



Integrating gender in development of participatory forest management plans in Kenya

A 'how to' note

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Why gender matters in participatory forest management planning

Forests support the livelihood needs of forest-adjacent communities through various ecological functions. Forest management plans need to consider the needs of both men and women to ensure that forest degradation is reduced, and that communities continue to receive socioeconomic and ecological benefits from the forests.

However, forest management programs can overlook the different roles of women and men in forest management, and the impact of gender norms on issues such as tenure security and resource access and use. Although women are more involved in gathering fuelwood, medicinal plants and food, they often have limited rights. They are also marginalized in decision-making processes and access to benefits. In addition, forestry tends to be perceived as male dominated (Evans et al. 2014; Kaudia and Obonyo 2007). Sociocultural norms form a significant barrier to participation and access to benefits (Marin and Kuriakose, 2017; Sunderland et al. 2014). The norms, such as the division of labor, prevent women from accessing resources and land and having ownership rights. This restricts their participation in decision-making processes.

Traditionally, the man is expected to provide financially and the woman to take care of family members and obey the man without question (Laboso 2014). These norms limit women from participating in activities outside the home. Men also dominate leadership positions in community forest associations (CFAs). For instance, a study of 12 CFAs in Kenya showed a low representation of women. Out of the total number of officials in the CFAs, only 24% were women. Men dominated the positions of chairperson or vice-chairperson, whereas women held treasurer or secretary positions (Mogoi et al. 2012). Hence, there is need to integrate gender aspects into forest management programs and the processes involved in developing the programs from the start, not later in the process.

One way of integrating gender is to recognize the differences between men and women in their preferences and use of forest resources and further recognize that it is these preferences that shape their priorities. Therefore, it is important that the roles, needs and priorities of men and women be considered in order to increase participation, ensure equity and increase the likelihood of implementation of management programs to achieve the intended outcomes. Furthermore, men and women have different strengths that can be tapped to enhance forest management. For instance, a comparative study across

four countries in Kenya, Uganda, Bolivia and Mexico, showed that forest user groups dominated by men adopted new technologies, and women were better in managing conflicts (Mwangi et al. 2009).

Gender and forest management planning in Kenya

In Kenya, communities through CFAs are involved in forest management through Participatory Forest Management Plans (PFMP), which are developed at the forest-station level. The process of developing the plan is guided by the Participatory Forest Management Guidelines (KFS 2015). There is a gap in integrating gender into the development of forest management plans. This 'how to' note provides suggestions on how to integrate gender into both the process and content of the PFMP. This has been developed from field experience of producing PFMPs in Kenya. The gender requirements rule was also considered.

Planning the PFMP process

The initial planning to assemble a team to work with the Local Planning And Review Team is important as it forms the foundation of the development and review of the management plans.

Include a gender expert in the PFMP review team:

Before the actual team begins the development process, a team of experts should be constituted to undertake the process. This is the first step where a gender lens is required. Including a gender expert in this team is essential to ensure that the whole PFMP process integrates gender aspects at all stages from data gathering to development of management programs and developing the plan.

Forest Management Agreement (FMA): An agreement between the Kenya Forest Service/ county government and a Community Forest Association, county government, or any person or organization for the purpose of managing a state, county or private forest.

Forest Management Plan: A systematic program showing all activities to be undertaken in a forest or part thereof during a period of at least five years, including conservation, utilization, silvicultural operations and infrastructural developments (KFS 2015).

Gender in the PFMP Process

Step in the PFMPs Guidelines	How to integrate gender
Step 1: Identifying the community and resources	<p><i>Feasibility assessment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record the types of forest products used/removed by both men and women and where they are found When conducting an overview of the forest area, consider how men and women are benefiting from the forest resources When identifying the community, determine the priorities of men and women and who benefits from the different resources accessed from the forest Assess problems and priorities for men and women Determine whether and how existing cultural and gender norms can affect the process. <p><i>Formation of local planning team</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure men and women are represented on the local planning team, and in the distribution of roles Reserve some leadership and decision-making roles for women to enhance participation.
Step 2: Facilitate formation and strengthening of CFA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Represent both men and women in the membership recruitment criteria Ensure equal participation of men and women in the process of developing the local rules and regulations for the CFA When preparing the community for elections, sensitize community members on the importance of representation from both men and women in the CFA Committee and in the user group Under capacity building for the committee members, include modules on gender roles in forest management Consider having separate training sessions for men and women and others that are combined.

Step in the PFMPs Guidelines	How to integrate gender (continued)
Step 3: Assessing the forest area	<p><i>Awareness creation</i> Differentiated methods for information dissemination should be used to ensure different groups are considered, including women. Dissemination meetings such as <i>barazas</i>, should ensure equal representation of men and women and should be conducted at times and at locations that can be accessed by both men and women.</p> <p><i>Undertaking the socioeconomic surveys</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When compiling the list of households, it should include both households headed by men and those headed by women, and ensure equal proportions of these households are selected in the sample • Include men and women enumerators in the data collection team, so that participants in the survey are comfortable • Conduct gender disaggregated focus group discussions with members of different user groups to complement the socioeconomic survey. <p><i>Participatory resource assessment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the products and services, and the different interests and priorities of men and women in these products and services, and the challenges for men and women • Include the different rights men and women have to different resources in the information to be collected. <p><i>Analysis and write up of findings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disaggregate the results of the socioeconomic survey by gender; for example, when talking about tenure, how does this compare between men and women? • Seek ideas from men and women and their priorities when seeking community ideas on how to address protection and conservation needs.
Step 4: Preparation and approval of PFMP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect additional data through gender disaggregated focus group discussions with members of forest user groups • Indicate the target group for each management program, and include priority activities for both men and women. <p><i>Validation of PFMP</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select a presentation and validation method that will ensure participation of all. For instance, have copies of the draft PFMP been distributed to community members for review and comments before the PFMP validation meeting? Have small groups of men and women reviewed the draft and presented their comments during the validation meeting? • Use a language that is locally understood during the validation meeting. <p><i>Distribution of copies of the PFMP</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a summary version of the management programs and translate the summary into the local language • Make and distribute copies of the summary to the community.
Step 5: Negotiating and signing the Forest Management Agreement	<p>Ensure equal representation of community members in the public meetings discussing the draft agreement</p> <p>Hold meetings at locations and times convenient for men and women.</p>
Step 6: Implementation of the plan	<p>Ensure equal representation in the forest management committee constituted to implement the plan.</p>
Step 7: Impact monitoring of participatory forest management	<p>Assessment of impact on livelihoods and rural development should be gender disaggregated.</p>

Conclusion

Integrating gender into PFMPs can be challenging as it goes against community norms, such as women not speaking up in front of men, or forestry being regarded as an issue for men. In addition, there is misinterpretation of the constitutional requirement of a one-third gender representation, with this being interpreted as the maximum percentage of women who can be included. The process also takes much longer and is more costly, involving, for instance, smaller discussion groups rather than a single plenary during validation. It is also difficult to ensure *bazaras* are attended by women. Nevertheless, it is important to foster women's participation in developing the forest management plans.

Acronyms and abbreviations

CFA	Community Forest Associations
FMA	Forest Management Agreement
PFM	Participatory Forest Management
PFMP	Participatory Forest Management Plans

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