



# RE-ENVISIONING REDD+: GENDER, FOREST GOVERNANCE AND REDD+ IN ASIA

## Brief #4 of 4

*The Challenges of Securing Women's Tenure and Leadership for Forest Management: The Asian Experience*

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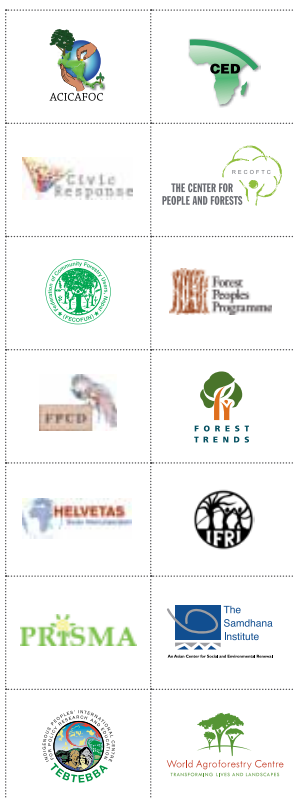
### 1. INTRODUCTION

In the last several years, Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) has gained momentum as an effective means to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. REDD is an initiative to create a financial value for the carbon stored in forests, offering incentives for developing countries to reduce emissions from forested lands and invest in low-carbon paths to sustainable development. "REDD+" goes beyond deforestation and forest degradation, and includes the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks. It is predicted that financial flows from developed to developing countries in the tropics for GHG emissions from REDD+ could reach up to US\$30 billion a year. This significant North-South flow of funds could reward meaningful reductions in carbon emissions and could also support new, pro-poor development, help conserve biodiversity and secure vital ecosystem services. A core principle underlying REDD+ is performance-based payments, in which payments will be made to forest owners and users who can demonstrate reduced emissions and/or increased carbon stocks. It is aimed at paying carbon rights' holders with sufficient incentive to maintain or increase carbon stock in the forests.

Despite the lack of a global agreement on emissions reduction at the UNFCCC Climate Change conference in Copenhagen in 2009 (COP 15), many countries in Asia-Pacific have received a flood of international assistance to support REDD+ 'readiness'. These readiness projects are supported by numerous sources, such as the United Nation's Collaborative Programme on REDD (UN-REDD), bilateral cooperation, government-supported pilots, and private institutions for voluntary carbon markets.

REDD+ presents significant challenges and opportunities for countries in Asia. If properly designed and implemented, REDD+ will be able to contribute to significant reductions in the region's carbon emissions and deliver important co-benefits, such as biodiversity conservation, poverty reduction, opportunities for sustainable livelihoods in poor and marginalized communities, improved governance and tenure rights, as well as climate change adaptation benefits. While opportunities to

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simultaneously mitigate climate change, conserve biodiversity, and improve local development sound ideal, there have also been growing concerns regarding the possible socio-economic impacts of REDD+ projects on forest-dependent communities. Limited participation by Indigenous Peoples, women and other marginalized groups, and the increased risk of losing access to forests due to limited acknowledgment of their rights over forest resources have both been cited as potential problems.<sup>3</sup> In this light, women are among those most likely to be negatively affected by climate change.

Although there have been numerous studies conducted to understand the potential socio-economic impacts of the REDD+ initiative to forest dependent people and governance issues,<sup>4</sup> thorough investigations to understand how the initiative impacts men and women differently are still entirely lacking. Despite several decades of forestry policies and programs seeking to foster and/or support community forest management and related livelihood and enterprise initiatives, and a wealth of lessons learned about the need to understand the gender dimension of community forest resource governance, use and management, as well as experience in implementing targeted actions to address gender disparities, the lessons learned have not been reflected in the design or implementation of REDD+ initiatives. In this case, gender analysis can be an invaluable tool to illuminate the ways in which REDD+ and Payment for Environmental Services (PES) projects bring about gender-differentiated consequences, recommend steps to be taken to mitigate negative impacts on women, and develop gender equitable outcomes throughout the project development and implementation.

Institutions responsible for REDD+ programs and projects are not situated in a vacuum and cannot be separated from the influence of the larger society in which they are situated; an institution's culture tends to reproduce the norms, values and attitudes of the larger society. In this study, we further explore how patriarchal institutional culture contributes to the shape of REDD+ program and activities.

This chapter is based on the authors' recent study for USAID on gender and REDD+ in the Asia region.<sup>5</sup> The study aims at identifying and assessing existing practices of REDD+ and PES projects that contribute to women's empowerment and gender integration, and provide recommendations on how REDD+ initiatives in Asia can successfully incorporate gender perspectives. The study also analyzes how different roles and status of women and men within the community, political sphere, workplace and households affect the achievement of sustainable results for REDD+ projects, and how the anticipated results of the project affect men and women differently. To do so, the authors conducted in-country consultations in Viet Nam, Viet Nam, Indonesia, Thailand, Nepal and Cambodia, and desk studies for India, Bangladesh and Papua New Guinea. Interviews were conducted with various stakeholders engaged in REDD+ project development and implementation and some representatives of international organizations, including World Agroforestry Center (ICRAF), Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), UN-REDD, and RECOFTC – The Center for People and Forests (RECOFTC). The authors also conducted field visits to some REDD+ and PES pilot projects, including: Oddar Meanchey REDD+ project (OM-REDD) in Cambodia; Ulu Masen REDD+ in Aceh, Indonesia; UN-REDD and a PES projects in Viet Nam; and NORAD REDD+ and PES pilot projects in Nepal.

## 2. INCORPORATION OF GENDER INTO REDD+ PROGRAM AND ACTIVITIES

Despite the evidence of women's extensive engagement in forest management, few institutions in the countries studied have incorporated gender into their activities and plans. The current, almost complete neglect of gender issues and women's roles as stakeholders within REDD+ policies, plans and projects

globally provides evidence that little has changed in the way that members of the forest sector view these concerns. This is despite the fact that gender equality is currently understood in the community of development practitioners as key to reaching goals for poverty alleviation and human development.

The study finds that institutions implementing and/or supporting REDD+ projects in the region are not systematically incorporating gender considerations within their REDD+ policies, plans and projects. In Cambodia, there is no evidence that the REDD+ Roadmap planners recognize that women and men have different roles and knowledge related to forest management, and that women should therefore be recognized as significant stakeholders. There is no gender-based targeting of REDD+ activities or consideration of gender as an indicator within the Roadmap's Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA). Within the OM-REDD Project in Cambodia, there is evidence of an awareness of the need to secure women's participation and benefits to ensure project success, but the project's planning and implementation lacks a systematic incorporation of gender concerns. A proposal to strengthen women's almost non-existent leadership in the Community Forests Management Committees (CFMCs) outlines a set of activities for women's empowerment, but has not been implemented, as it was not incorporated into the original budget and plan of work.

In Viet Nam, gender issues have either not been considered, or if considered, have not been systematically incorporated within project objectives and activities of the projects reviewed, including

## BOX 1: SUCCESS STORY OF SUSTAINING LOCAL ECONOMY THROUGH DEVELOPING MICRO FINANCE FOR WOMEN

Lubuk Beringin is a village covering 2,800 hectares (84 percent of the area is watershed protection forest), is located in Bungo District in the edge of Kerinci Seblat National Park (TNKS). The majority of people in the village live below poverty line. The main source of local income is rubber from agroforests that provide not only rubber but also durian and other fruits as well as medicinal plants. Under Integrated Conservation and Development Project (ICDP) in TNKS (1997-2002), the villagers agreed to maintain the forest areas, planting bamboo along the riverside and not cultivating land with more than 80 degree slope. A local NGO, KKI Warsi, assisted men and women to empower village institutions to enhance villagers' economic status and to sustainably manage natural resources. In 2000, the NGO started to facilitate women, all of whom were Muslim, to hold a meeting on Fridays. The meetings began with religious teachings and continued with arisan, a private lottery similar to a betting pool. Each participant is obliged to submit IDR 2,000 (1,000 for lottery share and the rest to support the religious teaching). In the long run, they eventually managed to develop a credit union that provides micro credit for women to start up small businesses and offer financial support when they face unexpected expenses.

Despite the failure of other ICDP initiatives in this area, Dahlia, a women's cooperative, sustains and successfully supports the local economy. A PES project was initiated by ICRAF after the closure of ICDP project. An agreement was developed between villagers who have protected the watershed areas and ICRAF. In return, the communities were granted micro-hydro facilities to generate electricity in the village. The women's credit union also got additional revenue for their credit union. The credit union is now a legal entity, a women cooperative that provides its members with small loans. The cooperative also rents items for wedding parties or meetings, and home handicrafts industries. An annual meeting is held for members to distribute the net profits of the cooperative to its members. Some portion of the profit is allocated for watershed conservation expenses and some other for new investments. Currently the cooperative has total assets of IDR 200 million (approximately US\$23,000).

Source: Akiefnawati et.al. (2010); Syaifullah (2008)

those of the Netherlands Development Organization (SNV), Winrock and UN-REDD. While there were initiatives to incorporate gender in the original project design of Winrock's Asia Regional Biodiversity Conservation Program (ARBCP), project implementation has not supported gender-specific activities other than to support women as bamboo handicraft entrepreneurs. More often, project leaders assume that household benefits—such as payments from PES projects—automatically reach women and lead to women's empowerment, without dedicating attention to this objective, nor addressing the costs of women's participation in these activities. Attention to gender in the programs/projects reviewed is limited to counting the numbers of women versus men engaged in activities and benefitting from services, and is lacking in approaches to ensure that women's strategic needs to access and influence the design and monitoring of the projects are met. The UN-REDD program in Viet Nam has addressed gender issues by ensuring significant women's participation in its awareness programs, by developing the capacities of rural women to participate in a meaningful way, and inviting members of the Women's Union into these sessions. However to date, there is no evidence of how gender is to be addressed beyond this stage, either in capacity building activities or through the benefit distribution system. All of these programs lack tailor-made approaches to empower women through recognition, assimilation, capacity-building and leadership for ensuring gender consideration into REDD+ and PES projects. Likewise, there is no mention of how REDD+ projects might affect women's needs for non-timber forest products (NTFPs) or agricultural resources, or impact their current workloads.

In Indonesia, the REDD+ National Strategy does not mention gender issues or provide ideas about how REDD+ projects might have differentiated impacts on women and men, and there is no clear plan to ensure women have equal access to project information and benefits. Although the document provides a specific section on the importance of enhancing multi-stakeholder participation in the processes of REDD+ policy and project development, women are not considered as an important stakeholder in these processes. Planning documents for the Ulu Masen REDD project refer to the need to engage women in the consultative processes and incorporate women's voices into project activities, but the project has not succeeded in engaging women in this way, in part due to its lack of a strategy to address the strong patriarchal character of the mukim (local administration) structure that effectively denies women access to public meetings. In many community forestry projects in Indonesia, women are significantly involved in numerous activities such as planting, nursery management, maintenance, replanting trees, harvesting NTFPs and marketing the products.<sup>6</sup> However, women's participation and representation in the forest farmers groups (Kelompok Tani Hutan), an institution that is usually established in the village located close to forest areas, is almost absent.<sup>7</sup>

In Nepal, women are projected in REDD+ readiness documents as vulnerable communities, despite recent policy changes that recognize new rights for women to own land and have their issues addressed at the highest levels. Within Nepal's Readiness Plan, consultation is recommended as the only strategy for attending to gender issues. The REDD Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) does not discuss the possible costs of REDD+ mechanisms in Nepal, which may have negative impacts on women's access to fuel wood and other NTFPs by restricting their access to forest use because of claims by other actors on forest resources for carbon sales or conservation purposes. None of the existing projects have identified the Convention to End Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) as a binding agreement to safeguard women's rights in REDD+ programs; indeed the study team found little awareness of CEDAW amongst staff of the institutions and projects visited.

In the UN-REDD document for Papua New Guinea (PNG), there is no specific consideration of the ways REDD+ projects and policies can affect women and men differently, or acknowledgement that

women are important stakeholders to be consulted in the process. The document cites the outcomes to be achieved by UN-REDD to reduce gender inequalities in PNG by 2012 but there is no further discussion of how REDD+ schemes can be an avenue for achieving the intended outcomes.

Similarly, within the international and regional organizations interviewed, gender is just beginning to be considered and not yet mainstreamed throughout programs of research, capacity building and advisory services delivered by RECOFTC, ICRAF and CIFOR. ICRAF has recently conducted the first study to compare gender-disaggregated profiles and gender analyses of three PES sites in the Philippines to determine the perspectives of women and men on environmental conservation and rewards for environmental services, and elicit issues and implications for integrating gender in project policies, plans and activities. This study concludes with two vague recommendations: “harness gender differentials for effective participation in natural resource management and address women’s strategic needs but avoid the ‘multiple role syndrome’.”<sup>8</sup> Otherwise, ICRAF has produced tools to generate sex-disaggregated data on tenure rights to land and carbon and recognizes the gender implications of benefit sharing. CIFOR has initiated research on women’s involvement in REDD+ through a module within its Global Comparative Study on REDD+, that contains a ‘women’s questionnaire’ to gather data on women’s livelihoods and how they change over time; women’s participation in village decisions; perceptions of changes in women’s wellbeing; and women’s knowledge of and involvement in REDD+.

These organizations have stated their intentions to build internal capacities to enhance their activities to incorporate gender into REDD+ and other programs of work in the near future. To date, RECOFTC has not yet systematically incorporated gender or paid specific attention to women as stakeholders or professionals in their capacity building or publications related to REDD+, but has expressed interest in doing so; they have initiated a Gender in REDD Net list-serve that is informing users of new publications and developments.

The study shows that countries and organizations in the Asia region have far to go before they are effectively addressing gender within their REDD+ policies, plans and projects. These findings mirror global trends that have excluded women and gender from traditionally male-dominated forestry and environment sectors for decades, as described above.

It should be noted that the very process of discussing this topic with people in the countries covered in this study generated an overwhelmingly positive response by those interviewed, several of whom demonstrated high levels of interest to champion gender equality and women’s empowerment in their projects and institutions. These positive demonstrations of commitment, however, are in stark contrast to institutional realities, where institutions have not seriously considered gender or viewed women as key stakeholders in forest management. Despite that fact, there has been positive development since the completion of this study, wherein some institutions and projects, such as UN-REDD, USAID and KFCP projects in Central Kalimantan, Indonesia, have recently hired gender consultants to assist the development of a work plan for gender within its programs.

### 3. PARTICIPATION AND BENEFIT SHARING

The participation of local communities and marginalized groups living around the forest in the development and implementation of REDD+ projects is central to ensure sustainable outcomes of these initiatives. The degree to which local communities can meaningfully participate in REDD+ activities will depend on accurate information they have about REDD+: what it is about, what their participation will be and what costs and benefits they might incur from their engagement. However, the complexity of



REDD+ frameworks and the highly technical language used in the consultations have rendered meaningful participation by representatives of marginalized groups impossible. A lack of understanding about the REDD+ framework, its benefits and risks have been a major barrier for their effective participation. Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) is promoted as a way to achieve a higher level of participation throughout all phases of REDD+ project development and implementation.<sup>9</sup>

Most of the REDD+ initiatives assessed in this study have acknowledged the importance of stakeholders' engagement in REDD+ project development and implementation. Nevertheless, women's participation in these processes has been minimal due to limited acknowledgement of women as a distinct stakeholder, with perspectives and experiences that may differ from those of men. In Indonesia and Cambodia, women have been minimally involved in REDD+ decision making processes from village to national levels. In one of the project sites visited by the team in Aceh, Indonesia, a women's group had neither an understanding about the project and what benefits could be gained, nor had they received an invitation to be engaged in any consultation processes. Despite women's involvement in maintaining a tree nursery and organic composting site, they had not been involved in the broader discussion about the project scheme. The patriarchal culture and conservative religious views on women's roles in the public spaces give considerable challenges for women to fully participate in the project. Male villagers repeatedly mentioned women's lack of formal education and confidence to speak in public as reasons not to invite women in the meetings. In Viet Nam, however, women have been reported to participate in the UN-REDD FPIC process in Lam Dong province, in which more than half (51.8 percent) of the village level meeting participants were women. At these meetings, women were reportedly outspoken and also clear on their assertions about REDD. However, women's presence and influence is almost negligible at the higher district and national levels.

Regardless of the discouraging fact of minimal levels of women's representation and participation in REDD+ project development and implementation, there are many women's formal and informal organizations that can potentially be empowered to engage in the REDD+ project development and implementation and to channel benefits from the initiatives in the future. In Indonesia, the study finds many formal/informal women's organizations at the village level, such as those of women farmers' organizations (*kelompok wanita tani*). In Viet Nam, there is the Viet Nam Women's Union (VWU), a mass organization representing all strata of women throughout the country at the local, provincial and national levels. The VWU and the National Committee for the Advancement of Women (NCAFW) share responsibility for implementing the Gender Equality Law but their involvement in the REDD/PES is noticeably absent. In Nepal, the Himalayan Grassroots Women's Natural Resource Management Association (HIMAWANTI) is a federation of women-led Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs) of 32 districts, representing all geographical locations. HIMAWANTI works through its women change agents on several topics, ranging from human rights to natural resource management. A large formal body of CFUGs, FECOFUN, has stipulated that 50 percent of positions within its national and district structures should be for women members, providing appropriate capacity development programs for advocacy. Yet this policy is not fully operational at the local level. FECOFUN's lack of advocacy for women's issues in REDD awareness programs was evident during the R-PP preparation phase and within its own project, the RECOFTC/FECOFUN REDD project.

As REDD+ projects investigated in this study are still at the initial stage of development and implementation, most of them have not clearly designated a benefit sharing mechanism. In some cases of REDD+ projects in Cambodia and Indonesia, the percentage of benefit allocation among different project proponents has been decided but how the benefits will be distributed within communities is still unclear.

It is commonly assumed that if benefits flow to village level institutions, despite these being predominantly male-led, then benefits will trickle down equally to other beneficiaries in the village, including women.

This view is rooted in a misleading assumption that forest dependent communities are homogenous or balance the power of different community members and neglects power relation dynamics embedded in cultural and social structures within communities. Experience with PES and community forestry projects has shown that if women are not clearly targeted as project beneficiaries, for example by including their names on certificates and contracts, they will not likely obtain the project benefits.<sup>10</sup> In this way, REDD+ may serve to actually widen gender disparities. Therefore, in implementing REDD+ initiatives, benefit sharing mechanisms and payment structures should be gender sensitive.

#### 4. WOMEN'S ROLE AND STATUS IN RELATION TO LAND OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT UNDER REDD+ PROJECTS

Forest tenure is one of major themes in the REDD+ debates. The rights to obtain benefits and participate in the decision making processes of REDD+ project is often determined by tenure rights over forest land. Clear tenure arrangement, roles and responsibilities in the REDD+ implementation will enable the project proponents to devise equal and just benefit sharing mechanisms and determine incentive for behavior change. The larger context of discussions amongst REDD+ supporters reveals a consensus that, "secure titles and access rights are seen to be fundamental for an effective REDD design."<sup>11</sup> In this regard, some authors have argued that REDD+ could prompt governments to clarify and formalize tenure rules, which would enable forest dependent communities to use forest conservation incentive payments to improve education and health care and as a source of direct revenue.<sup>12</sup>

In the current REDD+ discussion, widespread attention to Indigenous People's rights (in reference to the UNDRIP), in particular, brings a strong rights-based approach that should, in theory, carry over to a consideration of women's rights to land, as stipulated by CEDAW and other international treaties signed on by the majority of the world's countries, guaranteeing these rights. Without secure tenure rights, local communities, including women, are very prone to dispossession, especially if REDD+ projects increase land values and outside interests.<sup>13</sup> Based on her study on land tenure reform in Latin America and Asia, Larson argues that even if the REDD+ programs are planned to ensure secure tenure rights, there are still risks of elite capture, conflict and inequity.<sup>14</sup>

Although clear and secure tenure has been acknowledged as a necessary pre-condition for making the REDD+ initiative successful, such a condition can hardly be found in countries assessed in this study. Unclear tenure arrangements over forestland are common. In addition, due to institutionalized gender biases and the widespread exclusion of women stakeholders in global and national forums on REDD+, women's rights to land and forest resources have not been part of the discussions. Women risk exclusion from REDD+ and other carbon payment opportunities by virtue of their weak rights to land and trees. They suffer from not only a lack of legal rights, but also weak traditional rights over land and trees.

It is important to note that recognition of rights to forest products and carbon credits from forests is critical in order for women to be included in the revenue sharing from REDD+ activities on such lands. Given that REDD+ funding is based on performance indicators (and not development assistance as usual), the degree to which globally agreed indicators comply with international laws that assure women's equal rights to land affects whether or not REDD+ becomes a means of transformation for women's property rights. REDD+ has the potential to provide women with new rights to forest land, if women are recognized as stakeholders whose secure titles are required by REDD+ financing mechanisms, donors and private investors.

## 5. GENDER ANALYSIS

As described earlier, REDD+ provides both opportunities and challenges for numerous marginalized groups, including women. Our study points to potential gendered impacts of REDD+ initiatives and reveals the ways in which women can positively contribute to and benefit from the initiatives.

### 5.1 REDD+ projects' anticipated impacts on men and women

REDD+ provides a framework for supporting activities that can have positive impacts on communities, improve livelihoods, and conserve and restore forest resources, presenting some opportunities for positive outcomes for forest-dependent communities. However, REDD+ could also produce significant risks and harmful negative outcomes. Indeed, REDD+ projects will impact women and men differently. Current discussions on REDD+ are very weak with respect to the gender dimension and to its impacts on rural women who have few or no options. There are at least four factors that influence the ways REDD+ produce gendered differentiated impacts:

- *Women's higher workloads*

Studies and reports have suggested that in many rural communities, women often have higher workloads than men. In Nepal, women work four to five hours longer than men.<sup>15</sup> Their activities to collect fuelwood, water and fodder becomes much more tiring and time consuming in the hill and mountain areas due to difficult terrain and poor access to roads, markets and water supplies.<sup>16</sup> Women-headed farm households have considerably higher workloads, particularly when male labour is not available for numerous tasks, such as ploughing. In the context of REDD+, our study shows that women are often unable to participate in numerous capacity building activities and decision making processes because of their high workloads.

Furthermore, there are also risks that REDD+ mechanisms may not address women's differentiated roles in forest management (e.g. need of fuel-wood, honey, other NTFPs). Although women participate in forest patrolling in some of the countries of this assessment, men are often said to be the forest patrollers. Women are perceived to do the 'soft' work such as household and child rearing tasks, while men are perceived to do the 'hard' work, outside the home. Due to such perceptual boundaries, women tend to get no recognition for their contributions to forest protection and management. As such, their recognition as active agents for protection and thus, they may not be compensated under REDD+ or PES payments, despite significant increases in their work burdens that may result from additional forest management activities. Due to the differentiated roles and rights of women and men in relation to forest resource management, and the fact that REDD+ is performance-based, there is a need for specific gender analyses and provisions in all REDD+ mechanisms so that women can be directly rewarded for their forest enhancing activities.

- *Gendered access to decision making processes*

Within REDD+, there is a fairly high probability that rural women will be harmed by projects that exclude them from decision making processes and the use of forests on which they and their households rely. Consultations on REDD+ denote a marked absence of women in who represent these concerns, or who can influence decision makers. Due to the limited capacity and knowledge of women's groups about REDD+ impacts on women, it is much harder for women to significantly engage in technical and legal negotiations on REDD+ and benefit sharing. In addition, women can be displaced from forests that they depend on, when these are placed under conservation schemes for carbon sequestration. Without specific



plans to incorporate gender-based needs and priorities, it is questionable as to whether or not REDD+ benefits can extend beyond carbon revenues to social and subsistence benefits.

- *Gendered access to knowledge related to REDD+*

Access to knowledge about REDD+ initiative and its potential risks and benefits are very crucial for forest dependent communities so that they can make informed decision related to the initiative. Nevertheless, women and men have differentiated access to knowledge about REDD+. Men may learn more about REDD+ and participate more in public fora while women are left out, thus widening the gap. Due to their lower levels of literacy, the lack of recognition of women as significant stakeholders, and widespread gender biases, women may be further excluded while men are provided with more and more capacity building opportunities, as currently proposed by REDD+ protagonists.

- *Gendered access to REDD+ benefits*

As described earlier, access to REDD+ benefits are often differentiated by gender. Women are prone to be excluded from REDD+ and other carbon payment opportunities due to their weak legal and customary rights to land and trees and their limited participation in the decision making processes to determine benefit sharing. If women cannot participate in the decision-making process on benefit sharing, their aspiration and needs would unlikely be incorporated and considered in the benefit sharing systems.

The four factors above describe ways in which REDD+ can bring negative impacts to women. It is critical that this gap be addressed so that the policies, mechanisms and processes take full account of the differentiated rights, roles and responsibilities of men and women, promote gender equality and equity in REDD+ policies and practices, and reward women who protect and manage forest resources. If designed and implemented effectively, REDD+ has the potential to simultaneously serve as a vehicle for sustainability, poverty alleviation and women's empowerment. REDD+ can have positive implications for both gender equality and women's leadership. A REDD+ project that delivers carbon revenues to special groups of stakeholders who are rewarded for their contributions to reducing carbon emissions, enhancing forest protection, etc. could be making higher payments to women than men in a community, based on performance indicators and PES contracts. This would be the case if projects were implemented by women's organizations with the objective of providing maximum benefits from REDD+ projects to rural women managing forest enhancement activities through collectives. This is currently being piloted by groups of Indigenous Peoples in Nepal, for example, using funds allocated by donors sympathetic to their cause.

## 5.2 Women's potential contributions to REDD+ initiatives

Different roles and status of women and men within the community, political sphere, workplace and household can affect the achievement of sustainable results in REDD+ projects. Therefore, engaging all legitimate stakeholders who depend on forest resources and will be affected by REDD+ projects is central to achieve successful implementation of projects and to produce sustainable outcomes. Women can contribute to long-term success in several ways:

- *Women often have intimate knowledge of landscapes that can help REDD+ projects succeed*

As primary users and managers of forests, women often have local and very specific and sophisticated knowledge of the interlinked systems of forests, livestock and crop production, and have made significant contributions of labor and time to maintaining forest and soil resources. With such unique knowledge, derived from experience, women can provide added value to initiatives to mitigate climate change.

- *Women can play an essential role in forest monitoring*

Likewise, women's role in monitoring the forest health, forest protection and by extension carbon sequestration can substantially benefit REDD+. As the information from Nepal, Cambodia and Viet Nam indicates, monitoring of forests by staff of forest departments together with men and women of communities has been helpful to control forest misuse and improve protection.

- *Engaging and consulting women in project design and implementation is key to success at the local level and they should be rewarded for their efforts*

Women's use of forests for fuel wood renders them agents of deforestation, and therefore as stakeholders for whom behavior change can decrease carbon emissions. As such, they should be offered incentives that reward them for forest enhancement and avoided forest degradation/deforestation. For REDD+ to achieve sustained emission cuts, forests need to be well-protected and managed. Given the wide scope of women's activities in forestry, it is crucial that women understand the program, weigh the costs/benefits scenarios with and without REDD+, and then choose to engage in the project. For example, the substantive reduction in forest irregularities in the ARBCP project in Viet Nam (up to 50 percent) and thus, enhanced protection can be attributed to women's understanding, contribution and commitment to forest protection. Had the women not embraced and contributed to the program, the forest protection would likely have suffered and sustainability of forests could not be assured.

Some countries have developed and supported community forestry policies as a pathway for securing communities' rights over forest land. Given that forest land available for community management is, in almost all cases, owned by the government, rights for women to own land may not an option, making other means of assuring joint rights of both men and women to forests crucial. Success stories have been documented throughout Asia in which communities that obtain secure access to forests have successfully established sustainable forest management.<sup>17</sup> Women's engagement is critical for the success of community forestry initiatives. Studies in Nepal indicate that excluding women in forest management can result in negative consequences not only for gender equality and women's livelihoods, but also for efficient functioning and long term sustainability of these initiatives.<sup>18</sup> Women's CFUGs have successfully protected forest, rehabilitated degraded land, and managed nurseries. As a result, there have been fewer landslides, increased sources of fuel wood and livestock fodder for family members, among others. In Lubuk Beringin, Indonesia, assuring women's involvement in the community forestry project and PES projects has been the key to the generation of successful and sustainable alternative livelihoods in the villages.<sup>19</sup>

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 efficient functioning and long term sustainability of these initiatives.<sup>20</sup> 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.<sup>21</sup> Integrating women's needs and priorities in community forestry is thus essential to promote sustainable conservation.

Current gender roles assign women's responsibilities within household spheres, particularly in rural ethnic communities in Viet Nam. This also means that women need to cater to the household needs for forest products such as firewood, fruits, honey, etc. If REDD+ programs ban women's access and do not provide alternative ways to obtain these products, women's role may force them to break into forests to harvest trees and NTFPs, thus affecting the abilities of communities to protect forest resources. Similar cases have been reported in community forestry projects in Nepal.<sup>22</sup>

- *Women's groups have proven to be effective structures for community-based forest management and should be engaged as a mechanism for capacity building and benefit sharing for REDD+*

Women's groups have proven to be effective structures for community-based forest management, and therefore should be engaged as a mechanism for capacity building and benefit sharing for REDD+. In Nepal, women CFUGs protecting forests, managing nurseries and afforesting degraded lands, which has resulted in fewer landslides, the provision of fuel and fodder resources, a tree survival rate of 60-80 percent, legal bans on tree felling, and increased sources of fuel wood and livestock fodder for member families. When women's groups were linked by an NGO in Cambodia to form networks, they were able to increase their power 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 government.<sup>23</sup> Thus, for REDD+ to be successful, forests have to be managed closely and belong to specific owners. Unless they are granted rights that provide them with clear benefits, rights and obligations, it cannot be assumed that women will contribute to the sustainability of protected forests.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MOVING FORWARD

There are several recommendations that can be adopted to integrate gender perspectives in REDD+ programs, thereby ensuring that the initiatives do not harm women and can optimally contribute to gender equality.

*First, REDD+ programs should incorporate gender mainstreaming tools. Key activities include:*

**Gender analysis:**<sup>24</sup> conducting gender analysis to provide background information on gendered resource use, responsibilities, perspectives and needs. Collecting this information helps ensure the quality of REDD+ project design.

**Gender-integrated design:** Based on the gender analysis, develop a strategic plan to achieve change for women's empowerment and gender equality. This process should include women and men identified in Stage 1 and ensure their input and full participation in project decision making and entails identifying and working with opinion leaders, especially religious and women leaders/elders in communities on gender issues related to harmful practices; and consulting with external groups that can assist with strategic planning to change attitudes and increase acceptance of such approaches.

**Gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation:** Develop a gender monitoring and evaluation (M & E) system that includes indicators for measuring behavioral and institutional outcomes, and ensures the participation of women and men leaders in this process. Use outcome mapping and participatory evaluation methods to determine effectiveness of women's groups to implement project activities, monitor, and distribute benefits. One specific suggestion is to incorporate gender indicators into existing standards and guidelines for REDD+ monitoring and evaluation, such as Climate, Community and Biodiversity Project Design Standards (CCB Standards),<sup>24</sup> to ensure that women have equal access to REDD+ benefits and avoid negative impacts.

*Second, REDD+ projects should pay particular attention to incorporate gender into aspects of participation, capacity building, governance and benefit sharing.*

**Meaningful participation:** To ensure women's meaningful participation in all stages of REDD+ initiatives, it is crucial to raise awareness among stakeholders to underline that women are a distinct stakeholder group in REDD+. Bringing these issues up in dialogue will raise awareness and embolden

those who already have an interest in addressing gender issues. Furthermore, it may be important to mandate at least 30 percent<sup>25</sup> of women's participation in consultations and awareness sessions and develop their abilities to advocate effectively, to assure that women have equal and timely access to information on REDD+ policies, processes, risks and benefits. Ensuring that women are fully participating in decisions related to REDD+ program activities that would affect the resources on which their livelihoods depend.

Due to women's multiple roles as caretakers, farmers and collectors of water, fuel wood and other necessities, they are often unable to attend meetings and are therefore denied access to information. Meetings therefore must be organized in ways that suit women's schedules, use appropriate language and terminology and allow sufficient time for discussion. Based on information acquired, women may have the right to withhold consent for REDD+ projects to be implemented within their communities<sup>26</sup> as FPIC provides to Indigenous Peoples.

**Technical and leadership capacity building for women** is important to enable women to become 'champions' who can influence and train others. In order for rural, poor women to feel sufficiently empowered to play an active role in REDD+, they must gain skills that include: literacy/numeracy, advocacy/public speaking, community development and organizing, influencing and negotiation and MRV (measurement, reporting and verification) of forest carbon (for baseline establishment and verification). In addition, men's support to women leaders is crucial to create an environment that enables women's effective engagement.

**Strengthen women's organizations/self-help groups** to provide them with skills and knowledge to enable them to negotiate the terms of their engagement with REDD+ projects and to obtain loans and technical assistance through technical and micro-finance institutions. Actions should include the following:

1. Map existing formal and informal women's organizations at the local level, including farmer associations, savings and micro-credit groups
2. Engage with mixed organizations of men and women (i.e. within farmer associations) to include unique knowledge and perspectives of both groups, and build their mutual support for REDD+-related initiatives
3. Develop systems of benefit distribution, using existing savings, micro-credit and self-help group mechanisms
4. Support/form federations of women's groups managing forest resources, so as to promote shared learning, and advocacy at the national level
5. Encourage vertical and horizontal alliances between local level groups and national women's organizations and service NGOs (vertical linkages, as in Viet Nam that spur innovation and synergistic actions)

**Governance:** Mandate at least 30 percent women's membership in governing bodies for community forestry and local and national development/administration, including those that make decisions related to fund disbursement. Based on this assessment's findings that the forestry and environment sectors in the countries surveyed are traditionally dominated by men to the detriment of women's advancement and consideration of gender issues at national, regional and local governance level, it is important to ensure that women are not only represented in decision making bodies, but also given the means and forums to effectively participate. Strengthening women's participation in Community

Forestry Management Committees would increase women's ability to address their needs and assure their right to benefits of REDD+. For instance, the CFUGs in Nepal provide a critical entry point for women to gain experience and confidence, and build networks that could be leveraged in seeking high-level support and promoting change in political structures.

**Benefit sharing:** Mechanisms of benefit distribution that recognize and reward women's contributions to REDD+ activities must be developed to ensure that women get equal access to the benefits. It is also important to analyze gaps and opportunities in current benefit sharing systems to incorporate gender and social equity into the design. This analysis should consider existing micro-credit and savings schemes used by local communities and women's groups. Use action research to test various benefit sharing and distribution mechanisms. Many of the existing recommendations geared toward ensuring that REDD+ helps poor communities—ensuring equitable benefit distribution; systems of accountability, information-sharing, and participation in decision-making; and accessibility on a smaller scale—can and need to be adapted to apply specifically to the situation of women.<sup>27</sup> Often women do not have their economic, household, or personal needs met when such mechanisms channel resources to a community or project. One way around this is to specifically include women's names on certificates and contracts, so they will obtain project benefits.

*Third, provide secure tenure for women.*

Official recognition and implementation of women's rights to forest products and carbon from forests is crucial to ensure women to get share from the revenue of REDD+ and ensure their traditional access to forests for fuel wood and livelihoods is not unduly restricted due to REDD+ activities. Actions to strengthen women's land tenure position are critical to enable them to benefit from payments for conserving trees and land. This includes formalizing women's collective rights to forest or wastelands in order to assure their long-term rights to carbon payments. REDD+ has the potential of providing women with new rights to forest land, if women are recognized as stakeholders whose secure titles are required by REDD+ financing mechanisms, donors and private investors. Furthermore, given that REDD+ funding is based on performance (and not development assistance as usual), the degree to which globally agreed indicators comply with international laws that ensure women's equal rights to land affects whether or not REDD+ will be transformative for women's property rights. REDD+ has the potential of providing women with new rights to forest land, if women are recognized as stakeholders whose secure titles are required by REDD+ investors.

*Fourth, compensate women for their engagement in forest protection and carbon monitoring activities.*

Women's role in monitoring forest health, forest protection and, by extension, carbon sequestration can substantially benefit REDD+. As information from Nepal, Cambodia and Viet Nam indicates, combined forest monitoring including forest department staff together community members (men and women) has helped control forest misuse and improve forest protection. Including women in and compensating them for forest protection and monitoring activities can increase the sustainability of REDD+ activities, while improving women's livelihoods and social standing. Field experience also shows that involving women in forest management improves management outcomes, whereas excluding them has a negative impact, especially since women often heavily dependent on forest resources.

*Fifth, explore pilot projects that use REDD+ payments to reward women for their knowledge and roles as forest managers.*

Through activities that increase carbon sequestration, such as tree planting or reforestation, or reduce GHG emissions from forests, such as protecting threatened forests, women forest users should be able to



generate carbon credits that can provide them with income while encouraging and enhancing their sustainable land use practices. Given the current state of REDD+ development, projects that work directly with women's forest users groups are likely to be looking to sell credits on the voluntary carbon markets or be part of national or regional level schemes to scale up REDD+.

*Sixth, develop and analyze innovations through pilot projects to use forest carbon markets for income generation for rural women.*

*Seventh, look for ways to increase women's engagement and buy-in by increasing their living standards and wellbeing.*

Design REDD+ activities in ways that enable women's participation in decision making, including reducing women's workloads to meet families' daily needs for food, fuel and income that are currently limiting their participation in community meetings and decision-making processes, and preventing them from achieving higher levels of well-being. Improved cook stoves, biogas, solar energy sources and other technologies provide ways in which to address drivers of deforestation while simultaneously decreasing the time women must spend for fuel wood collection, for example. These activities may be included in REDD+ strategies, as they relate to the reduction of carbon emissions.

*Finally, promote technologies of renewable energy and agroforestry to meet the needs of women for fuel wood and fodder resources while building their climate change resilience.*

Poor women are the most likely to be negatively affected by climate change, through their roles as farmers and food providers. Women of smallholder farming communities who rely on forest resources, and have limited ability to expand or intensify, will suffer most from the negative impacts of climate change. Agro-forestry can play an important role in improving the resilience of farming systems to climate variability while increasing food security and providing fodder resources for livestock, thus easing women's workloads and alleviating hunger and poverty.

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## ENDNOTES

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<sup>3</sup> Baldwin, Andrew. 2009. "Carbon nullius and racial rule: Race, nature and the cultural politics of forest carbon in Canada". *Antipode* (41): 2. 231-255; Sunderlin, William et al. 2009. "Forest tenure rights and REDD+: From inertia to policy solutions." Arield Angelsen (ed.). *Realizing REDD+: National Strategy and Policy Options*. Bogor: CIFOR.

<sup>4</sup> For these studies, see Sunderlin et.al, 2009: 1; Wollenberg, Eva and Springgate-Baginski, O. 2009. "Incentives +: How can REDD improve wellbeing in forest communities." *Brief Info*. Bogor: CIFOR; Angelsen, Arield. 2008. *Moving Ahead REDD: Issues, Options and Implications*. CIFOR: Bogor; Griffith, T. 2007. *Seeing 'Red'? 'Avoided Deforestation' and the Rights of Indigenous People and Local Communities*. Forest for People Programme. [http://www.forestpeoples.org/documents/ifi\\_igo/avoided\\_deforestation\\_red\\_jun07\\_eng.pdf](http://www.forestpeoples.org/documents/ifi_igo/avoided_deforestation_red_jun07_eng.pdf)

- <sup>5</sup> USAID, 2011. *Getting REDD+ Right for Women: An analysis of the barriers and opportunities for women's participation in the REDD+ sector in Asia*.
- <sup>6</sup> Setyowati, A. 2003. *Voice of the Voiceless: A Case Study of Community Forestry in Kulon Progo, Indonesia*. Paper presented in a World Forestry Congress side event.
- <sup>7</sup> Women tend to form informal/formal women only groups in the village level.
- <sup>8</sup> Chiong-Javier et al., 2010. *Gender and Natural Resource Management: Implications for Rewarding Environmental Services in the Philippines*. ICRAF.
- <sup>9</sup> UN REDD, 2010. UN REDD hosts FPIC workshop in Viet Nam. *UN-REDD newsletter* no.10 (July 2010). Accessed from [http://www.un-redd.org/Newsletter10/UNREDD\\_FPIC\\_Workshop/tabid/4860/language/en-US/Default.aspx](http://www.un-redd.org/Newsletter10/UNREDD_FPIC_Workshop/tabid/4860/language/en-US/Default.aspx)
- <sup>10</sup> Leimona, Beria and Amanah, Siti. 2010. Gender Equality in Rewards for Environmental Services Scheme. Bogor: ICRAF.
- <sup>11</sup> The Forest Dialogue, 2010. "Beyond the REDD-hot Debate: Challenges and Options for REDD-plus Implementation". Interim Report November, 2010. [http://environment.yale.edu/tfd/uploads/TFD\\_BeyondTheREDD-hotDebate\\_InterimReport\\_en.pdf](http://environment.yale.edu/tfd/uploads/TFD_BeyondTheREDD-hotDebate_InterimReport_en.pdf)
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- <sup>20</sup> Saifullah, A. 2008. Dahlia Fosters Conservancy. *The Jakarta Post* (December, 12 2008). <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2008/11/25/039dahlia039-fosters-conservancy.html>
- <sup>21</sup> Upadhyay 2005:3; Agarwal 2002: 4.
- <sup>22</sup> Agarwal, 2002.
- <sup>23</sup> Giri, K. 2009. *Gender considerations into REDD policy in Nepal*. Paper presented at WOCAN national workshop, held August 13-14, 2010 in Kathmandu, Nepal.
- <sup>24</sup> Common strategies, steps, and approaches for conducting a useful gender analysis include: Identify and analyze the roles of women and men—both adults and children—in four spheres: productive, reproductive, community management, and environmental management that affect resource use in the project sites; Identify women and men most affected by project interventions and community leaders with the most influence and importance; Examine access and control issues regarding resources in projects (including those of Benefit Distribution Systems); Identify harmful cultural practices that might be supported or exacerbated by the project; Identify practical and strategic needs of both women and men affected by the project goals through the initiation of changes that are needed, to mitigate harmful practices and leverage social change.
- <sup>25</sup> USAID. 2010. *Cambodia Gender Assessment*: 4.
- <sup>26</sup> The Climate, Community & Biodiversity Alliance (CCBA), 2008. *Climate, Community and Biodiversity Project Design Standards*. 2nd Edition. 30 percent is considered the 'tipping point' to facilitate women's meaningful participation (moving beyond tokenism), and has been adopted by the Beijing Platform for Action ([www.un.org/womenwatch](http://www.un.org/womenwatch)).
- <sup>27</sup> Rights to withhold is stipulated in Article 32 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People for Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) which should be understood to apply to women of forest-dependent communities, as well as to Indigenous Peoples.
- <sup>28</sup> Poverty Environment Partnership, 2008. *Making REDD+ Work for the Poor*: 12.

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