch C and Peluso NL. 2015. *People in motion, forests in transition: Trends in migration, urbanization and remittances and their effects on tropical forests.* Occasional Paper no. 42. Bogor, Indonesia: CIFOR.

[RECOFTC] The Center for People and Forests. 2016. *Ensuring Women's Participation in Forest Decision-Making. Advancing Sustainable Development Goal 5 on Gender Equality through Community Forestry in the Asia-Pacific.* Annual Report 2015-2016. Bangkok: RECOFTC.



# Male outmigration, gender fairness, and community forestry in Nepal

## QUESTION FOR REFLECTION


### **Does male outmigration open up opportunities for greater women's participation in community forestry governance?**

It is becoming increasingly clear that male outmigration is affecting forest tenure governance (see Hecht et al. 2015; Juniwaty et al. 2019). The question is: in what way? What are the implications for women and men's role in local forest governance? One country in which we can look at these dynamics is Nepal which is the most remittance-dependent country in the world. Outmigration started here in the early 2000s to global destinations in Asia, the Middle East and further afield. We know that reforestation has increased over this period but not to what extent has this been the result of community forestry institutions, or more so due to outmigration (Oldekop et al. 2018). Remittances have led to declining forest dependencies as households can afford to purchase non-forest fuel sources, fodder and construction materials, but in what way has this opened up opportunities for women to become more active and influential in community forestry institutions?

The emerging picture is quite mixed. Certainly, women have increasingly been attending general assemblies<sup>15</sup> and learning about the process of forest governance (Giri and Darnhofer 2010a; see also RECOFTC 2018c). Based on research in Ramechhap district with more than 50% male outmigration in CFUGs, the effect is complicated depending on the women's household context. Where there is no man in the household, or where the woman is in a nuclear household, women are more likely to participate (Giri and Darnhofer 2010b, see also Lama et al. 2017). Yet, more recent research in CFUGs with high and low migration rates in three districts (representing mountainous, middle hills and lowland/Terai ecozones) shows that there was little change in terms of CFUG executive committee membership (Lama et al. 2017). Quite unexpectedly, there was greater participation by women in low migration CFUGs (Lama et al. 2017). What this indicates is that women do not simply move into positions vacated by men: rather, there are various gendered dynamics set into play by male outmigration, such as time poverty, older and elite men dominating executive committees and enduring gender norms.

If we go one step further and take a comparative look through the lens of gender intersectionality, an even more complex picture emerges based on ethnicity and caste conditions (Sijapati Basnett 2016). In Bhatpole village in Kavrepalanchowk district, a largely Tamang area (with primarily gender egalitarian cultural practices), community forestry has been a women-led initiative from the outset. Nine of the 11 CFUG executive committee members were women. The list of users in the CFUG operational plan mostly included women.

<sup>15</sup> General assemblies and executive committees are the two main decision-making bodies for CFUGs.

The background of the entire page is a dense, repeating pattern of black line drawings of various plants and leaves on a teal background. The plants include ferns, small round berries on stems, and various types of leaves. In the bottom right corner, there is a white silhouette of a person in a dynamic pose, possibly dancing or performing a traditional movement, which overlaps with the botanical pattern.

In contrast, in Gharmi village of Kaski district with high rates of male outmigration among the low caste Bishwa-Karmas (Dalits), their push to start a community forest as a caste-based struggle in an area that also included high caste Poudyals and Khatri-Chhetris ended up excluding women from forestry decision making. Here, the low caste communities, in emulating the high caste gender norms on women's honor and division of labor, did not extend the ideas of 'equality', 'rights' or 'citizenship' to women.

## LESSONS

Male outmigration does not generically open up opportunities for greater leadership and participation by women: the research indicates the importance of understanding the various axes of existing social dynamics.



**Men** *generally recognize the great role women play in improving the families' living standards, but it is important for them to also agree that for the women to continue to play that role and even improve in that role, they need security to lands and forests.*

---

**Cécile Ndjebet**

Coordinator, African Women's Network for the Community Management of Forests (REFACOF) (Mwangi and Evans 2018, 3).



## 3.2

---

# CRAFTING GENDER-RESPONSIVE TENURE GOVERNANCE IN COMMUNITY-BASED FORESTRY

---

Achieving the responsible governance of forest tenure within community-based forests involves interventions in a number of action arenas. This includes how national laws and policies are implemented, how members of governance institutions are selected, how local forest-related policy goals are identified and how specific rules on access, use, management, monitoring and sanctions, and conflict resolution methods attend to gender-differentiated needs. Before launching into the specifics, we review some broad-based principles for how to strategically engage in improving community-based forest tenure for gender equality (Figure 24, see also Giovarelli et al. 2016).



# 1

## MAINTAINING A COMMUNITY-WIDE FOCUS

Community-wide engagement is essential for sustainable, wide-spread progress. Successful processes and interventions aiming for sustainable and wide-spread change empower women and strengthen their governance rights as part of an ongoing and collaborative process involving the entire community.

Engage community leaders: Successful projects often receive the support of male and female community leaders.

Provide culturally appropriate support: Successful activities implemented by organizations external to communities are designed alongside community members, resonate with communities' cultural norms and prioritize communities' agency.

Recognize that social change takes time: Successful activities allow enough time to transform patriarchal attitudes toward gender roles and for normative changes to manifest in favor of women's land governance rights.

# 2

## USING INFORMATION AND LEARNING TO FURTHER EMPOWER WOMEN AND THEIR COMMUNITIES

# 3

## ESTABLISHING STRATEGIC NETWORKS AND ALLIANCES AT MULTIPLE LEVELS

**Figure 24.** How to support indigenous and rural women's forestland tenure governance rights.  
Source: RRI (2019).

Highlight the valuable contributions that women already make to their communities: Render visible the positive impact of women's work on the management and conservation of community lands.

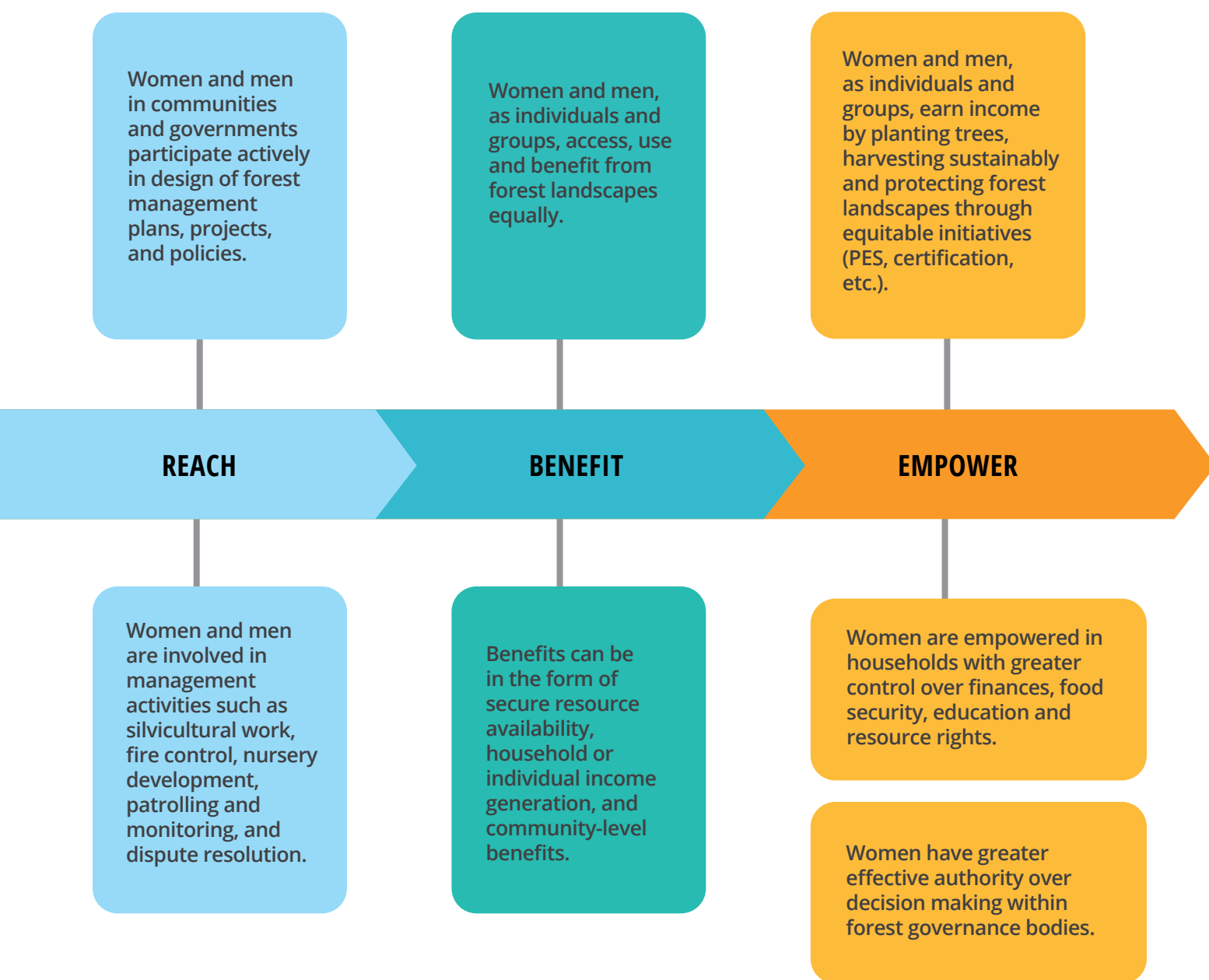
Demonstrate the community-wide advantages of securing women's governance rights: Successful initiatives empowering women also benefit – and are presented as benefiting – the entire community.

Use information to empower women as community leaders and decision makers: Successful activities use the sharing of information with women as the foundation of women's leadership and decision-making capacity.

Establish meeting spaces, activities, networks or institutions that are exclusively for women: Successful initiatives often facilitate women-only networks, institutions, activities, meeting spaces or agreements.

Create self-sustaining, multilevel networks of women leaders: Successful activities create networks of women leaders who engage in mentoring and information sharing to maximize results.

Build and leverage strategic relationships with a variety of stakeholders outside of communities: Successful initiatives effectively communicate and build relationships with a wide variety of external actors to garner their support.



**Figure 25.** Gender-responsive outcome pathways.

Source: Adapted from Johnson et al. (2018).



It is critical to think about pathways of change for women and men. Although much work has been done on bringing more women to the decision-making table so that they can effect change, it is imperative to consider the types of changes that are being sought. Figure 25 sets out the change pathways whereby women and men who participate actively in forest management activities receive benefits, and thereby become empowered at the household or community level. These three stages are called *Reach*, *Benefit* and *Empower*. Research indicates that there are no clear differences in outcomes based solely on whether the forest tenure regimes designated forest lands for community use or granted communities full ownership (Larson et al. 2019a). Rather, achieving goals such as food security or livelihood improvements requires examining how particular interventions work in specific types of change pathways to create transformations.

Identifying change pathways involves looking carefully at the type of women's empowerment being sought. There are many dimensions to women's empowerment such as production, community-level decision making, authority over household decisions, individual and family income, community-based leadership, and reducing time and labor burdens (Figure 26).





**Figure 26.** Eight key domains of women's empowerment in community-based forestry.

Before getting into the details of change pathways and particular interventions, the core issue of power dynamics in creating gender-transformative change needs to be confronted. Power dynamics at the household, community and village level play a central role in determining how day-to-day practices in the forests take place, how forest resources are used, how decisions over forest products are taken within households, and how governance takes place. Every attempt to create positive transformations in the journey toward gender equality will very likely be resisted by those who are vested in the status quo. Understanding what is at work requires objectively looking at gender intersectionality: the various axes of structural discrimination at work in any household or community's practices. This involves examining prevailing social norms, hierarchical relationships, how decision making typically is carried out, and what types of conflicts tend to be common. Additionally, what are the relationships and networks through which the powerful and less powerful exert their influence and cultivate benefits for themselves or their families? Through this, creative and inspiring approaches that build alliances among women, between men and women, and nurtures women and male champions can create positive forces for gradually bringing everyone on board. Sensitive and carefully crafted communication that brings everyone to the table to identify realistic goals and approaches is critical. Building upon what already exists is ideal rather than

creating new initiatives which require spending a lot of time and money on groundwork preparation. However it is carried out, a hopeful approach aligned with strategic thinking about how to create change through equalizing assets and decision-making authority between women and men is critical.

An adaptive collaborative management (ACM) approach can help navigate the multiple challenges in the face of change. ACM involves an iterative style that basically follows the *Analyze*, *Strategize* and *Realize* set of steps focusing on reflection and learning (Mukasa et al. 2016; Evans et al. 2014, 2017). ACM is a learning journey in which facilitators work with communities along these steps.

Some careful thinking about intervention design can produce multiple rewards (Figure 27). This table is divided into two major sections: one is related to interventions focused on the forest governance institution or body, and the second is related to more generalized interventions within the broader community itself. Given the multiple action arenas involved, strategic preparation about what needs priority attention and how sequencing of interventions can take place is called for. What we know is that intensive engagement at the community level with good room for sequenced discussions and iterative work produces remarkably better results than a one-time thorough approach.

# 1 RESPONSIBLE GOVERNANCE OF FOREST TENURE

## CREATING RESPONSIBLE LOCAL GOVERNANCE OF FOREST TENURE

### ENABLING POLICIES AND LAW

**D**oes the Constitution, national or subnational policies and laws prohibit discrimination based on sex? Do they provide for equal rights between women and men? Are there any provisions in the forest law mandating the proportion of members of local forest governance executive committees be women? Are there any stipulations regarding gender-equal benefit sharing?

Local forest governance bodies can provide empirical evidence and support action-oriented research on how gender equality in forest tenure creates an accelerator effect for various development goals. This can support policy development and legal reform.

Local forest governance bodies can create and join alliances mobilizing to reform forest tenure policies and law on issues such as proportional representation in forest governance bodies, benefit sharing among women and men, and gender-equal FPIC.

### GENDER-EQUAL REPRESENTATION ON FOREST GOVERNANCE BODY

**A**re all women and men in the community able to become members of the community-based forest governance body? Is there a requirement that 30 to 50% of executive committee members be women? Are there stipulations that office-bearer positions rotate among women and men? Do women also have authority to manage community-based forestry funds?

Carry out awareness raising and bylaw amendment activities so that the local forest governance body can mandate how gender-equal representation (in its multiple forms) can be achieved.

### GENERAL MEMBERSHIP IN COMMUNITY-BASED FORESTRY REGIME

**I**s there a general assembly in which all members of the community-based forest tenure regime participate? If so, can all women and men adult members of households become participants? Are time and place of meetings suitable to women and men, near and distant?

The bylaws can be amended to require all women and men members of households be eligible to join the community-based forestry regime.

Raise discussions at the assembly about where and when meetings are suitable to both women and men coming from near and far; arrange seating at the meeting so that both women and men can actively participate.

## FOREST GOVERNANCE DECISION-MAKING

**What** is the process of decision making? Are a set of bylaws or rules in place that include the full bundle of tenure rights over high and low value forest resources? Are they robust and durable? Do they recognize the different types of rights women and men need to sustainably manage forest resources, build livelihoods and run enterprises? How are bylaws updated? Are most people in the community involved in making decisions about bylaw changes?

Train women on relevant policies and law so they are able to participate knowledgeably in executive committee meetings.

Train women on how executive committees and general assemblies are run with a focus on how to introduce and achieve changes supporting gender equality.

Provide women with skills to effectively participate in decision making by training them in public speaking and debating to achieve the goals being sought and build confidence.

Ensure that all women and men understand the importance of organizing meetings that consider time commitments, mobility requirements, and cultural norms so that women can comfortably participate.

## FOREST GOVERNANCE POLICY GOALS

**What** are the policy goals of the forest governance body? Do these goals recognize the multifunctional uses of the forested area? How women and men use different resources and zones of the forest? How are the goals of forest management related to climate change, growing markets, and changing national development goals?

Support a step-wise series of workshops on identifying policy goals through the input of all key stakeholders within a community-based forestry regime; draw upon a facilitator who is gender sensitive.

## DISCRIMINATION, POVERTY AND WELL-BEING

**Has** there been any initiative by forest governance body to understand the patterns of discrimination, poverty and well-being in the community?

Train leaders and users of the community-managed forestry regime about discrimination, poverty and well-being to understand the ways in which forests are used and benefits are shared recognizing the importance of social equity to effective forest management.

**Figure 27.** Designing interventions for gender-responsive change in the responsible local governance of forest tenure.

Source: Adapted from Ostrom (1990); Fuys et al. (2008); Caron et al. (2014); FAO (2016a); Gilmour (2016); Mayers et al. (2016).



# RECOGNITION AND RECORDING

## COMMUNITY-BASED FOREST BOUNDARIES

**A**re the geographical boundaries of the community-based forestry regime clearly defined? Were these boundaries mapped with the involvement of women and men in the community? Does it involve a village or cluster of villages or a group of households who are dependent on a particular forested area? Is this map (paper-based or digitized) housed with the community-based forestry regime office, or with the local government? Are there any audio-visual resources associated with the map that reflect forested areas (or zones) typically used in different ways by women and men?

Carry out participatory mapping (working with an NGO) involving women and men equally as contributors to knowledge for initial consultation, map preparation, as mappers and as data analysts.

Work to store the map and audio-visual data in a location that is accessible to all in a low-cost way.

## RECORDING RIGHTS

**A**re the bylaws (with associated maps and forest management plans) as well as list of members of the community-based forestry regime recorded at the local or digital tenure registry? Is it accessible to all in a low-cost way?

Work with the local government on recording the tenure rights in a gender-differentiated way.

Ensure that the records are accessible to all in a low-cost way and can be readily updated.

## DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONAL RULES

### FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN

**A**re women and men both involved in preparing a forest management plan? Is there a good agreed understanding about how women's and men's uses and management methods of the forests take place (see Ombogoh and Mwangi 2019)? Are socioeconomic surveys at the household level needed to get an accurate picture of the situation?

Document women's and men's knowledge about different forest areas and trees and their resources, as well as their understanding of climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Determine whether there is a match between local ecological conditions and the various rules on use and management by women and men?

Involve women in silvicultural management and development of forest operational plans.

Actively engage women in project-specific planning such as for REDD+ or PES or adaptation from the beginning (see FAO 2018b).

### FOREST TENURE RULES

**B**ased on the forest management plan, a set of rules in the bylaws will need to be established on the bundle of tenure rights that includes: access, use, management, monitoring, dispute resolution, alienation and so on. Do the various tenure rules match the ecological and socioeconomic conditions? Are the rules clear in terms of when, where, level of harvesting, and technology that can be used to carry out sustainable use and management?

Engage in a multi-step process whereby the existing rules affecting women and men are "shouted out": these are then reviewed two or three times before a new set are included in the bylaws; creating awareness of the VGGT principles in the process will be important.

### BENEFIT SHARING

**H**ow are the multiple benefits provided by different resources from the forests including water conservation shared among the women and men in the community of different social status and geographical location? Are these benefits accruing to individuals, households or at the collective level of the community?

When the forest management plan is developed, a series of discussions will be needed about how benefits (some of which are in kind, and some in financial form) are to be shared among women and men considering differential needs and interests.

## MONITORING

**Who** is monitoring the condition of the forest as well as compliance with bylaw rules in different areas? How will anyone flouting the bylaws be identified? What will be the set of subsequent actions? Are women better able to apprehend women who do not comply with rules?

Provide for patrolling and monitoring by both women and men by creating gender-segregated teams with specific responsibilities.

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION MECHANISMS

**Are** there typical types of disputes that commonly occur? How are small disputes and larger conflicts addressed? Is the executive committee able to address these issues in a low-cost way? Are these sensitive to gendered needs where women are able to speak up and have their concerns heard?

Include women in any conflict resolution body (ideally who are involved in monitoring work), or provide for women-only conflict resolution bodies for women who break rules; provide training to improve technical capacity so they can effectively carry out their responsibility.

## GRADUATED SANCTIONS

**What** type of sanctions will be imposed on those who violate the bylaws? Are there a set of graduated sanctions that are related to level of seriousness and offense context?

Take an annual opportunity to reflect on the established graduated sanctions to review whether they meet the needs of women and men who have different dependencies on the forest.

## LANDSCAPE OR NATIONAL NETWORKING AND LINKAGES

**Does** the local forest governance body have any informal or formal links with other governance bodies in the landscape, or nationally with federations? Are women receiving forest landscape-related information as much as men?

Explore opportunities for women and men in the local forest governance body to develop networking links with other forest governance bodies within the landscape or nationally.

## MINIMAL RECOGNITION OF RIGHTS TO ORGANIZE

**T**o what extent does the tenure governance body have autonomy when it comes to designing, implementing and addressing new gendered needs as they arise? Is there a low or high level of government involvement in the community-based forestry regime? Are the government officials sensitive to gender concerns?

Organize meetings with local government staff (who hold authority and have decision-making power) on a range of emerging needs of women and men so that they understand the importance of autonomy for successful forest management.

## INTERACTING WITH EXTERNAL PROJECT PROPONENTS AND INVESTORS

**W**here external project proponents and investors are involved in the local area, is there a good understanding of how the FPIC principle can be implemented in a gender-equal way (FAO 2014a; Coleman 2019)? Are there principles set out in bylaws for collaborative project management, as well as contract templates for investor agreements (see FAO 2015b, 2016d)?

Provide training on the importance of gender-equal FPIC in the context of donor projects that cover such themes as community-based forestry, REDD+, and PES initiatives.

Where investors are exploring opportunities, work with an NGO to identify how best to carry out the preliminary engagement, subsequent negotiations, as well as prepare investor agreements that attend to gender equity.

# 2 CHANGE AGENTS

## CHANGING COMMUNITY PRACTICES AND DYNAMICS

### WORKING WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT

**D**o community members have trust in the government effectively implementing laws and policies, particularly those promoting gender equality? Is there good service delivery in terms of technical support for forest management, forest law enforcement, or in business incubation for enterprise development?

Build a positive working relationship with the local government in conjunction with cultivating alliances with influential NGOs/CSOs to improve government administration and service delivery on gender and forest tenure in an ongoing process.



## WORKING WITH LOCAL LEADERS

**T**o what extent do local leaders, both men and women, work to support gender equality in governance of forest tenure?

Build, support and recognize the work of male equality champions.

Cultivate alliances with influential women such as the wives of leaders and chieftains to mobilize positive changes for gender equality.

## COMMUNICATIONS

**H**ow are stories of positive change and inspiring leadership promoting gender equality shared within the community? Through particular meeting spaces or collective ritual gatherings?

Find regular opportunities to share knowledge about women and men's specific dependencies on the forest and what that means for overall development in the community.

Collect and share positive stories about changes in gender equality within the forest governance regime such as on forest management, use rules, benefit sharing or enterprise development.

## WORKING WITH WOMEN'S GROUPS

**W**hat kinds of women's groups exist in the community? Self-help groups? Savings groups? Mother's groups? In what way are they associated with the forest sector activities? Can alliances be built with them to strengthen gender equality on forest tenure?

Develop a separate women-only supportive group to help women on the forest governance body, and build links with other women's group to effect quicker change.

# EDUCATION, AWARENESS AND TRAINING

## CHANGING GENDER NORMS

**W**hat are the prevailing gender norms among the different hierarchically ranked status groups in the community? How do they affect the way in which women and men are able to access and use forests? How does it affect women's participation in governance meetings? Who are the new role models for girls and young women, and boys and young men?

Change gender norms through gradual and sustained effort in the form of numerous interventions, be it through inclusive dialogues with influential community and religious leaders; communicating targeted messages through radio and theater; rewarding public achievements, and so on; requires an approach that conveys the importance of inclusiveness and gender equality between women and men of different backgrounds.

Mentorship programs can be set up for supporting young women and men who are becoming active in forest governance and management.

## BUSINESS TRAINING AND INCUBATION

**D**oes the regulatory framework support women's entry into setting up forest-based enterprises? Any incentives on registration or taxes to support women? Do women in the community have opportunities to join training on starting a forest-based enterprise? Are they able to join study visits to other communities with profitable forest-based enterprises? Is training provided on running a business? On technologies for forest products processing? Is there a business incubation center that is attentive to gendered needs?

Identify sources of women-focused investments to incubate profitable forest-based enterprises.

Provide business skills to women seeking to start one particular type of forest-based enterprise suitable to local context.

## LEGAL AWARENESS AND EMPOWERMENT

**T**o what extent are women and men knowledgeable about forest and related laws and regulatory provisions? What do they know about their rights to remedies within these laws?

Organize small group events (for women and men separately) to increase knowledge of the law, how it is implemented in practice, and what supportive services exist.

# REDUCING OBSTACLES TO EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION

## REDUCING LABOR AND TIME BURDENS

**W**hat types of specific areas of intervention can support reductions in heavy responsibilities women hold in the household such as cooking, collecting fuel, child care, elderly care, looking after livestock and so on?

Carry out action research on what women and men believe are priority interventions for reducing their household labor burdens and time spent collecting forest resources to help set the stage for decisions on best supportive actions.

## SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (SGBV)

**W**hat are the threats of violence and coercion made to women as well as men, be they physical, emotional, psychological or sexual in nature about forest issues (Camey et al. 2020)?

Change the patterns of SGBV through a multipronged approach that addresses gender norms, patriarchal forms of power, masculinity and increasing vulnerabilities among men due to poverty and loss of livelihoods.

Prepare a "Protection against sexual harassment and abuse" policy to help motivate behavior changes.

## BANKING, CREDIT AND TECHNOLOGY

**D**oes the community generate collective funds (from say, sale of NTFPs) to support women with new technologies to reduce their heavy household workloads? In what way can women use their forest tenure rights to gain access to bank loans for starting or growing forest-related enterprises? How can such loans support entry into processing, marketing and retailing nodes of the value chain? How many women have independent bank accounts? Can they be accessed by mobile phones?

Create a community fund for women to meet their tailored needs for reducing time or labor burdens.

Provide credit or grants to women-led tree nurseries or forest-based enterprises that are linked to strengthening recognition of women's forest tenure rights.

Support women in opening independent bank accounts, ideally with mobile banking service.

## SECTION 3.2

### FURTHER READING

[FAO] Food and Agriculture Organization. 2019. *A framework to assess the extent and effectiveness of community forestry*. Working Paper no. 12. Rome: FAO.

[RRI] Rights and Resources Initiative. 2019. *Strengthening Indigenous and Rural Women's Rights to Govern Community Lands*. Washington, DC: RRI.



## WHAT DOES RESEARCH SAY: Why is women's participation in community-based forests important?

---

### QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

**How important is women's participation as members in a forest governance committee for achieving gender equality?**

From the early 2000s, the predominant theme of research on gender and community forestry governance has been on issues of women's participation (Mai et al. 2011, see also Asher and Varley 2018 for an update). Increasing women's participation in local forest governance has long been considered the cornerstone of gender-transformative change. The core idea has been that if enough women actively and effectively participate, then improvements on gender equality will inevitably ensue. Gender-equal representation would lead not just to benefits for women of different status but would result in rules that would be in the interest of all community members.

The work of Indian economist Bina Agarwal on gender and community forestry in South Asia has been influential in throwing open this discussion. In the face of the optimistic hype about improving women's participation in forest governance, her

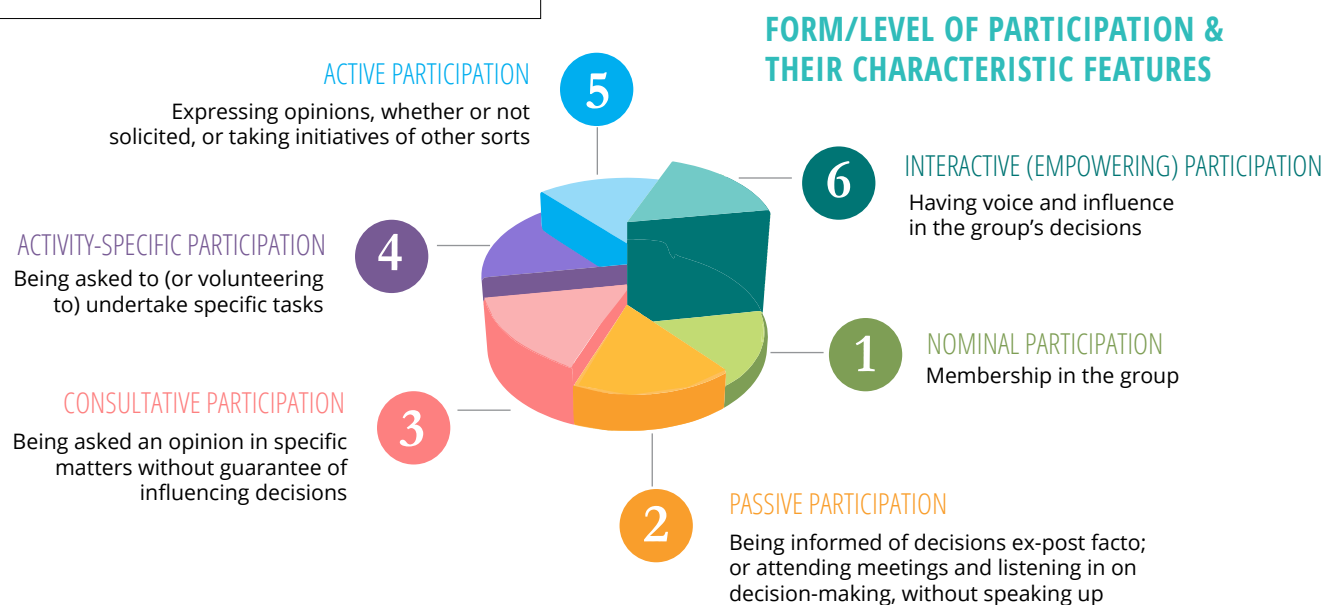
critical interpretation of what she termed 'participatory exclusions' (that is exclusions within seemingly participatory institutions) (Agarwal 2001, 1623) prompted careful consideration of how much women were really effectively participating in community forests. To clarify, she developed a typology that differentiated levels of women's participation in community forestry that is often used still today (Figure 28). This typology points to the importance of understanding how assertive and influential women can be in participating in governance bodies. It is not uncommon for women to participate in majority numbers and express their opinions vocally and still be ignored, as is seen in the case of the Lam Dong REDD+ project in Vietnam (Gurung and Setyowati 2012). At the same time, there is more to participation than simply how women's voices are expressed in decision-making forums: heavy household responsibilities mean that it is elite women who all too often are able to make time to join such meetings.

A follow-on question is about 'critical mass': what proportion of women do you need on a collective forest decision-making body to support gender-equal representation and therefore to improve forests, livelihoods and income generation? Even though research has been carried out on this subject for some 20 years now, there is still no consensus. Some studies have demonstrated that increasing women's participation up to about 30% of forest user group governance membership in South Asia has produced improvements in forest resource management and distributional equity, often through ensuring better rule compliance (Agarwal 2010, 2017). In addition, the presence of older women members on committees has contributed in positive ways. This research has also underscored that it is women with the most at stake, for example, landless women who are more committed participants in assemblies, speaking out regularly on their needs and flouting prevailing social norms. In subsequent work, it was argued that while the power of numbers and *implicitly* shared interests can help to



**Figure 28.** Typology of women's participation in community-based forest institutions.

Source: Agarwal (2001).



build the strength of women's participation, *conscious* recognition and *collective* articulation through intra-group dynamics as well as horizontal linkages with other local groups and federations can also bring about needed changes (Agarwal 2015).

That said, other research undertaken in Kenya, Uganda, Bolivia and Mexico zooms in on another facet of the issue asserting that mixed gender groups are better able to engage in forest resource enhancing behavior than women-only groups (Mwangi et al. 2011; Sun et al. 2011). In other cases, such as in Brazil, research indicates that women-only and topic-focused groups create space where women are able to build positive initiatives for change (Shanley et al. 2011; Sun et al. 2012). Additionally, global research that examined how the gender

composition of forest and fisheries management groups affects resource governance and conservation outcomes found that there is clear evidence for South Asia (India and Nepal) where women's involvement in management groups does improve governance and conservation, but in other geographical areas, there is an inadequate empirical basis for good analysis (Leisher et al. 2016). In essence, there is a clear need for more geographically diverse research to improve global-level understanding. In the end, it is about more than numbers. Rather, substantive knowledge, roles, relationships and networks that women members of forest executive committees bring to bear on their influential role are vital for effective participation (see AIPP 2013; Upadhyay et al. 2013; RECOFTC 2016).

## LESSONS

While increasing empowered participation of women in forest tenure governance institutions is clearly important, numbers alone are not the critical factor as it is the substantive influence women can exert that leads to positive change for gender fairness.



**In** our village, the men go into the forest to map, but I manage the data. Women can study that data and make conclusions.

---

**Maliwan Agkara**

Secretary of the Nam Khae mapping project in Thailand that is working to get government-recognized title to their forest land (RECOFTC 2020)



## GENDER, PARTICIPATORY MAPPING AND COMMUNITY-BASED FOREST TENURE

---

With the focus so squarely targeted at improving women's participation in forest tenure governance, it is easy to forget the other essential interventions needed to improve gender equality. Establishing the boundaries of community forests as well as resource mapping is a foundational step for clarifying and asserting forest tenure rights. While participatory mapping has grown in leaps and bounds over the last 30 years, the multiple ways in which women can engage in creating and analyzing maps is now becoming prominent (IFAD 2009; Tebtebba 2013). Such maps can be used to geospatially document tenure relations, such as for creating a citizen's cadaster, delineating customary or ancestral lands, determining the boundaries of community forests, identifying resource-use areas and resolving conflicts. They can also be used for other related needs such as livelihood strategies, participatory land-use planning, or documenting place-based oral histories and mythologies (see, for example, Etongo and Glover 2012). Mapping can be required in the claims process, or it may be initiated by the community to legitimize its *de facto* tenure rights. Women can contribute to consultations before mapping occurs, identify and validate boundaries and resource zones, but they can also work as mappers, community surveyors and analysts. The process of visibilization creates new understanding and representation of gendered knowledge. In this way, gendered participatory mapping becomes a pivotal part of the clarification, assertion, recording and analysis of forest tenure rights.

In recent years, the use of mobile technologies has not only helped to lower costs, but also has facilitated more inclusive participation from various community members who hold expert knowledge (see, for e.g., USAID n.d.), while capturing gendered audio-visual data. Thinking carefully about how to include women's and

men's diverse perspectives in using mobile technologies produces a map that all can agree to. Participatory mapping guides may suggest carrying out the mapping work separately for women and men to allow women to speak freely, and to find a time and place that respects their other work commitments. Yet, there are few reports of how the mapping was actually carried out in practice and with what gendered effect on local leadership, forest management and governance, or forest-based enterprise start-up. There are some positive developments afoot with examples of participatory mapping guides that are set out in gender-sensitive ways (see for example Vasundhara 2016; Rainbow Environment Consult 2018; Rainforest Foundation UK 2019a; USAID LTS Team 2019). Going forward, this is an important area for developing gender-responsive and locally relevant tools and protocols, in either written or audio-visual formats. Mapping is certainly not a one-time-use tool: it can be very valuable for tracking change, assessing the impacts of development projects, or adaptively building land-use planning systems. The snowball effect of mapping in consolidating rights assertion will take time to understand.

---

### SECTION 3.3

#### FURTHER READING

Boissière M, Duchelle AE, Atmadja S and Simonet G. 2018. *Technical Guidelines for Participatory Village Mapping Exercise*. Bogor, Indonesia: CIFOR.

Rainbow Environment Consult. 2018. *Synthetic and Practical Guide of the Unified Methodology of Participatory Mapping in Cameroon*. Yaoundé, Cameroon: Rainbow Environment Consult.

# Women's role in participatory mapping in Latin American countries

---

## QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

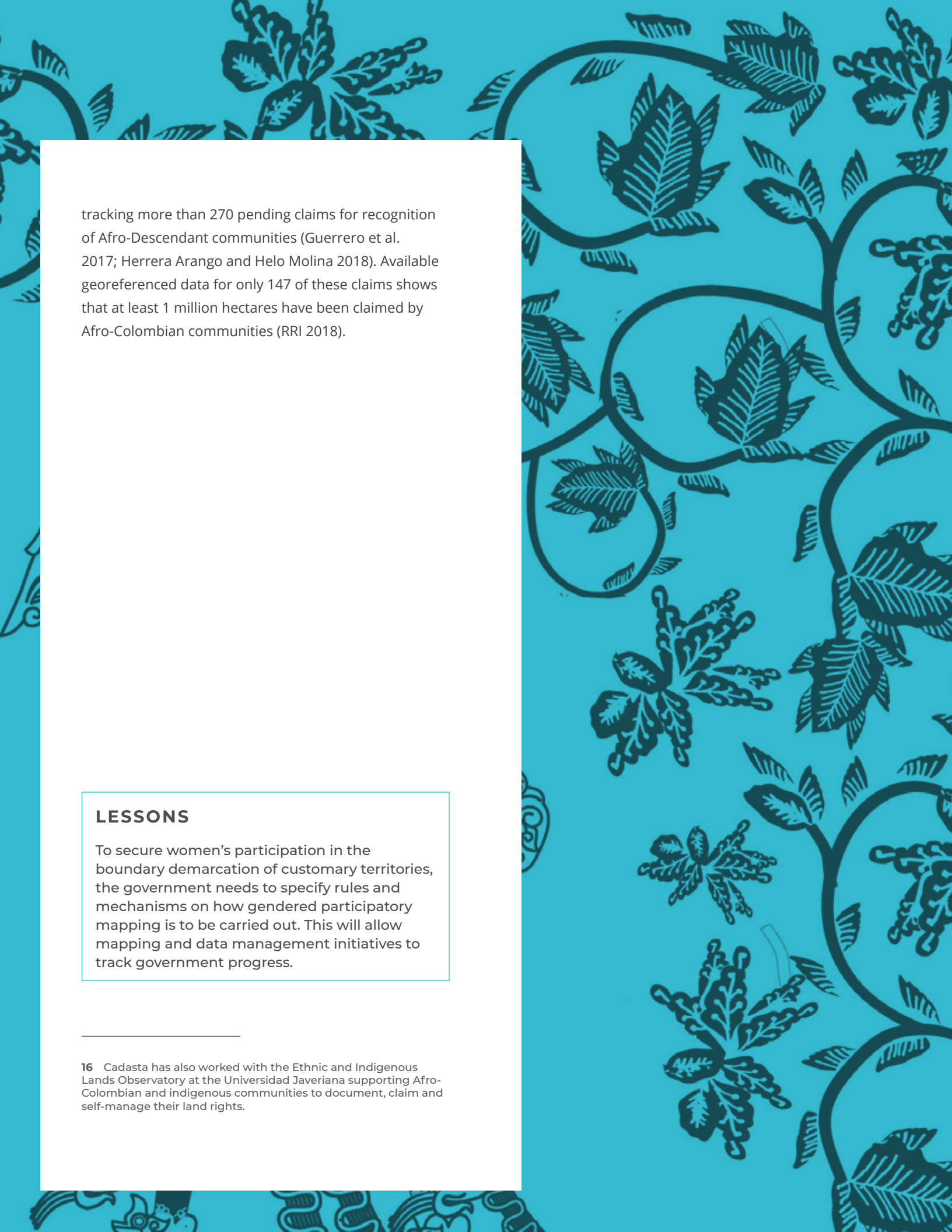
### **Why have women been left out of participatory mapping for boundary demarcation of customary lands in many Latin American countries?**

In Latin America, 33% of forests are managed under some type of collective tenure regime owned by communities, most of which are held by indigenous peoples (such as *resguardos* – indigenous reserves) (RRI 2018). Despite this substantial progress, formalization of claims over lands is still slow in many countries, and little is known about how these reform processes involve and benefit women. While existing procedures for formalizing rights are long, complex and costly for both boundary demarcation and mapping of key natural resources (Monterroso et al. 2017), it has become increasingly clear that incorporating women in demarcation procedures is essential for avoiding the risks of perpetuating social differentiation of vulnerable groups. Moreover, it is important because rural and indigenous women and men have different forms of knowledge about land and natural resources (Cruz-Burga et al. 2019; Duran et al. 2018). Because there are

seldom legal provisions regarding the demarcation procedure, most communities rely on their own self-organizing capacities (Notess et al. 2018). At this point, women are typically left out (Monterroso et al. 2019b).

Consequently, women's organizations have mobilized in countries such as Peru and Colombia to become more active not only in the formalization processes but also in policy discussions relevant to their territories (Bolaños 2017). For instance, in Peru, the National Organization of Andean and Amazonian Indigenous Women (*Organización Nacional de Mujeres Indígenas*, ONAMIAP) has asserted the need to review formalization procedures that currently only require involvement of the household head arguing that both women and men should be included (ONAMIAP and RRI 2017).

Clear mechanisms need to be established for engaging women during mapping and other steps for titling (Larson et al. 2019b; Monterroso et al. 2019b). There are other initiatives afoot that provide technical support for gender-responsive participatory mapping work. For example, Cadasta (an organization that provides technical tools and services on documentation of land and resource rights) has worked with the Aso Manos Negra, the Association for the Defense of the Environment and Black Culture (a women-run organization in Colombia formed in 1996) to map and document community lands among Afro-Colombians in the Pacific region (Cadasta n.d.).<sup>16</sup> Cadasta developed a customized data collection system and provided in-person training so that Aso could collect data on women's economic activities and land use, track the formalization process for community lands and survey women's community associations. This work has been indispensable for



tracking more than 270 pending claims for recognition of Afro-Descendant communities (Guerrero et al. 2017; Herrera Arango and Helo Molina 2018). Available georeferenced data for only 147 of these claims shows that at least 1 million hectares have been claimed by Afro-Colombian communities (RRI 2018).

## LESSONS

To secure women's participation in the boundary demarcation of customary territories, the government needs to specify rules and mechanisms on how gendered participatory mapping is to be carried out. This will allow mapping and data management initiatives to track government progress.

---

<sup>16</sup> Cadasta has also worked with the Ethnic and Indigenous Lands Observatory at the Universidad Javeriana supporting Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities to document, claim and self-manage their land rights.



**Thanks** *to the development of financing mechanisms, community forest enterprises have been able to modernize their [production] processes. By modernizing the sawmills and providing technical assistance for women's training, women now can participate in the process [by] working at the sawmills. This has been very good. The mechanization of the process, and the economic benefits [derived], have led to women taking part in...jobs that used to be exclusively for men.*

---

**Berenice Hernandez Toro**

Director of Financing, CONAFOR and Forest Investment Program Focal Point for Mexico (Kuriakose 2018)



## WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS LEVERAGE COMMUNITY-BASED FOREST TENURE RIGHTS

---

Ensuring that women and men have equally recognized rights to forests is not simply about ensuring that subsistence livelihoods and food security needs are met. These rights are also a powerful lever for jumpstarting entrepreneurial aspirations and establishing social impact enterprises. It is an important dimension of the realizability of tenure rights. Yet, such commercially relevant tenure rights are rarely part of the bundle of devolved tenure rights recognized by the government to IPLCs. Therefore, the details of the bundle of rights (as well as related regulatory frameworks) need to be crafted in such a way that both women and men have the appropriate set of rights to launch entrepreneurial

businesses. Where the forest tenure transition has taken hold and where tenure rights to forests under the government's jurisdictional control are transferred to communities, firms or individuals, substantial growth in community forest enterprises has been the norm (Molnar et al. 2007; see also Greijmans et al. 2014)). Small-scale or locally owned forestry is a very large sector that can become a force for changing the face of rural development given the right set of catalytic interventions for women and men (Mayers et al. 2016). Yet, little is known about gender-equal opportunities because of limited studies and gender-disaggregated data on forest-based enterprises (Ingram et al. 2016; FAO 2018a).



Studies show that there are major obstacles to women being able to benefit at higher nodes of forestry product value chains (see Ingram et al. 2014). Poorer women harvest medicinal plants or other NTFPs, become employees raising medicinal or aromatic plant seedlings or carry out processing with very simple labor-intensive technology. It is much less common to find women involved through employment in a forest-based enterprise; in processing, trading and marketing; as well as engaging in service provision.

In India, for example, the small-scale forest enterprise (SSFE) sector provides employment to millions of poor people who collect, process and sell forest products (Saigal and Bose 2003). Some 50% of SSFE employees are the landless or women. Even though the extra cash improves their income security, there are significant policy bottlenecks to obtaining better returns. Take the case of the *tendu* (or *kendu*) leaf used to roll *beedis* (a type of cigarette), where many of the pickers and rollers are women and children. There are about 750,000 *tendu* leaf pickers, mostly in central India. Following the passage of the 1996 Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act) in 1996 and the 2006 FRA, Indian states are obliged to hand over tenure rights to *tendu* leaf and other NTFPs to forest dwellers (Lele et al. 2015). In Madhya Pradesh (the biggest producer of *tendu* leaf), the transfer has started to benefit leaf pluckers in limited ways. In Orissa, where women in various forest protection committees took to the streets in the state capital in 2005 to get government leaf collection centers set up in nearby locations (with limited success) (Singh 2007), the state government has retained its monopoly over *tendu* and other NTFPs violating the FRA provisions (Pani 2018). The implication is that women, as major leaf pickers, will not be able to garner the benefits they are due by federal law.

Greater obstacles need to be confronted at higher levels of the value chain. One problem can be the gender stereotypes associated with certain forest-based

enterprises. Take the case of the numerous timber-based community forest enterprises that are operated and managed predominantly by men such as in Mexico (Antinori and Bray 2005). Although the charcoal sector, which provides income to millions of people, is another that is portrayed as dominated by men, but in fact, women are increasingly entering the value chain. New studies now reveal that women are actually involved across the entire value chain but with women having a stronger presence in retail nodes of the chain, with men involved in production and transportation (Ihalainen et al. 2020; see also Delagneau and Ahoussi 2019; Gonzalez 2020). The extent to which women take up responsibilities further up a value chain as a trader or wholesaler (rather than collector or processor) varies across regions (Ingram et al. 2016; Gumicio et al. 2018). Increasingly, guides are available on how to understand the gender-differentiated characteristics of forest value chains (see Stein and Barron 2017; FAO 2018a), and particularly to support women as traders (Awono et al. 2010; Rousseau et al. 2015).

Tenure rights play a role in gender-equal value chain dynamics. One of the main stumbling blocks in women engaging in higher-value activities is the lack of recognized tenure rights to trees and forests. Where women are involved in smaller commercial activities for local markets, such as woodcutting and marketing, tree tenure is among the factors affecting typically poor women's ability to profit from the harvesting (Friman 2020). Women are unable to leverage their informal tenure rights as collateral to obtain a loan for enterprise development, be it for production, processing, marketing or retailing. In this context, understanding how women in community-based forests leverage their joint strength to improve their involvement in forest businesses is needed (see Bolin 2018). Mostly, women from wealthier backgrounds draw upon their private agricultural lands to jumpstart a commercial initiative. That leaves many women excluded from profitable entrepreneurial opportunities.

## FURTHER READING

[FAO] Food and Agriculture Organization. 2018. *Developing Gender-Sensitive Value Chains. Guidelines for Practitioners*. Rome: FAO.

Haverhals M, Ingram V, Elias M, Sijapati Basnett B, and Petersen S. 2016. *Exploring gender and forest, tree and agroforestry value chains. Evidence and lessons from a systematic review*. InfoBrief no. 161. Bogor, Indonesia: CIFOR.

# Tree tenure and shea butter value chains in Burkina Faso

## QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

**In what way does informal tree tenure over lucrative shea trees pose obstacles to women in being able to benefit from higher-value processing opportunities?**

Women's tree tenure holds the key to securing financial flows from the shea butter commodity chain. In the agroforestry parklands of central and central-western parts of Burkina Faso, the shea tree is of crucial importance because its nut butter is valuable in the global commodity chains for the cosmetic and confectionery industries (Elias 2016). A slow-growing tree producing fruits after 15–20 years, shea is locally valued not only for its nut butter but also its nutritious fruits, medicinal benefits and hardwood. It is called the butter tree or women's green gold because it provides significant aggregate income for women (as collectors and butter processors).

However, men still occupy the most profitable roles in the industry earning three to four times more money. Women use their control over the money mainly for their children's education. Interestingly, although knowledge and cultural practices around its use and management are distinctly in women's hands, men also

know much about this tree because of its economic importance (Elias 2016).

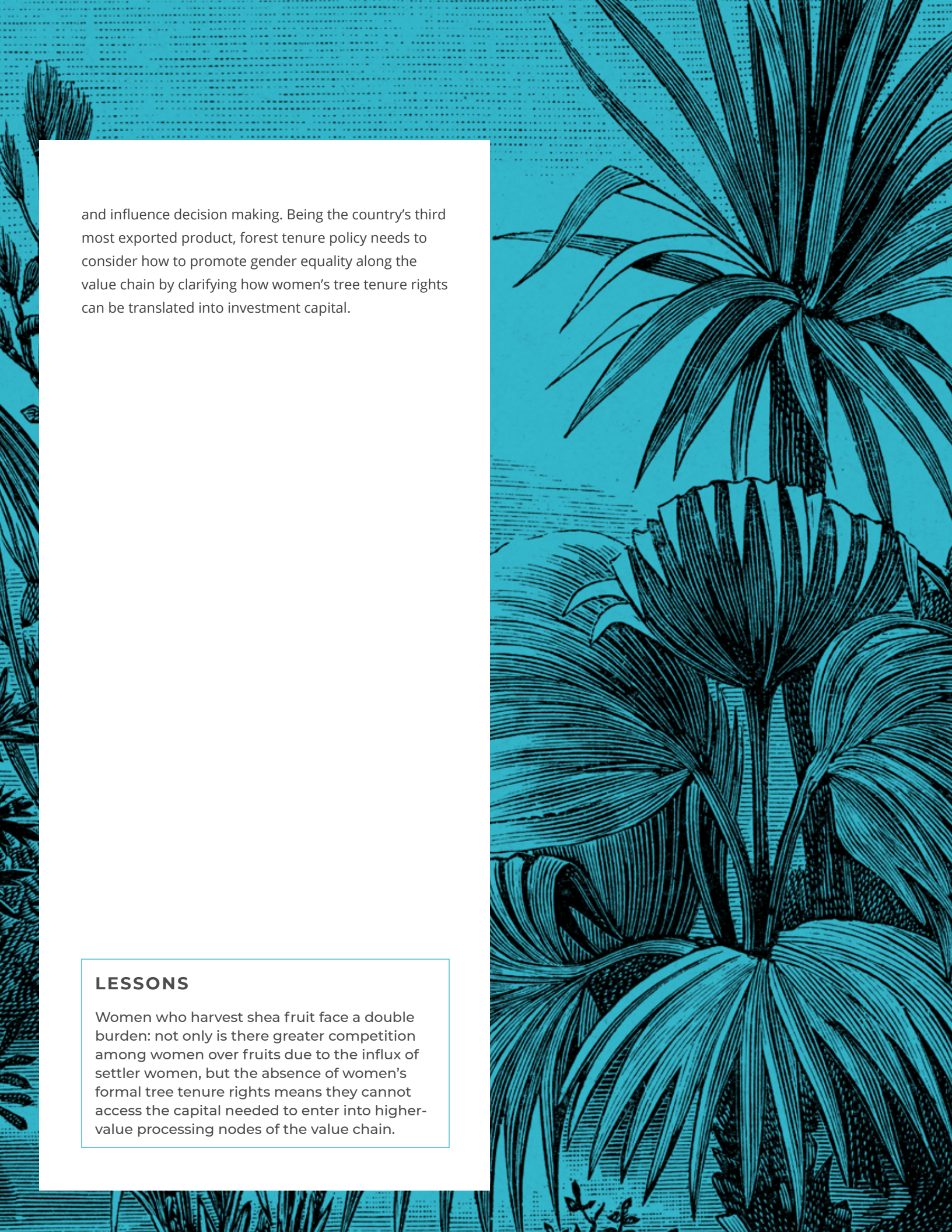
Women, as the main nut collectors, have to operate within the customary land ownership system, which is lineage based and patrilineal. In this, tree tenure dynamics are of paramount importance for women. Over time, these dynamics have changed because of the influx of new settlers over the last 20 years and who now outnumber the long-standing residents. Still, the prevailing rules governing access to shea trees on cultivated and fallow lands provide for stronger rights for indigenous families than settler families (Poudyal 2009; Rousseau et al. 2016).

Nevertheless, the result is that access to shea trees has become increasingly competitive. In response, women from indigenous families have tried to strengthen the informal cooperative relations among themselves (particularly to restrict access to settler women), while settler women (who are at a distinct disadvantage) have chosen to become involved in making higher-value shea products, as well as create formal cooperatives (Poudyal 2009).

A bigger problem facing all women harvesters results from the liberalization of the shea industry in the 1990s. This created an oligarchic structure of male-dominated wholesalers (Rousseau et al. 2015; Chen 2017). Attempts to bypass these traders through fair-trade projects that could benefit women harvesters has had little effect on the predominant value chain dynamics.

Women continue to have difficulty in engaging in higher-value processing because their forest tenure rights cannot be formally leveraged to access capital. If there were fewer barriers to land and asset ownership, women would have the capital to engage in markets





and influence decision making. Being the country's third most exported product, forest tenure policy needs to consider how to promote gender equality along the value chain by clarifying how women's tree tenure rights can be translated into investment capital.

## LESSONS

Women who harvest shea fruit face a double burden: not only is there greater competition among women over fruits due to the influx of settler women, but the absence of women's formal tree tenure rights means they cannot access the capital needed to enter into higher-value processing nodes of the value chain.



# Steering

*sustainable development policies toward a 'landscapes approach' framework, which applies an integrated approach to land management, will make the relevance of gender to environmental debates even more apparent.*

---

**Dr. Seema Arora-Jonsson**

Associate Professor of Rural Development with the University of Agricultural Sciences in Uppsala, Sweden (Mollins 2013)



## GENDER, FOREST TENURE, AND RESTORATION OF MULTIFUNCTIONAL FOREST LANDSCAPES

---

Creating positive effects at scale is also part of forest tenure reform thinking. Instead of considering forest tenure rights at the scale of one forest, improving forests and social equity can involve thinking across a landscape with its multiple tenure niches. Women and men in households will be drawing upon different types of resources across any ‘forest-tree-landscape continuum’ with diverse tenure niches creating a mosaic of protected forests, managed forests, orchards, multi-storied agroforestry areas, single species crop production and other land uses (Bruce 1989; Parrotta et al. 2016). How to govern and improve such forest landscapes is the art of gendered thinking across multiple and complex factors such that collaborative initiatives can foster further greening in support of multifunctionality.

Working at the landscape level is beginning to manifest in a number of initiatives such as jurisdictional REDD+

or forest landscape restoration (FLR) (Jhaveri and Adhikari 2016; Irawan et al. 2019). Indeed, since FLR is increasingly receiving public attention, the tendency has been to leverage existing programs such as REDD+ in new ways (Sijapati Basnett et al. 2017). Within this, it is clear that implementing some form of tenure reform is a way of incentivizing outcomes including gender equality (Sunderlin et al. 2018; McLain et al. 2019). While methodologies for FLR, such as the Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology (ROAM), has now included gender-responsive dimensions (IUCN 2017; Siles and Prebble 2018; FAO and WRI 2019; Seymour 2020), detailed understanding of the linkages between gender and tenure remain elusive. A review of eight ROAM reports revealed that while they noted that lack of rights or weak rights were obstacles in the way of scaling up FLR, none carried out an in-depth tenure and governance assessment (McLain et al. 2019).



One of the major obstacles is the lack of guidance on analyzing property rights within multilevel or polycentric landscape governance (Buck et al. 2019). Because working at the landscape scale is complicated, the concepts are still evolving. Rarely are tenure regimes, let alone their gender dimensions, easy to classify at this scale. Therefore, it becomes even more important for those involved in landscape governance to be trained in tenure diagnostic tools so that different types of hybrid tenure systems can be accurately examined (Ranjatson et al. 2019). This includes exploring women and men's indigenous and local knowledge about trees and the landscape's multiple uses (Elias 2018).

Gendered tenure plays a critical role in a number of factors behind successful restoration because it enables stakeholders to perceive that the rewards of their efforts will flow back to them over the long term. Tenure affects factors such as level of commitment by the range of stakeholders involved, engaging implementers (mid-level brokers and government officials), and willingness to hear those who have a clear stake in their landscapes, in particular women and the marginalized (Sarmiento Barletti et al. 2020). Longitudinal studies of gender and REDD+ across multiple sites show that the perception of well-being among women decreased at a higher level than for men, and as such point to the need for better attention to gender equality and safeguarding women's rights in regenerating forests (Larson et al. 2018).

## SECTION 3.5

---

### FURTHER READING

Buck, LE, Scherr SJ, Chami B, Goldman M, Lawrence T, Meham J, Nevers E and Thomas R. 2019. *Exploring Property Rights and Tenure in Integrated Landscape Management*. Washington, DC: EcoAgriculture Partners on behalf of the Landscapes for People, Food and Nature Initiative.

[IUCN] International Union for Conservation of Nature. 2017. *Gender-Responsive Restoration Guidelines: A Closer Look at Gender in the Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology*. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN.

McLain R, Lawry S, Guariguata MR and Reed J. 2019. *Integrating tenure and governance into assessments of forest landscape restoration opportunities*. Infobrief no. 241. Bogor, Indonesia: CIFOR.

# Gender-responsive forest landscape restoration in Malawi

## QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

**What are the critical components of a gender-responsive approach to carrying out a national forest landscape restoration assessment?**

After Malawi made its pledge to restore 4.5 million hectares of forestlands in 2016 to the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative and the Bonn Challenge, it quickly launched the National Forest Landscape Restoration Assessment (NFLRA) through a multi-sectoral national taskforce. Using the ROAM methodology, it sought to identify priority areas and interventions that were tailored to the local socioeconomic and ecological context. From the very start, this was done through a gender-responsive approach working with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN 2017).

The goal was to ensure that a Gender Plan of Action (GPA) would inform the NFLRA. A number of steps were taken: first, a gender specialist group was created by building the capacity of gender experts from various relevant ministries on forest restoration. A pre-ROAM inception workshop was held with this group to familiarize the experts with FLR and the linkages with gender concerns. Two members of this group were added to each of the three technical working groups developing the NFLRA in order to ensure gender integration. One particular working group on stocktaking and mapping undertook a gender analysis drawing upon IUCN's Gender Responsive FLR Analysis Framework (IUCN 2017). Drawing up a range of data that was collected such as relevant policies, gendered dimensions of existing FLR initiatives, sex-disaggregated socioeconomic data (and its geospatial dimensions), and district-level perspectives on gender-responsive FLR, the GPA aimed to guide the technical working groups. The GPA findings were then integrated into the NFLRA report and the National Strategy and Action Plan. A separate, comprehensive chapter setting out the findings of the gender analysis was also included in the NFLRA. Proactive thinking at the planning stage on gender-responsive approaches facilitates integration across the board.

## LESSONS

The Malawi experience indicates that a gender-responsive NFLRA process can benefit from: building and training gender experts across different sectors to join the gender specialist group; including members of the gender specialist group in various technical working groups to ensure gender integration; collecting relevant data to prepare a GPA; and carrying out a gender analysis using a gender-responsive FLR analysis framework.