

REDD+ in East Africa: The gender dimension of the Readiness Plans in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania.

By Harriet Smith, Student Intern at UCSD, August 2011

Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) is an international mechanism to mitigate climate change by supporting policy implementation at the national level, with an aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions related to deforestation and forest degradation. Furthermore, REDD+ goes “beyond deforestation and forest degradation, and includes the role of conservation, sustainable management [...] and enhancement of forest carbon stocks” (UN-REDD, 2009). Although a formal international mechanism for REDD+ is yet to be fully defined, REDD+ processes and initiatives are gaining popularity internationally and are a subject of discussion in most climate change fora. REDD+ is gaining momentum in East Africa, with Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania all participating in the World Bank’s Forest Carbon Partnership Facility, Tanzania having a UN-REDD country programme and bilateral REDD programme with Norwegian government has a number of REDD+ pilot projects established in the region.

Recent REDD+ discussions have highlighted the lack of integration between REDD+ and gender. According to the Global Initiative on REDD+ and Gender Equality (jointly launched by IUCN, WEDO and WOCAN at COP16), global REDD+ policies are dangerously close to promoting a ‘gender neutral’ evaluation of forests, given the fact that they are yet to recognise the differentiated forest requirements of women and men (IUCN, 2011). Due to cultural gender roles, women’s relationships with forests are restricted to subsistent resources: fuel wood and Non –Timber Forest products (NTFP) such as medicinal plants, livestock fodder and wild foods; in contrast, men’s roles tend to be linked with commercial scale timber and NTFP (Aguilar et al, 2007).

Many challenges face female forest users. Factors include gender biases in service provision (credit and technology access and dissemination), labor constraints, insecure access and tenure to forest resources and exclusion from decision-making processes (Mwangi et al., 2011; Gurunget al., 2010; IUCN, 2011;Gurung and Quesada, 2009; Mukadasi and Nabalegwa, 2007).Due to a lack of rights and access to forest resources, women are often excluded from stakeholder consultations and decision-making processes at the community level which has a resultant influence on REDD+ implementation by misrepresenting forest user groups and resulting in unsuitable approaches forest management.

Failure to incorporate gender issues into REDD+ implementation is a risk to REDD+’s long-term sustainability (Gurung et al., 2010), it is therefore imperative that REDD+ not only incorporates specific gender-strategies into project implementation, but adheres to, and works with implementing governments to further strengthen national and regional gender strategies.

By examining the extent of integration of gender issues in the current national REDD+ strategies, this article aims to evaluate the current status and role of REDD+ in promoting gender equality in East Africa.

Gender strategies in East Africa

The EAC Strategic Plan on Gender, Youth, Children, Social Protection and Community Development mission statement is to “Enhance community empowerment through people centered and gender responsive development that creates opportunities to harness potentials necessary for equitable and sustainable development” (pp. 22; 3.3.1), with specific objectives to “enhance empowerment of individuals, households and communities” and to “mainstream Gender [...] in macro-economic and sector policies and programmes” (pp.22; 3.3.2).

Having ratified the Convention of the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1979), Kenya (2000), Tanzania (1992) and Uganda (2007) all have national gender-related policies.

Gender strategies in national REDD+ Proposals and Strategies

National REDD+ Readiness Preparation Proposals (R-PP) outline the developmental process of REDD+ implementation strategies. Kenya and Uganda are in the R-PP phase. Tanzania has progressed into the implementation phase, having developed a draft national REDD+ strategy.

Kenya

While traditional gender roles in rural Kenya bring women into direct contact with natural resources (VFA, 2009), National Gender and Development Policy recognises this socio-cultural relationship. For example, Policy Objective 3.2.1 aims to “remove obstacles to women’s access to and control over productive assets, wealth and economic opportunities, shelter, safe drinking water and promote measures for conserving the environment”. Under this objective, the policy aims to “promote more equitable distribution of production assets, wealth and opportunities”, “increase women’s participation in macro-economic policy formulation” and “create an enabling environment for women to participate in the conservation of the environment”.

There is clear potential for REDD+ in Kenya to integrate with national policy objectives by directly linking women with forest management and conservation. The R-PP stipulates that the National REDD+ Coordinator will be dedicated to implementing activities regarding “oversight for particular gender concerns” (pp.11). However, Kenya’s R-PP lacks specific mention of integrating the women’s role into proposed implementation strategies. Nonetheless, as the R-PP process advances, the proposal advocates the application of “safeguards to ensure that social (gender [...]) and environmental impacts are minimized and mitigated” (pp.48).

Tanzania

A key priority in Tanzania’s Policy on Women in Development (1992) is to ensure women’s “right to own and inherit resources and implements for production” (18.i) and calls for the “involvement and incorporation of women’s participation in the planning process” (30) and “plans at all levels [to] reflect and indicate clearly the required resources and the contribution of women” (34).

Although Tanzania’s R-PP acknowledges the lack of women’s participation in decision making processes, proposed implementation strategies fail to address the issue. The R-PP states that “Something ought to be done to make sure that equal rights on claims to land are secured for the spouses as required by land policy and land law” (pp.18), however makes no specific mention of this under proposed strategies.

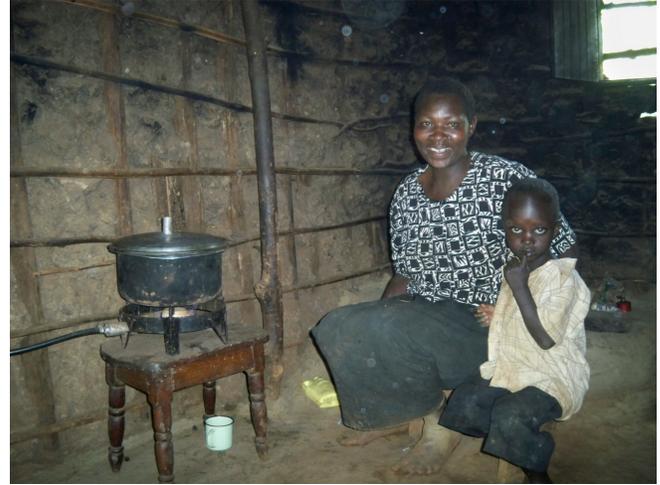
Uganda

Primary objectives of Uganda’s Gender Policy are to “reduce gender inequalities [...] to achieve improved and sustainable livelihoods”, “strengthen women’s presence and capacities in decision making for their meaningful participation in administrative and political processes” and “ensure inclusion of gender analysis in macro-economic policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation” (3.3). Specific strategies include “promoting a Gender and Development approach that is based on the understanding of gender roles and social relations of women and men as well as the Women in Development approach, which focuses on women specifically” (4.0.ii) and “ensuring gender responsive development planning at all levels” (4.0.v).

Uganda’s REDD+ R-PP recognises its requirement to “ensure the active participation of all people and affirmative action of all women, [...] in the [forestry] sector’s development. Although there are no specific strategies aimed at gender equality, the R-PP does state that “A study shall be conducted to identify solutions to the low performance in the enforcement of forestry legal provisions, its underlying causes and potential for pro-poor mechanisms to safeguard against negative impacts on the vulnerable, including gender issues” (2.3.1.2, pp.76).



Women collecting firewood at Rwoho forest reserve: Photo UCSD



A woman & a child cooking using a biogas stove: Photo UCSD

Discussion and conclusion

The REDD+ process is relatively new across East Africa. As a result, the three R-PPs advocate very few synergies with national gender policies. Gender issues are apparent within all 3 R-PPs, however there is a clear lack of specific strategies to safeguard and promote gender equality within REDD+. This may be a result of recent REDD+ operation in East Africa, but in accordance to the literature, it would be futile for REDD+ not to include explicit gender aspects in its implementation.

Borrowing from REDD-net's recent publication on Gender and REDD+ in Asia, there are useful tools and lessons that can inspire REDD+ readiness proposals for Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda to mainstreaming gender. In addition, REDD+ should follow national gender policies to develop gender equality, ranging from decision-making processes to resource tenure. Furthermore, REDD+ needs to implement forest management mechanisms which integrate gender specific resource consumption in order to maintain sustainability and address resource equity.

References

- Aguilar, L., Araujo, A. and Quesada- Aguilar, A. (2007). Reforestation, Afforestation, Deforestation, Climate Change and Gender. Fact Sheet. Costa Rica: IUCN.
- Draft EAC Strategic Plan on Gender, Youth, Children, Social Protection and Community Development, 2011-2015
- Gurung, J., and Quesada, A., 2009. Gender-Differentiated Impacts of REDD to be addressed in REDD Social Standards. Care International, and the Climate, Community and Biodiversity Alliance.
- Gurung, J., Giri, K., Setyowati, A. B., and Lebow, E., 2010. Draft Gender and REDD+: An Asia Regional Analysis. USAID.
- IUCN, 2011. Attending to Gender. The IUCN Forest Conservation Programme Newsletter, Issue 43.
- Kenya RPP
- Kenya: National Gender and Development Policy, 2000.
- Mukadasi, B., and Nabalegwa, M., 2007. Gender mainstreaming and community participation in plant resource conservation in Buzaya county, Kamuli district, Uganda. *African Journal of Ecology*. 45 (s1), pp. 7-12).

- Mwangi, E., R. Meinzen-Dick, and Y. Sun. 2011. Gender and sustainable forest management in East Africa and Latin America. *Ecology and Society* **16**(1): 17. [online] Available at: <http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol16/iss1/art17/>
- REDD-net, 2011. Gender and REDD+.
- Tanzania REDD+ Strategy
- Tanzania: Policy on Women in Development, 1992.
- The Uganda Gender Policy, 2007.
- Uganda RPP
- UN-REDD, 2009. About REDD+. [online] Available at: <http://www.un-redd.org/AboutREDD/tabid/582/Default.aspx> Accessed: 19 August, 2011.
- Volunteers for Africa, VFA, 2009. The role of rural women in natural resource management in Africa. [online] Available at: <http://www.ammado.com/nonprofit/50795/articles/7325> Accessed: 19 August, 2011.