

WOMEN AND ACCESS TO NATURAL RESOURCES (Forests & land)

Mary Nyuyinwi
Consultant

E-mail: mnyuyinwi@gmail.com

Tel: 77 78 04 99

PRESENTATION OUTLINE

- ✓ Why natural resource and Gender
- ✓ Why Gender and Tenure (key issues)
- ✓ Activities carried out by men and women in the forest
- ✓ Resources obtained by men and women in the forest
- ✓ Benefits obtained by men and women
- ✓ Access to and control over the resources
- ✓ Women's participation in forest related activities
- ✓ Conclusion

Why forests and Gender?

- The way people use and manage forests and land depends on socio-economic and socio-cultural factors, age and gender.
- The importance of gender depends on the extent to which it determines forest and land resource use, control patterns, decision making power and livelihood strategies.

Why forests and Gender?

- Women and men obtain different products and receive different benefits from forests
- Women and men have different knowledge, access and control of forests.
- Forestry projects involve men and women in different ways.
Women tend to be excluded
- Both women and men contribute in different manners to forest conservation and management.

Why Gender and Tenure

Key issues

- Women are the stewards of land
- Women are in contact with the land on a daily basis
- They face the greatest difficulties with land
- Cannot inherit
- No gender sensitive law on land and forest issues
- Limited access to trees (ownership and inheritance)

Key Issues

- There is no consideration of women's rights as concerns usage. It is based on customary law which does not recognize women's rights and some social categories to enjoy forest and land resources.

Thus, the critical issue of land tenure and decision making (notably in relation to forest resource mgt and of its revenues). The law should make a proposal above the customary law which will favour the involvement of women and other social categories in forest and land resource management.

Key issue

- The possibility to create a private forest is on the basis of land ownership. Women's access and ownership to land is extremely difficult , and so, women will be excluded from the process of creating and owning a forest.

Key Issues

- Conditions to access exploitation licences are out of reach to small exploiters. There is no provision made for NTFP and TF products. And so, small farmers's groups, despite their proximity to the forest and its exploitation find themselves not able to exploit because the conditions are quite complicated and made just to discourage them.
- Concerning the private forest, emphasis is laid on land ownership and nothing is said about tree ownership. And so, women who seldom own a piece of land , even though very much involved in tree planting are simply denied the right of possibility to owning a tree

Activities carried out by women and men in the forest

- Generally, Forests provide food security and resources, food, fodder, fuel and medicine for most of the 1.2 billion people living in extreme poverty.
- Women constitute 70% of the poor worldwide. Thus, forests are a crucial asset for women

Activities carried out by men and women in the forest (Cameroon)

Women

- Harvesting
- Collection of fuel wood
- Fishing
- Wood exploitation for home & traditional uses
- Collection of NTFP for food & medication
- Farming
- Rituals
- Water collection
- Crafts and weaving

Men

- Wood exploitation (building, sale)
- Fishing
- Cash crop production
- Logging
- Harvesting
- Distraction
- Rituals
- Hunting
- Collection of produce for medication

Resources obtained by men and women in the forest

- Women use wild patches and marginal areas from which they collect plants for food, medicine, seeds generation.
- Women worldwide rely primarily on wood for home heating and cooking.
- Women tend to collect berries, fruits, spices and small branches for fuel, while men will cut down the same trees to sell as firewood or to be used in construction

Resources obtained by men and women in the forest

Women

- NTFP
- Fuel wood
- Raw material for craft work & medicine
- Food
- Tree barks
- Water
- Small scale fishing & hunting

Men

- Food
- Industrial wood
- Medicine
- Raw material for craft work
- Bigger animals from large scale hunting
- Honey
- Fish
- Mineral resources

Benefits

- Men are more likely to be involved in extracting timber and non-timber forest products (NTFPs) for commercial purposes
- Women typically gather forest products for fuel, fencing, food for the family, fodder for livestock and raw materials to produce natural medicines, all of which help to increase family income.

Non cash benefits for men and women

➤ Women

- Food
- Medicinal plants
- Cosmetic products
- Cultural benefits
- Good harmony with the nature

➤ Men

- Health solutions
- Food
- Cultural enrichment
- Emotional, psychological and spiritual satisfaction

Cash benefits

Women

- Sales of NTFP
- Sales of food crops
- Sales of crafts

Men

- Sales of NTFP
- Wood sales
- Logging
- Sales of hunting and fishing products
- Food crops

Access and control over resources

- Women are commonly without any formal rights to land or forests.
- Under the customary law, forests are owned by indigenous peoples or forest dependent communities but it cannot be assumed that women have equal rights with men to these lands.
- In Cameroon women's access to the forest is by family relation, and trees officially belong to the household head and are easily integrated into male systems

Access and control over the forest

Access

Women

- Production land for farming
- Harvesting
- Collection of NTFP

Control

Men

- Land
- Trees
- Exploitation mode
- Decision on forest resource management
- Forest revenues

Women's participation in forest related activities

- Forestry sector tends to be considered a masculine discipline.
- There is a tendency to exclude women from consultation processes, design, implementation of forestry projects or conservation initiatives
- Women's exclusion has led to day-to-day conflicts with the forest patrols when collecting wood and other non-timber products

CONCLUSION

- Although women often dominate the collection and marketing of NTFPs they do not have security of access to these products or land and natural resources in general
- Non ownership of land brings about the problem of tree ownership even if planted by a woman
- Thus, land ownership, deciding on management of forest resources and revenues from forest remain crucial problems for women's effective participation in forest related activities.

The future of Gender in tenure and forests

Lessons, and case studies show that women are important forest and land stakeholders.

Initiatives should critically address and integrate gender equality, women's land ownership, empower women and promote the advancement of women's rights

The law should make provisions of separating tree ownership from land ownership . This will give the possibility to a person who plants a tree to become an owner of that tree.

Future

- On issues of exploitation, the law should create some specific agreements depending on whether it is for the exploitation of NTFP or for TFP.



Thank you for your attention !!!