



DEVELOPMENT OF GENDER STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNITY FORESTS IN NAMIBIA

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28 April 2015

Cape Town International Convention Centre

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- ✘ African countries' populations live in rural areas and are highly dependent on forests and forest products.
- ✘ (67%) Namibians live in rural areas and depend on the natural environment, particularly forests, for food, medicine, shelter and other resources essential for their daily sustenance.
- ✘ The Community Forestry Programme in Namibia is adopted to manage and use forests resources in a sustainable manner.
- ✘ Namibian men and women are actively involved in the use and management of natural resources.
- ✘ However, access, control and knowledge of forest resources differs between men and women.
- ✘ As a result of the gender differentiated access to forest resources, men and women do not derive the same economic benefit from Community Forests (CFs)

METHODOLOGY



- ✘ The AIM of the study was to identify relationships of the various groups to forest resources, and the influence these relations have on control, access and use and management of these resources.
- ✘ The study was guided by the following levels of assessment:
- ✘ Gender Analysis (Harvard Gender Analytical Framework) in the targeted communities;
- ✘ **Seven** out of 13 Community Forests were selected, based on their location, language differences, cultural and land use types, period of operation and status of formalization.
- ✘ **Key informants interviews and Focus Group Discussions** were held with CFs Executive and Management Committees. Women, Men, Youth (male/female), local structures such as Traditional Leaders, Water Point Committees, Heads of Organizations operating in CFs (Safe the ,
- ✘ The study also reviewed the **Forestry Policy and National Gender Policy** to assess the extent to which they mainstreamed gender.

POLICY POSITION INTEGRATING GENDER IN FORESTRY RESOURCES



- ✘ Two policies were reviewed, the National Gender Policy (2010-2020) and the Forest Policy for Namibia.
- ✘ The aim was to assess the institutional frameworks that govern forest management, including gender and the role of women, men, youth and marginalised communities in forest management.
- ✘ The policy frameworks were assessed for their ability to provide for inclusive community participation in forest management and factors that enhance or constrain the participation of women and marginalised communities were identified.

POLICY POSITION INTEGRATING GENDER IN FORESTRY RESOURCES



NATIONAL GENDER POLICY

- ✘ The National Gender Policy's overarching goal is the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of both female and male persons.
- ✘ It guides the **planning, implementing and monitoring of gender equality strategies and programmes.**
- ✘ It provides synergy with the Forest Policy and forest resource management in four core areas:
 - 1) Gender, Poverty and Rural Development,
 - 2) Gender, Trade and Economic Empowerment,
 - 3) Gender, Governance and Decision Making and
 - 4) Gender and the Environment.

POLICY POSITION INTEGRATING GENDER IN FORESTRY RESOURCES



FOREST POLICY

- ✘ Biodiversity conservation is central to the Forestry Policy for Namibia and the empowerment of local communities to manage forest resources on a sustainable basis.
- ✘ The policy identifies:
 1. effective property rights,
 2. a supportive regulatory framework,
 3. effective extension services,
 4. community forestry and forest research,
 5. education and trainingas instruments essential to the successful implementation of sustainable forestry management in Namibia.
- ✘ It also paves the way for the establishment of community forests and their custodianship by the people dependent on such resources.

GENDER RELATIONS IN FOREST MANAGEMENT



- ✘ There are diverse forest resources that men and women depend on within the CFs in Namibia.
- ✘ Men and women have different knowledge and also use different forest resources.
- ✘ Gender differentiated levels of participation in forestry management and governance is observed in all CFs visited.
- ✘ High level of male participation in issues related to leadership, decision-making and harvesting of high valued forest products.
- ✘ The male domination in CF management and the low participation of women is attributed to cultural norms and institutional and structural barriers to gender equality and policy implementation.
- ✘ Women tend to be well represented in the management committees but under-represented in the executive committees. Positions that women hold in these committees are secretaries and treasures.
- ✘ These undermines participation of women in local governance geared towards sustainable forest management

HARVESTING, ACCESS AND CONTROL OF FOREST RESOURCES



- ✘ Harvesting of forest resources in all Community Forests visited had distinctive gender relations, where in most cases decisions to harvest which resources were greatly influenced by cultural norms.
- ✘ High value resources such as construction poles, firewood, wooden crafts, stones, honey, firewood for selling, grazing land, salt, as well as wildlife, were harvested by men.
- ✘ Women mainly harvested subsistence and low value forest resources such as thatching grass, firewood for household use, edible plants, medicinal plants, palm leaves for weaving baskets, mopane worms, and raw materials for making traditional perfumes, as well as devil's claw products.
- ✘ Extraction of commercial forest products is controlled through Government permits
- ✘ Women who are from better off classes indicated that they are able to hire labour to harvest poles and timber on their behalf, giving them decision-making power over the control and utilisation of these products.
- ✘ Most San people generate a meagre income from rendering labour to harvest wood and timber.
- ✘ At household level, harvested resources are controlled by the harvester, however, the reverse was found for the thatching grass in north-central Namibia, where women harvest and men control how the resource should be utilised.
- ✘ In North central Namibia, customs does not permit women to harvest salts, and to go to salt pans. This is despite women knowing the value attached to salt.
- ✘ Inhibiting factors such as transport, finances to acquire permits, access to harvesting tools and position in society have a negative effect on poor women and marginalised groups who desire to have access to high value forest resources.

RANKING OF FOREST RESOURCES WITH ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE BY GENDER



Otshiku tshiithilonde		Oshaampula		Talismanus		Okondjatu	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Wooden craft	Thatching grass	Firewood	Edibleplants(Ximenia	Firewood	Wild fruits	Construction poles	Firewood
Salt	Mopane worms	Construction poles	Wild spinach	Devil's claw	Firewood	Droppers	Wild edible plants
Wildlife	Grazing (livestock sales)	Wooden crafts	Baskets	Marama beans	Devil's claws	Firewood	
	Salt			Poles	Honey		
Uukolonkandhi		Ehrovipuka		Otjinene			
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female		
Stones for construction	Edible plants	Mopane worms	Mopane worms	Marama beans	Firewood		
Firewood	Mopane worms	Stones	Traditional perfumes (Otjizumba)	Construction poles	Droppers		
Thatching grass		Wildlife (Trophy hunting)	Devil's claw	Wild fruits	Construction poles		
Construction poles		Construction poles	Edible plants	Droppers	Medicinal plants		
Mopane worms		Devil's claw		Devil's claw			

- ✘ The high demand on wood products such as poles, timber , wooden crafts and firewood have created local markets benefiting men in CFs.
- ✘ Women travel to distant places to market mopane worms(*Gonimbrasia belina*) or Marama beans.
- ✘ Due to lack of markets, products are sold to a middleman/woman who has access to more profitable markets in urban areas.
- ✘ No regulation in the prices of forest resources.
- ✘ There are No Value Additions to forest products,
- ✘ These hindrances robs women and marginalised communities from earning substantial income from sale of forest resources.

DISPLACEMENT OF MINORITY GROUPS:



- ✘ Illegal fencing in CF leads to displacing minority groups (San and the Himba).
- ✘ These also leads to minority groups loosing grazing land for their livestock.
- ✘ It is becoming more and more difficult for these communities to access forest resources due to distance, as a result of vast land that has been fenced off.
- ✘ In one incidence, the San people in Omaheke region had to ask permission from the person who fenced off the land to harvest forest products and they had to also share a portion of the forest resources that they harvested.
- ✘ This same community is currently in negotiation with Government to be resettled, under the National Land Resettlement Programme



CONTRIBUTION OF FOREST PRODUCTS TO LIVELIHOODS



- ✘ Both men and women indicated that forest products contribute to health, food and financial security as well as overall household wealth.
- ✘ Men showed high satisfaction levels with the income generated from forestry products, compared to women and marginalised communities.
- ✘ Although women were somewhat satisfied with what they reaped from forest resources.
- ✘ Younger women in most CFs did not see forest products contributing to sustainable livelihoods.
- ✘ Both men and women argued that there are limited skills for innovation and value addition of their forest products to increase benefits.

GENDER INDICATORS RECOMMENDATIONS



- ✘ Several recommendation were provided for the study.
- ✘ And finally the project also lead to the development of Gender sensitive indicators that could guide the gender mainstreaming in the Community Forests.
- ✘ By developing the Gender Sensitive Indicators we hope that they will ensure that forestry-related policies that are implemented are gender responsive, and that emerging gender issues and concerns are fully taken into account.

I thank You