Community Forestry: Bridging Ecosystem based Adaptation and Community based Adaptation

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The argument

Community forestry is a useful (and under-recognized) approach to local level adaptation, bridging EbA and CbA in forest landscapes

- Multi-functionality of community forests/landscapes well aligned with integrated resilience building
- CF sustainability dependent on quality of forest resources including ecosystem services, biodiversity and overall system vitality
- CF offers infrastructure to support adaptive measures for both social and ecological systems
- CF approached through a SLA framework, also used for assessing adaptive capacity
How we understand CF

“Community forestry covers social, economic, and conservation dimensions in a range of activities including indigenous management of sacred sites of cultural importance, small-scale forest-based enterprises, forestry outgrower schemes, company-community partnerships, and decentralized and devolved forest management (RECOFTC, 2008).”
Why CF matters in adaptation

- Forests cover approx 30% of world’s land area; billion+ people rely on forests for food, fuel, and income (RRI, 2014).
- In Asia Pacific region over 450 million people are considered forest dependent (FAO, 2010).
- CIFOR’s PEN research initiative in 33 countries determined global livelihood contributions of forests are much higher than believed. On average, 1/5 to 1/4 rural household income derived from forests (Angelson, 2011).
- Globally, at least 513 million hectares, (1/8 world’s forests), are government-recognized community forests (FAO, 2010).
What is an EbA approach?

- “Use of biodiversity and ecosystem services as part of an overall adaptation strategy to help people to adapt to the adverse effects of CC.” (CBD, 2009)

- “Adaptation policies and measures that make into account the role of ecosystem services in reducing the vulnerability of society to CC, in a multi-sectoral and multi-scale approach”. (Vignola, R., Locatelli, B., Martinez, C., and Imbach, P., 2009)

- “Local and landscape scale strategies that enable both people and nature to adapt in the face of CC” (IUCN 2009).
Community based Adaptation

• Community–led process, based on communities’ priorities, needs, assets, knowledge and capacities.

• Should empower people to plan for and respond to climate change impacts.

• Uses both local and scientific knowledge to reduce vulnerability to climate change.
What makes CbA different?

How is CbA different from a ‘typical’ rural development approach?

- Based on a holistic analysis of people’s vulnerability to climate change;
- Examines both current and projected climate risks;
- Explicit goal of reducing vulnerability to the impacts of climate change
Forests for adaptation
- Provide range of ecosystem services that reduce vulnerability of local communities and broader society
- New challenges:
  - Linking forest sector adaptation to other sectors
  - Balancing other priorities such as conversion for agriculture and commercial purposes

Adaptation for forests
- CC will, and is, affecting forest ecosystems
- Adaptation measures needed for forest landscapes
- New challenges:
  - Understanding impacts
  - Developing frameworks for involving communities closely in forest adaptation
Livelihoods

- Climate resilient agroforestry practices
- Multi-use community forests (timber, resin, medicine, fiber, nuts and fruit)
- Facilitating access to micro-finance
- Business plans for high-value NTFP/agroforestry product markets

Protecting multi-use community forests

- Forest restoration and conservation
- Strengthen systems for patrolling illegal harvesting
- Establishment of fire breaks
- Collect and distribute drought-resilient seed stocks
Community Forestry Climate Change Adaptation Practices (more examples)

Training in participatory research methodologies

- Monitor climate and ecological changes
- Track tree species composition and morphological change
- Wildlife inventorying and ranges
- Managing forest landscapes to: enhance hydrological functions, improve soil quality and retention for ag fertility, reduce disaster risk
- Horticultural skills for seedling propagation
- Planting/establishing seedlings in degraded ecosystems
Choose framework + methods of assessment

Engage the community/develop context

Assess past and future climate

Assess forest ecosystem impacts

Identify potential community social impacts

Define vulnerabilities and opportunities

Evaluate ability to adapt

Plan and implement adaptation actions

RECOFTC APPROACH TO CF-CCA
Frameworks we have drawn upon....

- CARE's CVCA
- ICEM’s CAM
- USAID Adapt Asia–Pacific Guidelines
- ICIMOD’s gender focused CBA approach
- Canadian and US Forest Services have detailed forest ecosystem VAs

- None of the toolkits alone covers all dimensions sufficiently – customized version is required to encompass both social and ecological dimensions
In practice: developing a CF–CCA demonstration site

- Pilots RECOFTC’s approach to assessing CF–CCA vulnerabilities and developing community–led solutions. Initiated in Nepal, to be expanded to 7 focal countries in Asia.
- CF–based ‘best practices’ will be piloted with aim to demonstrate approaches that work to multiple stakeholders and to support accessing of adaptation funds.
Gaps and challenges in incorporating CCA through CF:

- Does pursuing sectoral adaptation undermining national strategies and integrated local level planning??

- Challenges with coordination between sectors and ‘territoriality’ limiting local level adaptation planning.

- Pressing need for capacity dev’t/ training at local levels of government.

- Insufficiently mapped out and systematized adaptation financing options available to communities and local level actors.

- Limited availability and access to downscaled climate modeling data.
Conclusion

- EbA focuses on the protection and enhancement of ecosystems to support the adaptation of people
- CbA is community driven process of understanding vulnerabilities and assets and developing solutions in response
- CF, while not explicitly designed to tackle CC adaptation, *provides an excellent vehicle to offer the benefits of BOTH EbA and CbA*
Thank you!

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