

Gender in REDD+

A handbook for grassroots facilitators

Questions and Answers



Gender in REDD+: *A handbook for grassroots facilitators*

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Purpose of this publication

The main objective of this booklet is to support local trainers and facilitators, who already have a basic understanding of climate change and REDD+, by providing them with useful information on gender considerations for climate change and REDD+ related training and capacity development programs.

This booklet is a product of RECOFTC's regional project called, "Grassroots Capacity Building for REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, as well as Conservation and Enhancement of Forest Carbon Stocks and Promoting Sustainable Management of Forests) in the Asia-Pacific Region." Since 2009, RECOFTC has implemented the project in Indonesia, Lao PDR, Nepal, Vietnam, and in January 2013 Myanmar was added as a fifth project country. REDD+ is an internationally proposed mechanism, and grassroots stakeholders are not yet completely familiar with the concept or the technically complex language associated with REDD+. A critical objective of the project is to provide essential information on different aspects of REDD+ in simple language so that it may be easily understood and appreciated by grassroots stakeholders.

The goal of this handbook specifically, is to provide simplified information directly to the grassroots communities, on the current state of gender integration in climate change and REDD+ relevant policies, plans, programs, and practices, from local to international levels. Through wide dissemination, we aim to reduce the information gap between and among community level facilitators and national and regional level policy makers, researchers, academics, and practitioners. The booklet will be distributed in Bahasa Indonesia, Lao, Nepali, Vietnamese and Burmese, in addition to English.

Structure of the booklet

The booklet consists of a series of ten questions about different aspects of gender in the context of climate change and REDD+, and the answers. The questions have been selected based on ongoing discussions on gender integration in climate change and REDD+ awareness-raising processes, in the project's target countries. The booklet aims to address capacity development needs at the grassroots level, by addressing questions that are frequently asked by the participants in the project's training sessions. The selected questions are arranged in four sections, as follows:

Section 1 - The Basics section builds a basic understanding of gender for the grassroots stakeholders by defining gender, gender mainstreaming, gender equity, and equality, in context of climate change and REDD+.

Section 2 - The Climate Change and REDD+ section explains the rationale for mainstreaming gender in climate change and REDD+ capacity development, and the key considerations that are necessary to achieve it.

Section 3 - The Plans and Policies section provides an overview of existing policies and institutional initiatives at the international level that aim to promote gender equality. Specific references are made to current national level discourses on REDD+ and climate change, in the project's target countries.

Section 4 - The Capacity Development section provides guidance for local facilitators to deliver gender specific training programs at the grassroots level. In addition, a brief overview of the Grassroots project's approach to gender mainstreaming within the project's context is also shared.

Ten key questions



Section 1: The Basics

Q1

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Q2

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Q3

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Q10 How does the Grassroots project address gender mainstreaming in REDD+ capacity development?



SECTION 1: The Basics

Q1

What do we mean by gender and gender mainstreaming?

Gender can be defined as a socially and culturally constructed set of characteristics, roles, responsibilities, and behaviors that distinguish between men and women. Gender is not the same as sex. Sex is biologically determined and it is just one aspect of a person's gender. Gender behaviors and attitudes are learned or acquired; they are neither fixed nor universal.

"Mainstreaming" means bringing what or who can be seen as marginalized or excluded into the core decision-making process.

In this context, *gender mainstreaming* can be defined as a process to integrate perspectives and roles of both men and women, as an integral part in designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating plans, policies and programs, so that both men and women can engage equally and benefit equitably.

Thus, gender mainstreaming goes beyond simply increasing women's participation - it means recognizing and integrating the experiences, knowledge, and interests of women and men in the decision-making process. In the development context, it means identifying and applying the gender-dimension in goals, strategies, and actions of the development agenda, so that both women and men can influence, participate in, and benefit from development processes (See Box 1).

The ultimate goal of gender mainstreaming is therefore to bring about progressive changes in social and institutional structures for a just society wherein benefits and decision-making processes are non-discriminatory towards either gender.

Other terms which are used very frequently in the development sector are '*Gender Equity and Gender Equality*'. Equity is the process of being fair or impartial to women and men, and can be defined as a tool to achieve gender equality. In other words, equity is a means, whereas equality is a result of the process of equity. Therefore gender equality means men and women have equal, rights, and responsibilities in a society, along with equal access to the means (resources, opportunities) and to exercise them. Where gender inequality exists, it is generally women who are excluded or disadvantaged in relation to decision-making and access to economic and social resources.



Box 1: Definition and basic principles of gender mainstreaming

In July 1997, the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) defined the concept of gender mainstreaming as follows:

“Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality.”

Basic principles of gender mainstreaming: Gender mainstreaming in the development agenda needs to follow some basic principles, as listed below:

- Adequate accountability mechanisms for monitoring progress need to be established.
- The initial identification of issues and problems across all area(s) of activity should be such that gender differences and disparities can be diagnosed.
- Assumptions that issues or problems are neutral from a gender-equality perspective should never be made.
- Gender analysis should always be carried out.
- Clear political will and allocation of adequate resources for mainstreaming, including additional financial and human resources if necessary, are important for translation of the concept into practice.
- Gender mainstreaming requires that efforts be made to broaden women’s equitable participation at all levels of decision-making.
- Mainstreaming does not replace the need for targeted, women-specific policies and programmes, and positive legislation; nor does it do away with the need for gender units or focal points.

Source: United Nations Economic and Social Council 1997, Annual Report. USA: United Nations

Q2

How are men and women affected differently by climate change?

Climate change affects everybody, regardless of caste, ethnicity, race, class, or sex; however, its impacts are distributed differently. Women, who constitute 70% of the total 1.3 billion people living in extreme poverty all over the world¹, have relatively higher dependence on natural resources for subsistence and livelihood. Therefore, women are more likely to be vulnerable to the impacts of climate variations and climate change induced natural disasters.

Rural women and men have specific roles, rights, and responsibilities that determine their access to resources and its usage, which translates into varying vulnerability and decision-making power for women and men. The vulnerability, especially of rural women, gets compounded even further by discriminatory practices and prejudices in society.

Women's knowledge, skills, and use of forest resources shape their experiences differently (See Box 2). Women often have highly specialized knowledge of trees and forests in terms of their species diversity, management and uses for various purposes, as well as conservation practices. Compared with men, women's knowledge tends to be linked more directly to household food consumption and health, which is particularly important during food crises. Similarly, differences between men and women in the use and the knowledge of forest resources often determine their socio-economic status in the society, and shape the power dynamics between them. It logically follows, then, that in the context of climate change, not only do the available opportunities differ between men and women, but the impacts of climate change can also vary depending on the given gender dynamics.

¹ United Nations Development Programme. (1995). Human development report 1995. New York: OUP



Box 2: Differences in preferences for forest species between men and women in Asia-Pacific

In general, women in the Asia-Pacific region prefer multiple-purpose species, which may fulfill various roles including contributing to household fuel, fodder, and food security. Rather than focusing on timber, they value bushy trees with plenty of branches and varieties that can serve as windbreaks. Given their limited involvement in the sale and processing of timber, women will select trees such as neem, tamarind and similar species of medicinal importance, and other varieties of non-timber forest products (fruits, nuts, gum, wax, and honey) that they themselves can process or market. Men in the region, however, tend to prefer high-value timber species such as sal, eucalyptus, pine, teak, acacia, and gmelia, which could be attributed to the opportunities for, access to and knowledge about the nearby market, to sell timber.

Source: REDD-Net Bulletin, Asia-Pacific, Issue 04 - May 2011

Q3

Why are women more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change?

Studies show that women are more likely to be severely affected by climate change and natural disasters than men. As mentioned in the answer to question 2, discriminatory socio-cultural practices, higher incidences of poverty among women, and limited access to basic rights are factors that increase women's vulnerability. In natural disasters that have occurred in recent years, both in developing and in developed countries, it has been found that it is primarily the poor who have suffered the most (See Box 3). Ironically, more than 70% of the world's poor are women.

Box 3: Impacts of natural disaster on women: a case of 2004 Tsunami

An Oxfam Report (March 2005) on the impact of the 2004 Asian Tsunami raised alarms about gender imbalances, since the majority of those killed and the least able to recover were women. In Aceh, Indonesia, for example, more than 75% of those who died were women, resulting in a male-female ratio of 3:1 among the survivors. As so many mothers died, there have been major consequences with respect to infant mortality, early marriage of girls, neglect of girls' education, sexual assaults, trafficking in women and prostitution.

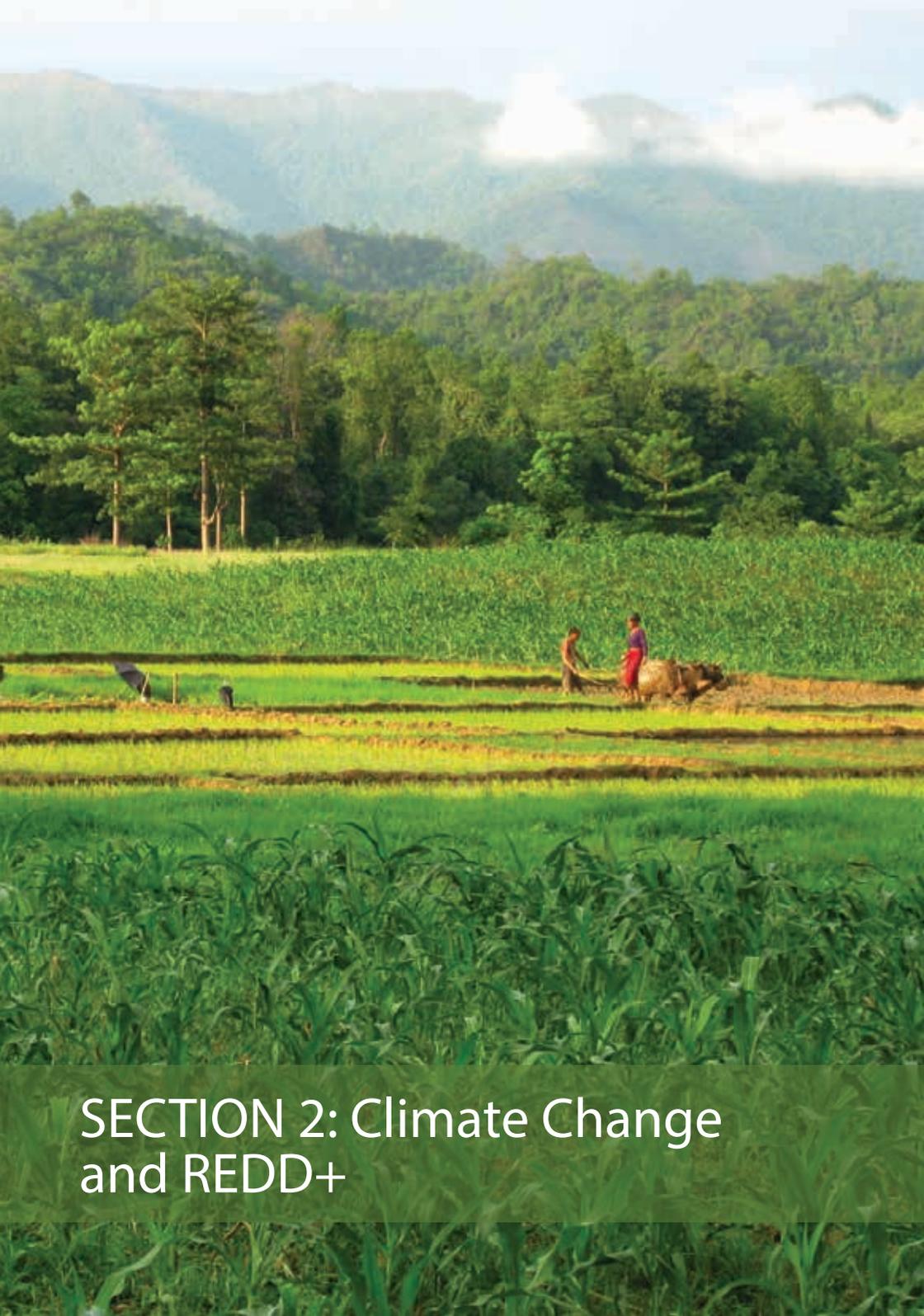
Due to women's marginalized status and dependence on local natural resources, their domestic burdens are increased. In fact, women living in poverty in developing countries, bear an unequal burden when it comes to climate change impacts. For example, women carry out additional household work, and walk farther to fetch water or collect fuel, fodder, and other edible and medicinal herbs from surrounding forests. Increased domestic burden prevents women from gaining enough rest, which in turn may have negative impacts on their health. In some areas, climate change may generate resource shortages and unreliable job markets, forcing men to migrate in search of jobs. This often results in women who are left behind with additional agricultural and household responsibilities (See Box 4).

Furthermore, lack of access to and control over natural resources, new knowledge, technologies, and financial credit for women, means they have fewer resources to cope with seasonal and periodic weather changes and natural disasters. Consequently, traditional roles are reinforced and women's ability to diversify their livelihoods (and therefore their capacity to access income-generating jobs) starts diminishing.

It has also been observed that women find it more difficult to secure tenure rights and have less access to market mechanisms. This is mainly because of the systemic and social norms that discriminate against women's ownership and land rights, which is alongside the limited skills, resources and mobility among women, as compared to their counterparts. Without secured forest tenure rights, there is the risk that local women may not be able to exercise their resource withdrawal rights.

Box 4: Environmental degradation – A cause of burdening women in Nepal

In a study executed on behalf of ACTIONAID in 1993-1994 in the Himalayan region of Nepal, it became clear that environmental degradation had compounded stress within households and pressure on scarce resources. This meant that the pressure on children, particularly girls, to do more work and at an earlier age was increasing. According to the study, girls did the hardest work, had the least rights and educational opportunities. Programs that concentrated only on sending more girls to school were failing as the environmental and social conditions of the families deteriorated.



SECTION 2: Climate Change and REDD+

Q4

Why is it essential to make climate change and REDD+ gender inclusive?

The rationale for making REDD+ gender inclusive is based on the human rights-based approach to development and ensuring gender equality. Another important justification for a gender inclusive approach for REDD+ is to improve its efficacy. Women should be seen as an agent of change to mitigate or adapt to climate change rather than merely vulnerable to climate change. Therefore, gender integration in REDD+ policy and planning allows greater and more efficient programming and results.

In the previous question, we discussed differentiated roles, rights, responsibilities, knowledge, and skills of men and women in the forestry sector. However, there is very little evidence to show that forestry management institutions, including government and non-government, have implemented gender-centered policies and plans in a systematic and significant manner. This could be partly because of limited understanding of gender issues among such institutions and policy makers, as well as the fact that the role of women as primary stakeholders in the forestry sector is rarely recognized. Besides institutional biases, there is a general perception that women have poor leadership qualities due to their typically lower levels of education, which leaves men in the dominant position in planning and decision-making related to forest management.

A study conducted by USAID² on assessment of gender mainstreaming and understanding gender equality in Cambodia found that over the last four years there has not been any significant change in persistent influence of traditional views and standards on the proper roles of men and women and how men and women relate to each other. Generally, such perceptions and opinions are taken at face value and without evidence, thus further creating complex challenges for gender mainstreaming policies and actions. Research on women and men's differing roles and responsibilities can help improve policy and action plans based

² USAID (2010). Gender Assessment, USAID/Cambodia.

on lessons learned. Furthermore, a lack of gender disaggregated data has resulted in the prevailing dominance of men in the decision-making process, and continued marginalization of women in the planning and decision-making process.

In the context of REDD+, it is necessary to engage both men and women in the development of policies and plans, and their implementation. This is justified by the fact that there is a strong inter-dependence between men and women in terms of the use and management of forest resources. Moreover, any management interventions to comply with REDD+, such as restricted access to forest resources to reduce forest degradation, may have a negative impact on the daily workload of women, as they have the major responsibility to meet their families' subsistence needs.

In view of the above, it is justified that the initiatives or interventions within climate change and REDD+ should also have a special focus on enabling women to be informed and active participants in the decision making processes and consultations, alongside men. This will assist in taking advantage of the diverse knowledge, and capacities of men and women to address the equally diverse vulnerabilities that both men and women are subjected to.

Transparency and corruption associated with financial transactions of REDD+ are other important elements, which warrant active participation of women in order to comply with safeguards mechanisms in REDD+. A gender inclusive approach is expected to help in ensuring transparency and accountability in financial transactions related to forest management in general and REDD+ in particular. Studies³ have shown that women are less likely to accept bribes and are less involved in illegal behavior, and thus reduce the potential of corruption. Hence, adopting a gender equitable approach can contribute to the promotion of fair distribution of benefits between men and women and good governance at the local level (See Box 5).

³ The World Bank (2012) World Development Report 2012: Gender Equality and Development, Washington DC: The World Bank. Available at: <http://go.worldbank.org/cqctmsf40>



Box 5: Impacts of the exclusion of women in Nepal's forestry sector

Studies in Nepal indicate that excluding women in forest management can result in negative consequences not only for gender equity and women's empowerment, but also for the efficient functioning and long term sustainability of these initiatives. The lack of women's participation in the forestry sector has proven to have detrimental effects. Reforestation projects in Nepal without a gender perspective faced problems when replanting, protecting the forests, and implementing rules that protect the reserves. Integrating women's needs and priorities in community forestry is thus essential to promoting sustainable conservation.

Source: Agrawal B. 2001. Participatory exclusions, community forestry and gender: An analysis for South Asia and a conceptual framework. World Development, 29 (10): 1623–1648.

Q5

What are the key gender considerations to strengthen the roles of men and women at the grassroots level in climate change and REDD+?

In order to strengthen the role of men and women at the grassroots level in climate change and REDD+, a number of steps need to be taken, including the following:

- i. Recognizing the rights of women to forest resources:** Women play important roles in forest management, especially when their participation and decision making roles are recognized within the framework of bundle of rights (See Box 6). This is an important consideration, because in the absence of these rights, the situation of women and their families may worsen. Concerns have been raised that new sources of forest finance in the form of REDD+ may encourage governments to restrict or prohibit access of local people⁴ to forests, or may incentivize other actors to make claims on forest resources. Such a situation will have a direct impact on how the benefits from REDD+ and similar initiatives will be shared between men and women, because generally women have major responsibility to collect the forest resources for the daily subsistence of households.

Box 6: Bundle of rights approach

The bundle of rights approach includes a set of customary and statutory rights for indigenous people and forest dependent communities:

- (a) Access Rights: communities can access forest resources
- (b) Withdrawal Rights: communities can harvest timber or other forest products
- (c) Management Rights: communities can make decisions over forest management
- (d) Exclusion Rights: communities can exclude outsiders from their forests
- (e) Alienation Rights: communities can lease a resource, sell it, or use it as collateral

Source: RRI. 2012. What Rights? A Comparative Analysis of Developing Countries' National Legislation on Community and Indigenous Peoples' Forest Tenure Rights. Washington DC: Rights and Resources Initiative

⁴ Local people are defined as those who reside in and around the forests and whose livelihoods heavily depend on forest products and services. Local people include indigenous communities, ethnic minorities, migrants and smallholder farmers in rural areas.



A study from a REDD+ pilot site in Nepal has indicated that the effective participation of women in community forestry led to increased forest restoration and reduced carbon emission.⁵ On the other hand, a lack of clarity of tenure will lead to uncertain access to land, trees, carbon, and other forest resources for women, who are frequently disadvantaged in both customary and statutory regimes.

- ii. Developing the capacity of women stakeholders at different levels:** Women tend to have limited access to resources, mobility, new information, capacity development opportunities, and financial institutions for credit, as compared to their male counterparts. These limitations restrict women's ability to contribute effectively in consultations or decision-making processes related to forest management. It also increases their vulnerability to climate induced disasters. Such a situation therefore calls for a greater focus on developing the capacity of women and their relevant alliances, networks and forums on various aspects of REDD+.

Capacity development must include basic awareness on climate change and REDD+, skills to negotiate the terms of their engagement with forest management programs and policies, managing funds, and on technical aspects, such as, forestry and nursery techniques, biomass assessment, measurement of carbon sequestration, and monitoring and reporting methods (See Box 7).

⁵ Agarwal, B. 2009. Gender and forest conservation: The impact of women's participation in community forest governance. *Ecological economics* 68: 2785–2799.



Box 7: The role of women in community-based forest management

Women's groups are effective in community-based forest management and should be involved in capacity building and benefit sharing for REDD+. For example, in Zimbabwe over half of the 800,000 families living in communal areas are headed by women and women's groups are in charge of forest resource and development projects through woodlot ownership, tree planting, and nursery development. In Nepal, there are over 800 women's Community Forestry User Groups (CFUGs) protecting forests, managing nurseries and afforesting degraded lands, resulting in fewer landslides, the provision of fuel and fodder resources, a tree survival rate of 60-80%, legal bans on tree felling, etc. When women's groups were linked by an NGO in Cambodia to form networks, they were able to negotiate prices, arrange transport to markets, set up and run community rice mill cooperatives to increase productivity and earnings, and influence decisions at all levels of governance.

Source: USAID (2011): Gender and REDD+: An Asia Regional Analysis (Draft). Downloaded from: http://www.rightsandresources.org/documents/files/doc_2307.pdf

- iii. Comprehensive gender assessments for improved forestry sector planning and development:** A comprehensive gender assessment needs to be conducted in order to assess and recognize the differential roles, responsibilities, patterns of use, knowledge, and skills of men and women in forest management. Such an assessment will be an important input to strategically recognize the role of men and women, and developing gender sensitive plans and policies in forest management. Such plans and policies in turn will help to create critical spaces for men and women to gain experience and confidence, and build networks that could aid in seeking high level support for gender mainstreamed policy advocacy in the climate change and REDD+ sectors.
- iv. Responding to REDD+ safeguards:** In cases of improper or poorly planned implementation of REDD+, a number of challenges and risks to the forests, biodiversity, and people depending upon these resources for their livelihoods can be expected. Non-adherence to the REDD+ safeguards may result into loss of rights to use the land and its resources, social exclusion, elite capture of the land, and loss of ecological knowledge of men and women, among other similar risks.

In response to these concerns various bilateral and multilateral agencies have developed sets of social and environmental safeguards for REDD+, which include mechanisms to ensure that the REDD+ process and its implementation does not bring negative impacts to local people and the environment.⁶ Gender mainstreaming, respecting the rights of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), full and effective participation of local people, livelihoods security and equitable benefit sharing are important considerations to ensure that national REDD+ strategies comply with applicable local and national laws and international treaties and other instruments.

⁶ Silori et al. 2013. Social safeguards in REDD+: A review of existing initiatives and challenges. *Journal of Forests and Livelihoods*. Vol. 11(2): 27-36.



SECTION 3: Plans and Policies



Q6

What policy instruments and frameworks exist at the international level to promote human rights and gender equality?

At the international level there are various conventions and instruments in place for promoting gender equality in development programs. A few are mentioned below:

- i. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly, provides a framework for gender equality as a basic human right. CEDAW recognizes women's rights to hold property and makes references to rural women in particular.
- ii. The fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing, China, in September 1995, resulted in the drafting of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1996, which re-emphasized women's rights as human rights, and declared that poverty eradication requires women's involvement in economic and social development, including equal opportunities for women and men in sustainable development.
- iii. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP), adopted in 2007, recognizes the rights of indigenous peoples on a wide range of issues and provides a universal framework for the international community. This includes the principle of FPIC. There are provisions for specific attention to the particular rights and needs of indigenous women, so countries can protect them against violence and discrimination.

Q7

What initiatives have been taken at the international level to address gender mainstreaming in climate change and REDD+ discourses?

The recognition of women's rights to hold property, with specific reference to rural women, under CEDAW and Rio+20⁷ Agreements, have particular relevance to mainstreaming gender into climate change and REDD+ policy and program development.

During the 16th Conference of Parties (COP) to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), held in Cancun, Mexico in 2010, the UNFCCC delivered the "Cancun Agreement." The Agreement makes repeated references to address gender in relation to REDD+ policy design and program implementation. This has helped in raising the profile of gender mainstreaming in climate change debates.

In Doha, Qatar, during the 18th COP in 2012, the UNFCCC Secretariat was assigned the task of tracking the progress of the advancement of a gender-sensitive climate policy. This will be further tracked and reviewed during COP 19 in 2013 in Warsaw, Poland through COP 22 in 2016.

⁷ Rio+20 is the short name for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development which took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in June 2012 – twenty years after the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio. The focus of Rio+20 conference was to reduce poverty, advance social equity, and ensure environmental protection on an ever more populated planet. The official discussion focused on two main themes: how to build a green economy to achieve sustainable development and lift people out of poverty, and how to improve international coordination for sustainable development (<http://www.un.org/en/sustainablefuture/index.shtml>).

Q8

What are the national plans and policies on climate change, REDD+, and gender in grassroots project countries?

As mentioned earlier, the Grassroots Capacity Building for REDD+ project is implemented in five countries, namely Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal and Vietnam. Below is a summary of the national policies and plans related to gender mainstreaming in climate change and REDD+ in these countries.

Indonesia

As a signatory to CEDAW, the Government of Indonesia has taken initiatives at policy and institutional levels to address gender issues in the development sectors, including forestry. A number of semi-government organizations like the Indonesian Women's Congress, Provincial Women's Council, the District Women's Council, and grassroots voluntary organizations are active in addressing gender issues and providing services to women in different developmental sectors. The Presidential Decree in 2000 made it mandatory for all government departments and non-governmental organizations to mainstream gender into their planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes.

Indonesia is one of the first countries to have its REDD+ Readiness Plan Proposal (R-PP) approved by the World Bank in 2009. A review of the R-PP document suggests that although it identifies an array of relevant stakeholders for REDD+ and emphasizes that vulnerable groups, including forest-dependent communities, indigenous peoples, women, and youth, should be involved in the formulation and execution of a REDD+ program, it does not offer any tailored strategies to specifically target these groups.

Moving forward with REDD+ preparedness, Indonesia finalized its National REDD+ Strategy in June 2012. The strategy describes five principles for REDD+ implementation. These include *effectiveness, efficiency, fairness, transparency, and accountability*. While describing the criteria for fairness, equality for all and human rights protection in forest management, especially for women and communities



vulnerable to socio-economic and environmental changes, are considered important criteria of REDD+ implementation. Furthermore, the fourth of the five REDD+ principles emphasizes changing the work paradigms and culture in the forestry management sector in order to effectively implement the REDD+ strategy. In this context, the gender sensitivity is considered as a foremost principle that emphasizes on equality in roles, needs and responsibilities of men and women for creating a better work culture.

Gender sensitivity is the ability to recognize gender issues and concerns, including the ability to recognize women's different perceptions and aspirations, which are based on their different social context and consequent gender roles. In addition, there is an emphasis on strengthening forest and land use governance through:

- a) increased flexibility for transparency and participation, especially for vulnerable groups, such as indigenous peoples, women, children, and the poor;
- b) capacity-development for community members, especially women and other vulnerable groups, to improve their understanding of available information; and
- c) participation in decision-making processes.



In the context of social safeguards, the REDD+ strategy advocates for gender equality and the right of vulnerable groups to participate equally in REDD+ implementation as a minimal criteria for its effective implementation. It further highlights the need for designing the social safeguards framework for the protection and benefit of forest dependent communities, including indigenous people, local communities, women and other marginalized groups, who have traditionally been marginalized from mainstream socio-economic and political processes. In the context of REDD+ such a situation puts them in a disadvantageous position in terms of their human rights and for claiming the benefits from REDD+ implementation. The REDD+ safeguards enable marginalized groups to be fully aware of their rights and make choices that enable improved role of these communities in the decision making process, and benefit from REDD+ mechanism in the future.

Lao PDR

The Lao PDR constitution of 1991 guarantees both men and women equal rights in the political, cultural, and social fields, in addition to family affairs. In 2003, a constitutional amendment affirmed efforts “supporting the progress of women and in protecting the legitimate rights and benefits of women and children.” Lao PDR is also a signatory to the CEDAW and has joined the global consensus on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. In 2003, the Lao PDR Government set up the Lao National Commission for the Advancement of Women (NCAW) to assist the government in policy and strategy formulation for promoting the advancement of women. The Lao Women’s Union (LWU), a public organization, is a key actor in this process, with a history of more than 50 years in helping to promote women’s income generation activities through capacity development in the agricultural sector and small and medium enterprise.



Lao PDR has had its Forest Policy since 1987, with a mention of gender mainstreaming. However, despite institutional and policy measures, a number of gaps remain, particularly in reference to processes related to defining and implementing policies. Due to ambiguity in the definitions of roles and responsibilities of men and women in various forest management activities, and poor implementation of policies, the gender gap in the forestry sector still remains unaddressed.

The country has prepared its REDD+ Readiness Plan Proposal (R-PP), while a REDD+ roadmap is yet to be developed. A review of the R-PP document reveals a reference to 'gender' related to social and environmental impact assessments of REDD+. References to women are made only twice in the entire document, both in the context of stakeholder consultation process. The consultation process during the preparation of the R-PP was limited to only a few stakeholders at the national and provincial levels where REDD+ readiness activities are currently envisioned. The Lao Women's Union was consulted only during the second consultation workshop to share the draft R-PP. However, it is not clear from the document if the LWU was engaged in the consultation from the initial phase of conceptualizing the R-PP, and later on during its development process. Thus the process of developing R-PP, as summarized above, clearly indicates inadequate focus on gender mainstreaming in REDD+ policies and plans in Lao PDR, as it stands today.

Myanmar

Myanmar is signatory to CEDAW. It has drafted a National Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women (2011-2015). The National Plan of Action stipulates that all women of Myanmar are empowered and able to fully enjoy their rights with the support of the Government of the Union of Myanmar. The Department of Social Welfare under the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement of the

Government of the Union of Myanmar is the nodal agency responsible for promoting social welfare services to the vulnerable groups, including women, on the basis of social integration strategies. Myanmar also established the Myanmar National Committee for Women Affairs (MNCWA) in 1996 to enhance the advancement of women. Subsequently the Myanmar National Working Committee for Women's Affairs was formed, followed by the formation of State (Province), Division, District and Township level working committees for Women's Affairs.

In 2003, the Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation was established to assist the MNCWA to carry out its functions for the development and security of women and to enhance cooperation with national and international non-governmental organizations.

With respect to climate change and REDD+, Myanmar is just began drafting its REDD+ readiness roadmap. Among the three technical working groups set up to support the roadmap development process, the Stakeholder Consultation and Safeguards working group is responsible for ensuring the participation of all stakeholders representing or supporting women and ethnic minorities/indigenous groups (including their networks), and the integration of their interests and potential roles in the REDD+ readiness process.



Nepal

Nepal has ratified the CEDAW and has guidelines to promote Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) in all its development programs. The guidelines encourage inclusion of the citizens who are otherwise marginalized based on their ethnicity, disability, gender, nationality, political opinion, race, caste, or religion, and with the recognition that affirmative action for poor and marginalized groups may be required.

In 1995, Nepal established the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare. The Ministry has been active in mainstreaming gender into national development plans, policies, and programs; advocating women's empowerment and gender equality; and initiating measures to remove socio-cultural, structural, and behavioral obstacles to women's full and equal participation in national development.

Nepal seems to be the most advanced in terms of mainstreaming gender into the goals, policies, and programs of the forestry sector as compared to the other Grassroots project countries. Recent policy changes in Nepal recognize new rights for women to own land and have their issues addressed at the highest levels of





decision making. The latest statistics suggest that nearly one-fourth of the country's forests are managed by local Community Forestry User Groups (CFUGs), numbering more than 17,800. Almost 31% of the CFUGs members are women and more than 800 CFUGs are led solely by women members.

Among civil society organizations, HIMAWANTI (Himalayan Grassroots Women's Natural Resource Management Association) and FECOFUN (Federation of Community Forestry Users, Nepal) are internationally recognized and leading organizations, advocating for women's rights in forest management.

However, the REDD+ process in Nepal has yet to develop effective measures to engage women in the process, even as the R-PP identifies women as vulnerable members of the communities in context of climate change and REDD+. The main REDD+ implementing body - Ministry of Forestry and Soil Conservation (MFSC) of Nepal, has only two women from among 16 employees. In addition, consultation is recommended as the only strategy for addressing gender issues in REDD+, within the R-PP. Despite claiming the use of multi-stakeholder platforms, evidence of the integration of gender concerns into REDD+ policy-making bodies, stakeholder forums or in the content of the R-PP is missing.

Vietnam

Vietnam is considered a leader in gender equality in the Asia-Pacific region. This is partly due to a strong legal and policy framework, which provides Vietnamese women with a system of rights, including affirmative policies for political participation, generous maternity benefits, and the right to make reproductive decisions. Vietnam has ratified the CEDAW and a Gender Equality Law. It also has an inter-ministerial committee to represent women, known as the National Committee for the Advancement of Women (NCFAW). There is a network of Committees for the

Advancement of Women (CFAWs) in all ministries, agencies and all the provinces of the country, under the NCFAW. Additionally, the Vietnam Women's Union is a public organization, which mobilizes Vietnamese women from the central to the grassroots levels and works closely with CFAWs. It also implements many projects to improve women's lives and contributes to economic development.

However, there are other areas, where gender inequalities are common in Vietnam. These include vulnerability of female-headed households to poverty; such as, women working longer hours than men for lesser pay; women's limited access to resources such as land, property, formal credit and job training or skills development; and poor representation in decision-making positions, particularly at the local level.

Within the forestry sector, Vietnam's Constitution mandates that all forest resources (including land, trees, and wildlife) are under the ownership of the people. According to the data of the Forest Protection Department, 2011, individual households and local people own nearly 28% of the total land area. Further, according to the Land Law of 2003, land tenure certificates (which provide rights to commercial forests) can now be signed by both husband and wife allowing for joint titles to the land. However, awareness of this law is very low, and land titling is still dominated by men. Moreover, existing practices of forest land allocation to households, for tending and management, has tended to negate women's contributions of labor and knowledge.

In terms of REDD+, the R-PP document from Vietnam has stressed special consideration for ethnic groups' rights and livelihoods, gender issues, and governance as part of the baseline and impact assessment. A few ongoing REDD+ projects, particularly under UN-REDD Programme, have contributed substantially to mainstream gender into its activities. Some of the initiatives include extensive use of FPIC with local communities, including women, resulting in enhanced awareness about the nature of and benefits from programs, as well as enhanced responsibilities to forest protection. The Forest Management Board works closely with local communities, including women, on REDD+ projects, which has helped in building their confidence to discuss their concerns and issues with the board officials.



NGUYỄN T. THUY TRANG

SECTION 4: Capacity Development

IN THUY

Q9

What are the key gender considerations to focus on while facilitating grassroots REDD+ awareness raising events?

While organizing REDD+ awareness-raising events at the local level, there are several considerations that can assist in a gender sensitive facilitation. However, it is essential to note that the points listed below should be viewed only as a guideline for improved impact rather than a list of rules; hence each point must be adapted or amended by local facilitators according to their context and socio-cultural situations.

- **Recognize and respect the local socio-cultural values:** Before organizing a local level awareness program on REDD+, the facilitators should be well aware of the local socio-cultural values and demographic patterns, particularly those which are successful in including women and promoting their participation in local decision-making processes, and build upon them.
- **Ensure proper logistical arrangements:** The facilitators should be aware of the preferred timing for conducting training programs and the daily routine for men and women, in order to improve participation in REDD+ training and capacity development. A special provision should be made for nursing mothers and women with young children, such as reliable child care services, during the event.
- **Build upon specific local knowledge and experience:** Local people, including both men and women, have rich knowledge and experience of the local climate, forest resources, and their use and management. This knowledge and experience differs according to the daily roles and responsibilities of both men and women. Due to this, facilitators should encourage men and women participants to discuss and share their knowledge, and help establish a common platform. The first step for this would be to build on the participants' understanding and help them relate to each other's knowledge base and experiences. The next step would include building on this collective knowledge in order to simplify the new concepts, technical terms, and scientific explanation of climate change and REDD+. This process can help women and men participants to understand the new knowledge more easily.
- **Avoid technical language:** Climate change and REDD+ language is full of technical terms, which are not easily understood by grassroots stakeholders and which are challenging to explain in simpler language, both in English or the local



language. Using such terminologies sometimes might lead to confusion about key climate change and REDD+ concepts, in addition to key terms for gender related discussions. Therefore, when possible, facilitators should find appropriate terms in the local language or ethnic dialect (as relevant) beforehand, and document local examples to explain the concepts and related issues, in simplified language.

- **Use adequate and relevant training material:** It is recommended that facilitators prepare ahead of the training or event to equip themselves with local examples and case studies, which can be used as resource material to simplify training's contents. In situations where participants are illiterate, appropriate and well designed visual aids and other engaging methods of training should be used, including posters and videos.
- **Document two-way learning:** During training and awareness raising events, facilitators should document gender relevant lessons learned, especially local examples, shared by the participants during grassroots level trainings. These are of critical importance and could prove useful for subsequent training and awareness-raising events at various levels and with different stakeholders.
- **Build partnerships with organizations that have similar mandate:** The gender mainstreaming process in REDD+ should also aim at building institutional leadership and capacity of grassroots women stakeholders, along with formal and informal institutions that represent women. Therefore, it is always useful to find a local partner organization working on gender issues and engaging them in training and awareness-raising events. This will help develop their capacity to represent and communicate the aspirations and concerns of local women and thus contribute actively to the REDD+ policy processes in the country.

Q10

How does the Grassroots project address gender mainstreaming in REDD+ capacity development?

RECOFTC – The Center for People and Forests, strongly believes that women’s empowerment is a key component for the sustainable use and management of forest resources as well as for upholding principles of social justice and human rights. RECOFTC is therefore committed to mainstreaming gender perspectives into policies and programs to promote equality and rights in community forestry and REDD+. Building on this fundamental approach, gender mainstreaming has been an integral part of the Grassroots Capacity Building for REDD+ project from its conceptual stage. The project has adopted a systematic and step by step approach to integrate gender-focused training and capacity development activities in its project countries.

The approach includes coordination and partnership building in the project countries; strategic targeting for capacity development at the grassroots level; developing training materials in local languages; outreach, communication and advocacy; research, analysis and synthesis; and monitoring and evaluation. In each project country, we aim to build partnerships with in-country partner organizations working on gender issues, helping them to mainstream gender into REDD+ through various capacity development activities. The project also documents the lessons learned from the delivery of training and capacity development activities and synthesizes them for use in updating further training materials and delivery of training and capacity development programs. The development of this question and answer booklet is an example of such an approach.



THE CENTER FOR PEOPLE AND FORESTS

RECOFTC's mission is to enhance capacities for stronger rights, improved governance and fairer benefits for local people in sustainable forested landscapes in the Asia and the Pacific region.

RECOFTC holds a unique and important place in the world of forestry. It is the only international not-for-profit organization that specializes in capacity development for community forestry. RECOFTC engages in strategic networks and effective partnerships with governments, nongovernmental organizations, civil society, the private sector, local people and research and educational institutes throughout the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. With over 25 years of international experience and a dynamic approach to capacity building – involving research and analysis, demonstration sites and training products – RECOFTC delivers innovative solutions for people and forests.

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