Strategic Foresighting for Building Resilience

Supporting women’s tenure rights: REFACOF’s experiences

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• REFACOF short presentation

• Women’s tenure Rights: key findings

• Women and business development opportunities in the forest sector

• How to build resilience: Possible entry points

• Conclusion: take home messages
The African women’s Network for community management of forests (REFACOF)

- Moto: Securing Women’s Forest and Land Property Rights!
- Created in May 2009 in Yaoundé, Cameroon
- Composed of 17 West and Central African countries and Madagascar
- REFACOF is an advocacy platform focused on African women’s tenure rights in land and forest reforms

**Mission:**
- Promote women’s rights in Africa and advocate to shape policies and practices for gender equity in relation to land and forest tenure
New RRI Study on Women’s Tenure Rights

A Comparative Analysis of National Laws and Regulations Concerning Women’s Rights to Community Forests that analyzed:

- 80 legal frameworks
- in 30 low- and middle-income countries representing **78% of the developing world’s forests**
- All ratified the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
KEY FINDINGS

- All the countries **failed to** meet the minimum international standards outlined in the CEDAW.

- Legal frameworks acknowledging communities as forest owners provide the **greatest protections for women’s rights.**

  Frameworks established for exploitation of natural resources and conservation purposes offer the **fewest and weakest protections for women.**

  Of the 80 CBTRs analyzed, the proportion that have adequate gender-sensitive provisions for specific rights are only:

  - 3% for women’s voting rights
  - 5% for leadership
  - 10% for inheritance
  - 18% for dispute resolution
  - 29% for membership
Women and business development opportunities in the forest sector

• Femmes dynamiques de Nguimbok: High value NTFP business

  – This is a group of 12 women set up in 2014 in Nguimbok, a village located in the montaneous area of the Littoral region of Cameroon

  – It’s a very small scale enterprise with women involved in the exploitation of Njansang (*Ricinodendron heudelotii*); they collect from forest, process and sell

  – They also started planting the trees through domestication techniques to address the shortage and uncertainty of the production

  – They can generate an annual income of **USD 3000-5000** depending on the production season.
• Fako Honey non governmental enterprise: **Honey production**
  
  – Set up in 2010 in Fako, a capital city in the South West region of Cameroon
  
  – Small Scale enterprise of 20 small holders farmers at the neighborhood of the protected forest region in the Mount Fako Area of the South West Region
  
  – They produce, process, package and sell honey
  
  – The annual production is about **15 tons** of honey
  
  – They generate an average income of **USD37000** per year
Women, Employment and Appropriate Technologies (AFETA): Improved technology for more added value products

- Set up in 2009 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso
- Small Scale enterprise with 12 women’s groups involved in the collection, processing and marketing of shea butter “Vitellaria paradoxa”, “liane-goïne” and “raisin sauvage” or “wild grape”
- AFETA help women develop processing and packaging technologies to improve their work and the quality of their butter
- They can generate income of **USD3000-8000** per year
Coopérative pour le Développement de Lonji (CODEL): Improved oven for fish processing and rehabilitation of mangroves

- Set up in 2014 in Lonji, a rural area located in the coastal region of Cameroon
- A group of 20 rural women with fish processing as their main activity for livelihood development
- With improved drying ovens, they sustain access to fuelwood and gained better shares in the market
- They can generate up to USD 300,000 yearly as income from fish and oyster marketing
Association MALEBI: Sustainable charcoal production

- Set up in 2008 in Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire
- A Small scale enterprise of 14 women involve in the value chain production of charcoal
- To secure their access to forests and sustain their activities, MALEBI was granted 4500 ha of forest in the AHUA classified forest with an approved management plan
- They can produce **160,8 Tons** of charcoal annually with an average income of **USD30,000/year**
- MALEBI is such a successful SSE that they have now partners with some privates and getting funded by Development organizations
How to build resilience: Possible entry points

1) Building on strategic alliances
   - Strategic alliances are likely to be more effective to influence Government policies and regulations related to gender, tenure and women’s rights

• In Liberia:

• After a series of advocacy work, REFACOF succeeded to have Her Excellency Madame Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the first woman president in Africa the Flag carrier to lead the advocacy on Gender and Women’s rights in Liberia and in other African countries
• In Cameroon:

• With Parliamentarians:
  – Review of the draft’s laws submitted by the government to make sure it took into account reform proposals from REFACOF that would include women issues
  – Promoting dialogue with Government Officials on Women’s issues based on REFACOF proposals/advocacy documents
  – Including REFACOF as member of the Parliamentarian working group on Forest law reform

• With Traditional Chiefs and Queen’s Mothers
  – Co-organizing awareness raising activities to improve the understanding of rural women’s issues in relation to natural resources management
  – Review of some traditional practices that hinder women’s rights to secure tenure
  – Support to REFACOF advocacy and following up the law review proposals at the high level of the administration, key Ministries, at the Prime Minister Office and the Presidency
• In Burkina Faso:

• With the National Association of Mayors
  – Supporting REFACOF advocacy for women property rights to lands and forests
  – Supporting and budgeting rural women projects and work plans
  – Developing mechanisms to improve the rights of women to secure land and NTFP

2) Working with Government

• In Liberia:
  – Strong collaboration with the Ministry of Gender, the Forest Development Authority (FDA)
  – Signed MoU with the Ministry of Gender
• Cameroon:
  – Strong collaboration with key ministries: MINFOF, MINEPAT, MINEPDED, MINDCAF, MINPROFF, MINADER, MINEPIA, MINAS
  – Gender Focal Points in all those ministries
  – Organizing trainings on Gender, Tenure and women’s rights
  – Participating to reform processes engaged by those ministries

• In Burkina Faso:
  – MoU with the former Ministry of Gender
  – Strong collaboration with Mayors and other sectors of the administration dealing with natural resources, agriculture, forest, environment, planning and water
3) **Empowering rural women** to generate important additional benefits for their households and communities, and create significant development opportunities in rural areas

- Technical, technological, organizational, financial capacity building
- Women operate mainly in the **informal sector** that should be better organized and improved with more flexible rules and regulations
- **Secure access** to productive materials such as lands and forests for women
- Networking and learning exchanges
- Engaging Men, ...

4) **Promoting Gender equality and access to decision-making** for women to make transformational economic, environmental and social changes required for successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
5) Promote law reforms, monitor and report on progress in achieving Gender equality and women’s rights:

– Harmonize customary laws with modern laws
– Develop friendly and adequate Tax regimes
– Forest, land, ... reforms
– NDC’s, ...
3 take home messages:

1) **Still a lot to do**: it is critical that governments develop, pass, and implement national laws and regulations that explicitly recognize and ensure equal rights for all indigenous and rural women.

2) **Lack of gender equality** hinders economic development in rural areas.

3) There is a need for **financial support** to help rural women to scale up their enterprises through the entire value chain.
Thank you!!

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