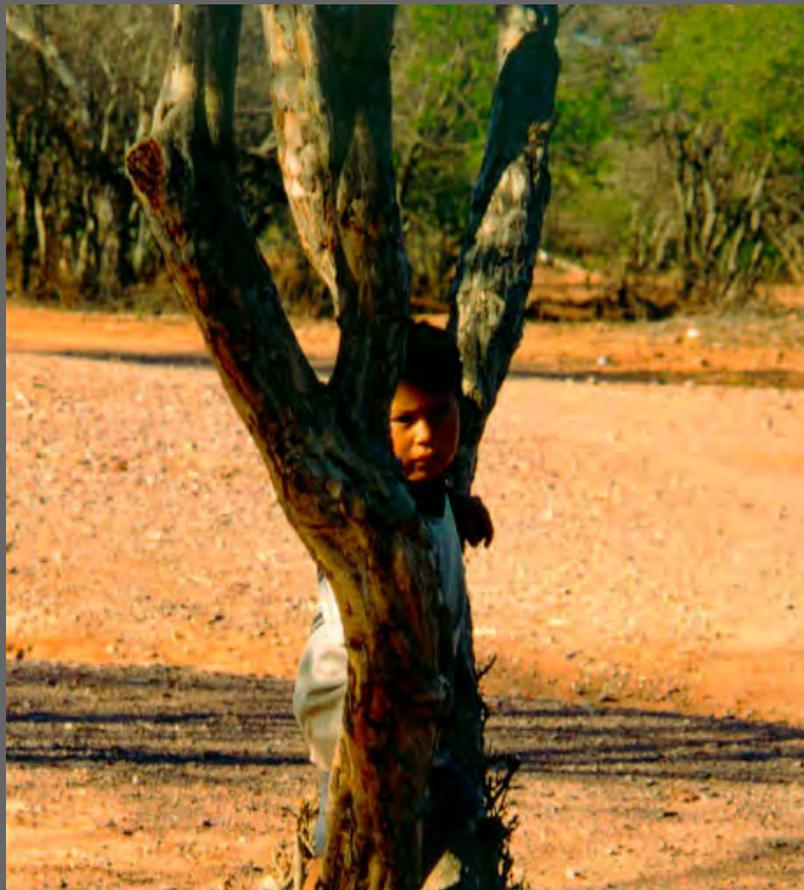




USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



LESSONS LEARNED FROM COMMUNITY FORESTRY AND THEIR RELEVANCE FOR REDD+ FOREST CARBON, MARKETS AND COMMUNITIES (FCMC) PROGRAM



MARCH 2014

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This report is one of four reports on “Lessons Learned from Community Forestry and Their Relevance for REDD+.” This global synthesis was prepared by Roy Hagen. It builds upon the work of three regional reviews on this topic, prepared for Latin America (by Janis B. Alcorn), Africa (by Tom Blomley), and Asia (by Robert Fisher).

Paula J. Williams has managed and served as the overall editor for the three regional reviews and a global synthesis. All four reports have been reviewed and edited by FCMC.

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DISCLAIMER

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---------|--|
| ACOFOP | Association of Forest Communities of Petén |
| CAF | <i>Chantier d'Aménagement Forestier</i> (Forest Management Project Site), Burkina Faso |
| CCBS | Climate, Community and Biodiversity Standards |
| CBFM | Community Based Forest Management |
| CBNRM | Community Based Natural Resource Management |
| CDM | Clean Development Mechanism |
| CIFOR | Center for International Forestry Research |
| DENR | Department of Environment and Natural Resources |
| DRC | Democratic Republic of Congo |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization (of the United Nations) |
| FCFA | Franc CFA (currency in West and Central Africa) |
| FCMC | USAID's Forest Carbon, Markets and Communities program |
| FCPF | Forest Carbon Partnership Facility |
| FECOFUN | Federation of Community Forest User Groups in Nepal |
| FPIC | Free, Prior and Informed Consent/Consultation |
| FMC | Forest Management Committee (i.e., in Guinea) |
| GIS | Geographic Information System |
| GPS | Global Positioning System |
| ICAA | USAID's Amazonian-Andes Conservation program |
| ICDP | Integrated Conservation and Development Project |
| ICRAF | World Agroforestry Center |
| IFRI | International Forestry Resources and Institutions |
| ILO | United Nations International Labour Organization |
| ITTO | International Tropical Timber Organization |
| IUCN | International Union for Conservation of Nature |
| JFM | Joint Forest Management |

| | |
|---------|--|
| MOMA | Monitoring Matters |
| NAFRI | National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute |
| NGO | Non-governmental Organization |
| NTFP | Non-timber Forest Products |
| PES | Payments for Environmental Services |
| PFM | Participatory Forest Management |
| PNG | Papua New Guinea |
| RECOFTC | The Center for People and Forests |
| REDD+ | Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation, plus the conservation and sustainable management of forests and the enhancement of forest carbon stocks |
| R-PP | Readiness Preparation Proposal |
| RRI | Rights and Resources Initiative |
| SESA | Social and Environmental Strategic Assessment |
| TFAP | Tropical Forestry Action Plan |
| UNCED | United Nations Conference on Environment and Development |
| UNDRIP | United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples |
| UNFCCC | United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |

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Roy Hagen

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-supported Forest Carbon, Markets, and Communities (FCMC) Program commissioned this global review of lessons learned from community forestry over more than 35 years. This report synthesizes three regional reviews based on existing meta-analyses of key lessons learned from experiences to reform forest management across Latin America, Africa and Asia. Efforts to promote Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD+) can achieve greater impacts if they build upon relevant lessons learned from community forestry around the world, and if they work with the people who live in, or depend upon, the forests targeted by REDD+.

KEY FINDINGS ON COMMUNITY FORESTRY

Regional Differences: Latin America has the most area under community forestry management, with diverse forms of self-initiated community forestry enjoying broad legal recognition across large geographic areas. The state claims direct control over most forests across Africa and Asia, where customary forms of community forestry abound, but virtually all legally-recognized forms of community forestry have been externally-initiated by donors, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and governments in the last 30 years.

Empowerment of Communities: Community forestry is based on the national government recognition of the rights of communities to establish and enforce rules governing forest access and use. Tenurial rights of communities are strong in most of Latin America, but are much more limited in scope across most of Africa and the Asia. Clear legal frameworks for empowering communities are critical to community forestry success.

Governance and Stakeholder Engagement: Government agencies, through their discretionary powers, frequently restrict the delegation of rights to communities. Worldwide effective community-level institutions that establish and enforce rules governing access and use of forests and of equitably sharing the costs and benefits of community forestry are critical: self-initiated community institutions are generally the most effective. All legitimate user groups and stakeholders, including Indigenous Peoples, women, migrant pastoralists and the poor, must be engaged in community-level governance structures. It is important to consider vertical (upward, as well as downward) accountability mechanisms, appropriate scale and linkages to existing formal and traditional structures.

Benefits and Incentives: Generally, the benefits accrued to communities have been limited, especially where externally-initiated community forestry has focused on conservation or regeneration. Communities must perceive that the overall mix of benefits is greater than the costs incurred. Costs and benefits are best shared equitably between the government and communities. Sustainable use and legal use of forest resources are generally the most important to communities. Monetary benefits are lower in Africa and Asia than in Latin America. REDD+ can learn from the analyses of lessons learned from the many Payments for Environmental Services (PES) schemes that have been applied in Latin American community forests.

Capacity building: Community managers can increase their effectiveness with capacity building focused on good governance, management and technical skills. Capacity building for forestry officers and other government agencies to support community forestry is vital, and requires a paradigm shift that includes support to field agents from supervisors and the forest agency itself. But it will only be effective in the context of minimum standards of good governance and commitment to implement supportive policies.

Scaling up: Critical conditions for scaling up at the national level are political will, along with tested and proven community forestry systems that utilize community support and straightforward policy, legal and regulatory frameworks for empowerment of communities. Social movements, clearly defined indigenous

rights to forests, and self-initiated forms of community forestry have generated broadly scaled-up systems in Latin America.

Sustainability: Community forestry has been shown to be more effective in reducing deforestation and forest degradation than state-managed efforts with little or no community involvement in management. Critical factors include: effective empowerment of community managers; strong community institutions capable of developing and enforcing rules governing forest access and use; and minimal standards of good governance in state institutions.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REDD+

If REDD+ is to fully deliver environmental, social and economic benefits to society, all REDD+ partners – governments, donors, NGOs, the private sector and communities – will need to:

- **Support policy reforms** to provide clear, secure, enforceable and non-discretionary tenure rights that empower communities to make and enforce rules that regulate access and use of forests. In the absence of formal tenure rights, support to local informal or customary rights may provide an interim solution. Adopt simple, low-cost and verifiable procedures for community empowerment and for approval of forest management agreements. Special attention is needed to develop and implement policy reforms that engage women, poor households and Indigenous Peoples.
- Develop effective measures **to reduce the effects of vested interests within state institutions** that seek to block the implementation of government policies in support of community empowerment, thereby restricting the flow of tangible benefits to the community-level.
- Give communities **a high level of autonomy in adapting or defining their own management institutions** for community forestry. Self-initiated community management institutions and local knowledge should be favored wherever possible.
- **Increase the benefits that communities** derive from sustainable use of forests through improved management, diversification and augmentation of benefit and income streams. Externally-driven management objectives for REDD+ need to be reconciled with local community needs and interests to assure sustainable forest outcomes. Overall community benefits need to be significantly greater than the transaction, management and opportunity costs of community forestry and REDD+.
- **Develop capacity** of community members, government and other partners to support community-level management institutions and to build the mix of technical skills (forest management, utilization and planning), enterprise development skills (financial management and book keeping) and governance capacities (accountability, communications and enforcement of rules governing access and use).
- Respect the two most **essential conditions needed for scaling up**: favorable legal frameworks and the existence of proven community forestry systems. Latin America, with its extensive areas of forest under self-initiated community forestry and relatively strong legal frameworks, offers the greatest near-term potential for REDD+ for rapid scaling up. Lessons learned from all three regions highlight the dangers of rapid scaling up, especially with weak community institutions. A major challenge for REDD+ is **to balance the urgent need** for climate mitigation through the rapid scaling up of REDD+ with the time needed for building local ownership and socially responsible programs.
- **Include measures to control “leakage”** caused by displacing harvesting from managed forests to unmanaged areas. Measures may include the application of local bylaws to neighboring forests and adding policies at the national level. Communities need to be empowered by the state to enforce local rules.
- **Enhance social, economic and environmental sustainability prospects** by strengthening community tenure and rights, enhancing and diversifying benefit flows to communities, supporting minimum standards of good governance in state institutions and valuing local ecological and traditional knowledge.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE COMMUNITY FORESTRY REVIEW

Local communities have been using and managing forests for millennia. Over the past four centuries, however, governments have claimed rights to most of the forests, leaving rural communities with much more restricted access to forest resources. State forestry departments have often displayed weak capacities to protect, let alone to sustainably manage, forests on their own. The emergence of the field of community forestry in developing countries has occurred over the past three decades, both in recognition of the need to engage communities if forests are to be managed properly and, sometimes in recognition of the importance of forests to people's livelihoods, especially to the livelihoods of the poor (Fisher 2013).

Positive incentives to help developing countries Reduce Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation and conserve and enhance forest stocks (REDD+)¹ are being developed under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).² REDD+ aims to provide incentives to developing countries to protect and expand their forests and to help mitigate climate change.

These same forests are frequently important sources of livelihoods for rural people and play major roles in provision of other environmental services beyond mitigation of climate change. REDD+ is drawing increased attention to multiple benefits,³ including the social, governance and environmental benefits of the targeted improvements in forest management. REDD+ is additionally challenged to "integrate outcomes of ecological sustainability, social equity, and economic efficiency in which objectives for long-term use of the resources are well-defined so that expectations of [communities] and the society at large remain consistent" (Pagdee *et al.* 2007: 33).

REDD+ is the latest international initiative working to improve forest sector governance. Like community forestry, REDD+ is inherently a social and political endeavor. REDD+ success, however, is measured by the condition, presence and absence of forests, and couples forest conservation efforts with mitigating carbon and greenhouse gas emissions. In addition to building on community forestry, REDD+ progenitors and parallel processes include initiatives such as the Tropical Forestry Action Plan (TFAP)⁴, forest certification, efforts to control illegal logging, payments for environmental services, Integrated Conservation and Development Projects (ICDPs), landscape conservation, collaborative management, and protected areas management approaches. All of these initiatives have clearly demonstrated that long-term forest management can only succeed with the active engagement of local communities.

¹ The "+" (plus) in REDD+ (or REDD-plus) refers to Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation, plus conservation and sustainable management of forests and the enhancement of forest carbon stocks.

² The UNFCCC was agreed at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio in 1992. During the Kyoto Protocol negotiations in 1997, the issue of forestry was discussed in the context of the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). In Montreal in 2005, the UNFCCC agreed to work on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation (RED), which was expanded to REDD+ in Bali in 2007.

³ The original REDD+ term "co-benefits" referred to social and environmental benefits to be derived from REDD+, in addition to sequestration of carbon. Many working on REDD+ issues prefer the term "multiple benefits," as it implies that the social and environmental benefits may be of equal, or even greater, importance than carbon benefits.

⁴ The TFAP was an international program, with \$8 billion in international aid, assisting developing tropical countries to come up with comprehensive plans for managing their forests, determining national priorities, and guiding cooperation with donors on these issues. Launched in 1985, the TFAP aimed to reduce forest deforestation. By the early 1990s, over 73 countries were involved in preparing their own national forestry action plans.

With this lesson in mind, the Forest Carbon, Markets and Communities (FCMC) Program commissioned three regional reports and a global synthesis report to examine lessons learned in community forestry, in particular as they relate to the special challenges and opportunities presented by REDD+.

This report is the global synthesis of three regional reports (Alcorn 2013; Blomley 2013; Fisher 2013). It identifies the lessons learned over more than three decades of community forestry⁵ in Latin America, Africa and Asia, especially their relevance to effective design and implementation of REDD+. This review looks at how these systems operate, what drives conservation and effective management, what conflicts can undermine success, and what policy and practice barriers can be avoided or removed to ensure a smoother REDD+ road ahead. Lessons about the importance and means of engaging communities to achieve forest conservation and management should not have to be “re-learned” by REDD+ planners and implementers.

Community forestry has many definitions, and many other terms: Community-based forest management, community-based natural resources management, participatory forest management, co-management, and social forestry, have all been used over the years to refer to the same or related activities. These FCMC reviews are based on studies that may have used differing definitions of community forestry. For these reviews, the team adopted the definition in Box 1.

Box 1. What is community forestry?

Community forestry is an evolving subcategory of forestry under which communities or groups of people have partial to full rights over specific forests, including the rights to establish, implement, and enforce rules governing access and use of those forests. These rights may be formal legal rights, or traditional or customary rights: the latter may, or may not, be legally recognized by the State. Community forestry systems may be initiated by the community or be developed as a result of outside intervention by governments or various development partners. Participatory Forest Management, Community-Based Forest Management or Joint Forest Management can be considered to be types of community forestry if communities have rights to participate in significant decisions on how the forest is used or managed. Community forestry may include not only management of natural forests and woodlands, but also community or group plantations and woodlots.

I.2 METHODOLOGY USED AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study is based on a rigorous desk review of key lessons learned from over 35 years of community forestry. The report synthesizes three regional reports – for Africa (Blomley 2013), Latin America (Alcorn 2013) and Asia (Fisher 2013). The review is based on triangulation across existing documents, including over 500 publications and reports (see bibliographic list of literature reviewed) and field experiences shared amongst colleagues. The bulk of literature on community forestry tends to be: 1) descriptive academic studies in fixed time periods with little attention to representativeness for generalizing findings to landscape or national or regional scales; 2) non-governmental organization (NGO) and donor documents that, with some exceptions (e.g., Springer and Alcorn 2007), do not evaluate against a baseline but tend to describe what projects are going to do – promoting their programs to donors; 3) project evaluations that are seldom published or used as baseline documents for follow-up years later; and 4) *ex ante* advice for designing interventions or policy rather than evidence-based evaluations of outcomes from projects or policy reforms

⁵ Community forestry evolved along with the "participation" and "appropriate development" reform trends in international rural development and conservation (cf. Alcorn 2000, Arnold 1992, Borrini-Feyerabend 1997, Chambers 1995, Jackson and Ingles 1998, Larsen *et al.* 1998, Moris 1981, Russell and Harshbargar 2003, Springer and Alcorn 2007, Warren *et al.* 1995, Weber *et al.* 2000, Wyckoff Baird and Brown 1992, and others).

and the scale of their impacts (Bohringer and Loschell 2006, Helming *et al.* 2011, Ojha *et al.* 2012). The literature review was supplemented by a limited number of discussions (by phone, Skype or email as well as personal discussions with key informants in various parts of the world).



Villagers carrying wood, Uganda. Photo: Tom Blomley

and institutional power and control over valuable resources. Critical perspectives incorporating an analysis of power issues tend to come from academic sources, (i.e., as Springate-Baginski and Blaikie 2007, Graner 1997, Ribot 2002) rights and tenure research organizations such as the Rights and Resources Initiative or activist sources such as Focus on the Global South, a lobby group based in south-east Asia.

The leading source of long-term, systematic analysis is the International Forestry Resources and Institutions (IFRI) program, a collaborative research program learning from changes in forests owned by governments, private organizations, and communities across Bolivia, Colombia, Guatemala, India, Kenya, Mexico, Nepal, Tanzania, Thailand, Uganda, and the United States (Ostrom 2011).⁶ The United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) Initiative for the Conservation in the Andean Amazon (ICAA) recently joined with the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) to initiate long-term monitoring of changes at key sites in the Peruvian Amazon (CIFOR 2012). CIFOR is also working with the World Agroforestry Center (ICRAF) and Biodiversity International for long-term monitoring of "sentinel sites." Although these initiatives have yet to deliver conclusive results as yet, it is hoped that they offer opportunities for future analysis and evidence.

Although a great deal of literature is available, much of the literature reviewed tends to promote community forestry successes from the point of view of donors or projects. The literature is often quite uncritical and, therefore, a poor basis for making sound assessments and drawing out significant lessons. For instance, few authors - especially in documents written for donors - consider power issues. The reluctance of forest departments to devolve genuine control of forests to communities is often attributed to a lack of confidence or trust in communities to manage forests sustainably, whereas this reluctance is clearly often related to a desire to maintain individual

⁶ IFRI was initiated by Nobel laureate Dr. Elinor Ostrom and her colleagues at the Workshop on Political Theory at the University of Indiana and collaborating institutions in the 1990s. The IFRI program subsequently expanded to include 14 Collaborating Research Centers around the world, coordinated by an administrative center at the University of Michigan, supported by World Bank, the United States Department of Agriculture, and other donors. Publications from the IFRI research are important sources of lessons learned on common property forest management regimes.

2.0 OVERVIEW

The field and concept of community forestry began to emerge over 35 years ago. In the 1970s, the Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) Forestry for Local Community Development program was initiated, and the 1978 World Forestry Congress focused on "Forests for People" (Arnold 1992). In subsequent years, many communities, governments, donors and other development partners have provided substantial support around the globe for developing various forms of community forestry. Notable support was provided by FAO, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Ford Foundation, and many bilateral and multilateral donors.

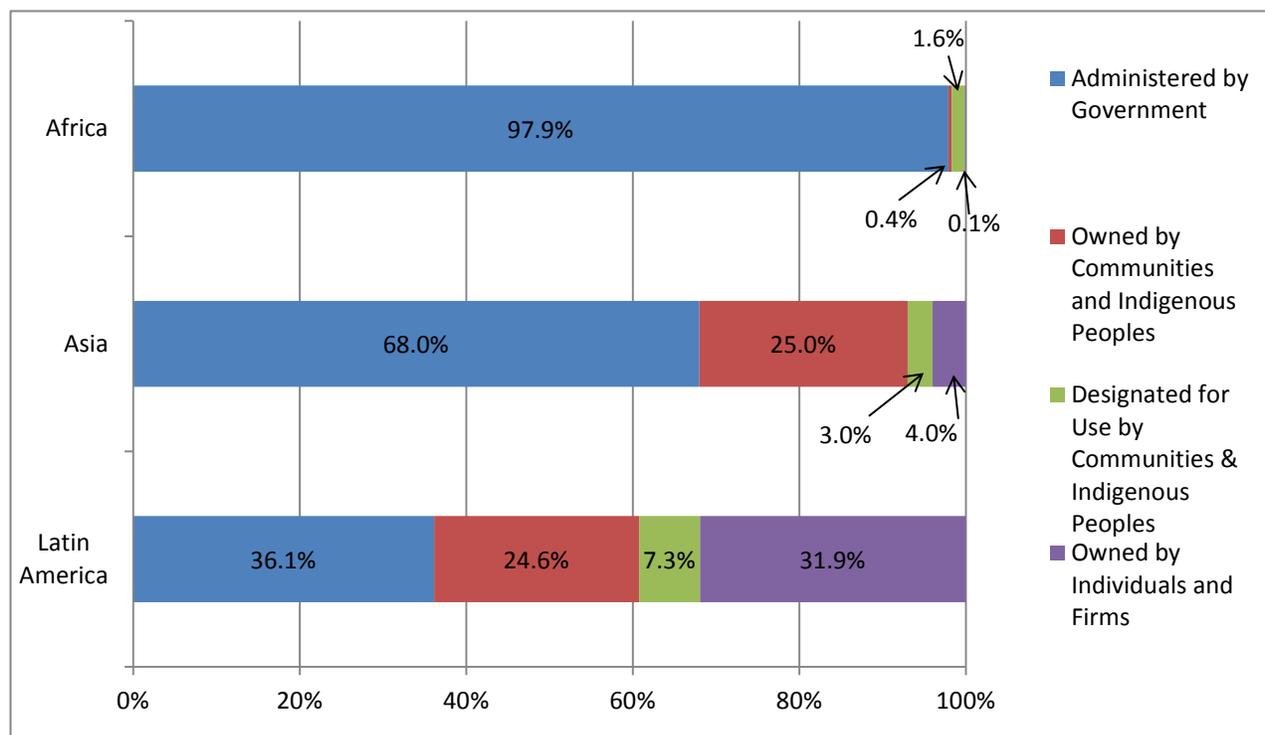
Community forestry covers a wide diversity of systems under which communities play a role in controlling the access and use of forests. This varies from full community ownership and control to many forms of co-management or joint forest management (JFM), under which control and decision-making is shared, sometimes very unequally, between the state and the community. Traditional forms of community forestry commonly include traditional land-use systems that integrate long-fallow swidden agriculture and agroforestry techniques for enriching the natural regeneration with valued species. Community forestry may also include woodlot management, reforestation and the protection of sacred or culturally valued forests.

Community forestry can be categorized as "self-initiated," "self-generated," "self-identified," or "organic" on the one hand, or "externally-initiated" or "externally-generated" on the other. (Self-initiated and externally-initiated are the terms used in this report.) Self-initiated community forestry systems range from traditional ones, dating back decades or even centuries, to recently created systems. Older self-initiated forms of community forestry are often referred to as "traditional" or "customary." Externally-initiated forms of community forestry have been developed with the intervention of national, provincial, and local governments, donor projects, NGOs or other external agencies, such as multilaterals or foundations. Another distinction that has been made is to describe self-initiated community forestry systems as "discovered" when outside interventions attempt to engage with those self-initiated systems, in contrast to "designed" (externally-initiated) systems that are blueprinted from the top down (Seymour 1994). Even with externally-initiated community forestry systems, however, an individual community forestry group may be self-identified. Alcorn (2013) also discusses how some "self-initiated" systems may be "invisible," i.e., not yet discovered by outsiders.

Professor Elinor Ostrom, the first woman to win the Nobel Prize in Economics for her years of research on common property resource management, found that the most effective institutions for governing local common property resources are self-generated institutions "running on their own motors" (Ostrom 1990, Ostrom 2010). The design principles for common property regimes identified by Ostrom (1990) offer indicators of what makes common property management work (Fisher 2013). They emphasize the importance of clear group and resource boundaries, decision-making processes at the local level and the recognition of "appropriators" (users) "to devise their own institutions" without challenge "by external governmental authorities" (Ostrom 1990: 90).

Self-initiated community forestry is widespread in Latin America, Africa and Asia (Figure 1). It is by far the most important in Latin America, where it is widely recognized as a legitimate land use and receives various degrees of legal recognition, including tenure rights. In Africa and Asia, nearly all forest lands are government either owned by the government, or considered to be the property of the nation or of "the people," and administered by the government on behalf of the country. Self-initiated community forestry tends to exist in parallel with state tenure, but with little legal recognition, thus not "discovered."

Figure 1. Formal Forest Tenure Rights by Region.



Source: Adapted from *Turning Point: What future for forest peoples and resources in the Emerging World Order*, Rights and Resources Initiative, Washington, D.C., 2012, Figure 1, page 8. Based on best available data (Dec.2011) from 36 of the world's most forested countries, representing 85 percent of the world's forests. Data was compiled by CIFOR, ITTO and RRI.

In most African and Asian countries, forests are largely legally under state ownership or control. In Asia and Africa, community forestry programs involve some form of decentralization of legal responsibility for forest management and, sometimes, but not always, transfer of rights over forests to local communities. The rights are generally highly circumscribed. In both regions, local institutional arrangements related to community forests often exist in parallel with official state tenure.

Communities now legitimately manage 216 million ha of forests or one-third of the forest in Latin America (Lawry and McLain 2012). Traditional self-initiated systems covering enormous areas predominate in South America, especially in the “carbon-rich” forests of the Amazon Basin. In Mexico and Central America, traditional rights form the core, but externally-initiated, commercially-oriented community forestry systems prevail and provide some of the best examples in all three regions of full community empowerment over forest resources.

For the Latin American review, Alcorn (2013) distinguished a continuum or range of ideal types of self-initiated community forestry⁷ in the region (summarized in Table 1). Externally-initiated community forestry is much more important in Central America, especially in Mexico and Guatemala. Mexico arguably benefits from the best combination of tenurial rights including strong commercial rights to harvest and market timber products.

⁷ Alcorn (2013) argues that “self-generated forms of community forestry fall along the following continuum or range of ideal types (*sensu* Max Weber). The continuum includes an infinite number of variations. The purpose of this graphic is to replace the single vision of “what is community forestry” with an open framework for understanding local variations so that self-generated community forestry will receive more appropriate support and recognition.”

Table 1. Spectrum of Community Forestry Types in Latin America

| Low-Intensity Forestry Intervention (LIFI) | Medium-Intensity Forestry Intervention (MIFI) | High-Intensity Forestry Intervention (HIFI) |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Found in more remote situations of natural forest where community forests are large (up to several million ha), population density is low and pressures on the forest are low • Tenure rights generally recognized by the state and internal tenure rights are regulated under customary law • Traditional, long-fallow swidden agriculture is often practiced • Non-timber forest products (NTFPs) are harvested for local consumption and/or sale, some logging may be done under agreements with the private sector • Practiced almost exclusively by indigenous, afro-descendent and some <i>riberño</i> communities, primarily in South America | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practiced in less remote situations where pressures on the forest are higher and forest blocks smaller • Communities enrich their natural forests with high-value trees that produce cash crops • These forestry communities may form logging enterprises and log their own forests in accord with forest management plans • Widespread in Central America, also found in agricultural transition frontier zones in South America • May involve both indigenous and non-indigenous smallholders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Found in high-density areas (100+/km²) where 10 to 25 percent of community lands are maintained in enriched/managed forest • Typically in colonization areas where land pressures and conflicts are highest and deforestation often results from the failure of government to guarantee community tenure rights • Incorporates commercially-oriented agroforestry systems, often focus areas for reforestation efforts • Widespread in Central America, also found in agricultural transition frontier zones in South America • May involve both indigenous and non-indigenous smallholders |

Source: Alcorn (2013)

Despite the lack of formal recognition in Africa, communities have controlled and managed forests and woodlands for centuries (Alden Wily 2012, Roe *et al.* 2009, Shepherd 1992). These patterns of community management fit within larger clan, tribal, and other customary structures. Control over forest resources was centralized during the colonial era and communities were disenfranchised from local forest resources. State ownership of forests was generally continued after independence, but the ability of newly independent states to control and manage forests has often been highly limited. New, more people-centered approaches became increasingly important since the mid-1980s onwards, but progress has been patchy at best.

The Rights and Resources Institute (RRI) estimates that almost 98 percent of forested land in Africa is “controlled” by national governments, while only 2.0 percent is formally “owned by” or “designated for use by communities and Indigenous Peoples” (see Figure 1). Some countries, however, have higher formal community ownership or control of forests based on legal recognition of customary law. **Emerging evidence from a number of countries indicates devolution of rights and resources produces more favorable forest management outcomes than centralized state control** (Blomley *et al.* 2008, Bowler *et al.* 2010). Traditional, self-initiated community forestry systems exist in parallel and over 90 percent of Africa’s rural population accesses land through customary institutions (Alden Wily 2008), but most of this is not officially recognized by African states.

Externally-initiated community forestry systems began in francophone Sahelian West Africa in the mid-1980s where it has always had a commercial focus on managing dryland forests for the production of fuelwood (firewood and charcoal) for urban markets. Community forestry initiatives began rather independently in East Africa in the 1990s with a much stronger focus on conservation. Africa’s largest community forestry program was found in Tanzania where 4.1 million ha is now under community

ownership. A diversity of initiatives was also found in southern Africa, coastal West Africa and in the Congo Basin.

In some Asian countries, forests have been under state control for centuries. Self-initiated community forestry has generally not been given legal recognition. The ancestral domain laws in the Philippines are a clear exception. Externally-initiated community forestry programs began in Nepal in the 1970s and are now widespread in the Asian region. 1.6 million households in Nepal are involved in community forestry covering 1.3 million ha of forest. The Philippines community forestry program began in the 1980s and now covers 1.6 million ha and 1.3 million beneficiaries (Braganza and Erdmann 2012). The JFM approach emerged in India in the 1980s and developed into an enormous nation-wide program. It is not a rights-based program and communities are paid in kind by the state for forest management services performed. The Forest Rights Act of 2006, however, challenged the Indian forestry department to recognize Indigenous Peoples' rights to forests and modify their approach. In Papua New Guinea (PNG) and across the Pacific sub-region, self-initiated community forestry is the predominant practice, though not fully supported by law in all Pacific countries (Clarke and Thaman 1993).

Community forestry is increasingly seen as a delivery mechanism for REDD+ that can reduce deforestation and deliver social, economic and environmental benefits. South America has advanced many REDD+ pilots and there are a modest number of REDD+ pilot initiatives in Africa and Asia. REDD+ is sometimes welcomed by civil society, but there are also deep fears that it will further disenfranchise local communities without proper safeguards. Some vulnerable populations and NGOs view REDD+ with suspicion and fear that its implementation will revert to old-style patterns that marginalize them (c.f., Phelps *et al.* 2010, Lovera 2012a). Vulnerable sectors that may either benefit or suffer from REDD+ include Indigenous Peoples, non-indigenous and forest communities with weak or no rights. Women also risk marginalization if they cannot represent their concerns that REDD+ will negatively affect their livelihoods and well-being.



Villagers discussing monitoring of community forest, Nepal. Photo: Paula J. Williams

3.0 KEY LESSONS LEARNED RELEVANT TO REDD+

3.1 EMPOWERMENT OF COMMUNITIES

3.1.1. Community Tenure

If REDD+ hopes to engage with communities to protect, sustainably manage and enhance forests, the communities need to be sufficiently empowered to do so. Thus, it is important to examine lessons learned from community forestry regarding community rights over forestland and how this pertains to REDD+.

Tenurial security is the single most important determinant for the success of community forestry outcomes – a necessary but insufficient condition for community forestry success. Forest tenure defines who owns forestland and who can use, manage and make decisions about forest resources. There is great diversity in the mix of tenurial rights among the different forms of community forestry. Tenure consists of a varying bundle of rights that include some or all of the following rights (Westholhm *et al.* 2011):

1. Access – the right to enter the area
2. Use rights – the right to use forests and forest products for domestic or commercial use
3. Management – the right to regulate internal use patterns or transform the resource
4. Exclusion – the right to decide who can or cannot use the resource
5. Alienation – the right to sale or lease of the land

Community forestry use rights are frequently restricted, such as limitations on the rights to extract specific resources from forests (e.g., timber, firewood, fish, wildlife, water). Use rights for forest products may be for domestic use only or less frequently may include commercial rights for harvesting and marketing, depending on the country and existing customs and laws.

The particular bundle of tenurial rights found in any given situation may be those of self-initiated forms of community forestry or those of externally-initiated forms of community forestry mostly developed over the last three decades. Self-initiated community forestry rights may or may not be legally recognized by the state. Tenurial rights of externally-initiated community forestry have frequently been transferred by the state to communities. Rights granted or legalized by the state range from full legal ownership and protection from loss of those rights at one extreme (e.g., Colombia), to time-bound, conditional “rights” that may be suspended or withdrawn with little warning at the other extreme (e.g., Indonesia). Tenure over land, trees and forests may be distinct in either self-initiated or externally-initiated community forestry. Traditional rights frequently exist in parallel, and in conflict, with legal tenure over forestland and resources, especially in Africa. Blomley (2013) describes forest tenure claims in Africa as “complex, overlapping, contested, often traditional, seasonal in nature and usually undocumented.”

The legally-supported bundle of land rights for collective tenure in Latin America is generally inalienable, indivisible and indefeasible (cannot be annulled, lost or overturned), but the situation varies from country to country. For example, communities may not be able to use their community forestry land as collateral for loans to finance their community forestry operations (or other activities).

Various forms of unofficial tenure are relatively common in Asia. Both indigenous peoples and non-indigenous communities have long established systems of rights that are mutually recognized within groups and, often, by neighboring communities. However, unlike the situation in much of Latin America, legal

recognition of these rights is relatively uncommon, with partial exceptions with regard to Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines and India. In some countries, such as Vietnam and Cambodia, recent recognition has been given to community forests.

Many types of community forestry are effectively systems of co-management, collaborative management or JFM, with rights and responsibilities shared between communities and the state. Again, there are very high levels of variability in empowerment of communities. Under the huge JFM program in India, which covers 20 million ha, an estimated 90,000 communities provide forest management services for the state forestry department in return for payments, usually in kind. Community rights are minimal, although communities are using the 2006 India Forest Rights Act to challenge old JFM and park management practices. At the other extreme, the community managers on the *Chantier d'Aménagement Forestier* (CAF, or Forest Management Work Site) initiative in Burkina Faso are strongly empowered to implement the agreed management plan on the government-owned forest lands, to harvest and market wood products in compliance with the plan and to collect taxes for the state on the wood sold. Once the co-management plan has been approved, the government has a light role in monitoring compliance.

Box 2. Effective Rights

Community empowerment under community forestry depends on rights to access and use forests based on tenure, but statements about what rights exist or do not exist often obscure the point that the existence of “effective” rights is really crucial.

It is important to distinguish between tenure rights on paper and those that are found “in practice” (Cotula and Mayers 2009). Communities with forest rights that exist only on paper cannot be considered to be empowered, nor can communities that have forest rights in practice that are not legally recognized. In the context of this review, empowerment in terms of tenure refers to: i) the complex of processes that evolved over time leading to the development of self-initiated tenurial rights; ii) the formal, legal recognition by government of such traditional rights; iii) the transfer by government to communities of rights to establish and enforce rules governing access, management, harvest or sale of forest resources; and/or iv) the degree to which all of these rights have been made “effective.”

There are **many factors that serve to limit the effectiveness of legally-recognized tenurial rights** in all three regions. These are primarily problems of governance. One of the findings of this review is the difficulty of separating tenure from governance. Effective rights are critical for community forestry and for REDD+. For a performance-based system, such as REDD+, clear tenurial rights and tenure security for communities are advantageous. Governance problems that limit the effectiveness of community rights are cited in this section and in more detail in Section 3.2 on governance and stakeholder engagement.

Let us distinguish between decentralizing (or devolving) power and authority versus decentralizing responsibility. It is very common for governments in Asia and Africa, and some countries in Latin America, to decentralize forest protection and maintenance responsibilities to communities while giving up little or no power to make and implement decisions about forest use.

The strongest tenurial rights for community forestry are generally found in Latin America where they are primarily based on self-initiated systems that have received varying levels of legal recognition by the state. In some cases, community rights over forests are even specified in a country’s constitution – particularly the many countries in Latin America that revised their constitutions to incorporate the United Nations International Labour Organization (ILO) 169 Convention responsibilities that support the customary rights of Indigenous Peoples (Van Cott 2000). While the Indonesian Constitution recognizes *adat* rights, this recognition has not been implemented by national law generally, and there are only *ad hoc* court decisions about specific cases, although some cases have been upheld by the Indonesian Supreme Court. The tenure rights of Indigenous Peoples are stronger in Latin America than in the other two regions. Indigenous Peoples’ tenure is often weak in practice, however, as a result of discrimination and the lack of mastery of legal and administrative systems by Indigenous Peoples (Alcorn 2013). In Mexico, traditional rights form the core of the success where commercially-oriented community forestry systems prevail and offer some of the best examples of full community economic empowerment based on community forestry. There are,

however, no equivalent success stories of community forestry in South America, where failure rates for externally-initiated community forestry projects have been high and self-initiated community forestry is often threatened by the expanding development frontier. Externally-initiated community forestry programs in South America have generally only enjoyed short-term success during the time in which the project is providing incentives and technical support. Longer term success occurs in situations where government programs and donor projects have built on existing community strengths, strong local and sub-regional organizational support and shared interests.

Community rights under externally-initiated forms of community forestry in Africa and Asia are generally partial, time-bound and conditional rights that have been transferred to communities by the state. Lessons from many countries in Africa and Asia show that the **success of community forestry is frequently undermined by the partial only transfer of tenure rights to communities** (Blomley 2013, Fisher 2013). Specific types of restrictions are discussed in Section 3.2.2 in the subchapter on governance. Traditional or customary tenure rights are generally legally recognized in the Pacific (especially Melanesia), but not in Asia.

Although legal recognition of customary tenure is relatively uncommon in much of Asia, there is an increasing incidence of legally recognized rights based on land that is distributed or allocated by governments. It is important to distinguish between programs based on discretionary “granting” of rights and recognition of rights as being in some sense pre-existing and applicable to all members of a specified population. Colchester (2008) stresses the difference between a Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) and a narrow focus on rights to property, i.e., tenure rights (See also FAO 2011).

In PNG, customary tenure rights are recognized in the constitution over 98 percent of the country’s lands and forests. In many countries where communities have not been empowered by the state, the rights of forest dependent communities and Indigenous Peoples have been, and continue to be, severely eroded.

The question of who should qualify as Indigenous Peoples is much less clear-cut in Africa and Asia in comparison to Latin America. This situation is due in part to the fact that protections afforded to Indigenous Peoples under ILO 169 and the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) only apply to Indigenous Peoples who self-identify themselves as such. Moreover, a limited number of countries have signed ILO 169, and UNDRIP, although supported by many countries, is not legally binding. This key step has not been pursued by many indigenous or tribal people in Africa and Asia, nor has been recognized by their governments. In some areas in Asia, such people may be referred to as “ethnic minorities.” In Latin America, Afro-Descendants are called “Tribal Peoples” and they share the same rights as Indigenous Peoples in the Inter-American Human Rights Court’s jurisprudence.

Threats to tenure rights in the three regions are substantial and include: i) new road networks, other infrastructure, and mining, petroleum and other extractive activities (all three regions); ii) spontaneous colonization (Latin America); iii) drug cultivation (Latin America and Southeast Asia); iv) armed conflict and insecurity (Latin America, Africa, and parts of Asia - NE India, the Philippines, Papua); v) market forces linked to globalization such as conversion to agro-industry and biofuel plantations⁸ (all three regions); and population growth and expansion of smallholder agriculture (especially Africa, also Latin America and Asia).

Extensive areas of forests in Africa are found in fragile states or post-conflict countries where the rule of law is very weak. By the end of the war in Liberia in 2003, the forest area claimed by logging companies exceeded the total area of forests by more than two times (Harwell 2010). Exclusion of specific groups of traditional users frequently leads to conflicts. Transhumant herders are frequently excluded from forest rights in Africa, but there are cases where their integration into community forestry agreements has yielded positive results (e.g., Takieta, Niger).

⁸ Examples: In the Amazon, soy beans and cattle ranching; in SE Asia, and beginning in Africa, oil palm plantations. Also in northern Lao PDR rubber plantations.

Traditional tenure may involve a mixture of collective and individual rights – especially where swidden agriculture is part of the landscape. However, where tenure reform does not take the subtlety of existing tenure and decision-making processes into account, it can have severe negative impacts on group effectiveness and on certain sub-groups within a population. One challenge to tenure reform is that customary tenure arrangements tend to involve mixtures of collective and individual rights. This is particularly clear in the case of swidden agriculture in which plots are farmed individually but fall within an overall community territory with collective distribution of plots and collective regulations. The process of allocation of community rights under the Forest Rights Act in India had mixed results for women, sometime leading to a loss of decision-making power. But in some cases where women, communities or NGOs were actively engaged, women’s rights have been formalized. Early externally-initiated community forestry in Nepal did not recognize traditional use rights, instead working with formal political-administrative structures. This oversight led to a lack of community engagement and conflict in some areas.

3.1.2 The Role of the State and Civil Society in Community Empowerment

Roles of the state: **The state can support and foster community forestry just as it can suppress community forestry development by disempowering communities.** The state can impact the empowerment of communities through its laws, policies, regulations, institutions, strategic plans and budgeting. The state can formally recognize traditional tenure just as it can transfer tenurial rights to communities for the management or co-management of government-owned lands. Government defines the conditions and the procedures for legally recognized community empowerment. Empowerment by government can be highly restrictive or it can be very broad. Government issues permits and licenses and may monitor community forestry implementation and respect for conditions/regulations. Government can levy taxes on community forestry products and services and decide of the use of those taxes. The role of the state can be very complex and heavily influenced by vested interests.

One of the most important roles of the state in respect to community forestry and REDD+ is in **policy reform**, especially policy reform to strengthen community tenure rights. Community tenure rights are weak in most countries. Many of the constraints to the effectiveness of community rights that exist on paper are governance constraints. Policy reform is a political act and can only be undertaken when the political conditions are conducive. Policy reform is fraught with risks – improper policy reform can even make matters worse. One of the risks in policy reform is that of standardization. Self-initiated community forestry is characterized by high levels of diversity, but governments generally prefer standardization which can be very problematical.

Community forestry is often strongly affected by government programs of decentralization. In Africa and Asia, legal recognition of community forestry rights almost always involves decisions of the central government. In at least two cases in Africa (Tanzania and Gambia), local government has the authority to grant such legal status. An important role of the state in the empowerment of communities is one of enforcement. The community’s right to exclude outsiders must be supported by the state (Fisher 2013). Another important role that the state can play is in conflict management: however, the state is often a party to many conflicts (Fisher 2013). The state commonly plays a role in technical support to communities. In Latin America, government can empower communities to engage directly as stakeholders rather than recognize NGOs as communities’ surrogates (Alcorn 2013).

Roles of civil society: In Latin America, the **most important role of civil society in the empowerment of communities has come through the demands and gains of larger social movements for better governance.** Civil society plays essential roles in service delivery, lobbying and watchdog functions. Coordinated civil society movements have played an essential role in empowering community forestry practitioners in Latin America and in Nepal, both directly and indirectly in developing the second key element for community forestry success – strong community forestry organizations. NGOs can play important roles in the development of national REDD+ plans and strategies that can strengthen communities and community forestry as part of their larger interests in promoting civil society participation in governance.

3.1.3 Conclusions and Implications for REDD+

- Effective REDD+ can benefit from the clarification and allocation of legally binding community tenure instruments. **Within the tenurial bundle of rights, those most critical to the successful engagement of communities by REDD+ are the rights of communities to control access and to develop and enforce rules governing access and use of forests.**
- REDD+ provides potential opportunities to strengthen the tenure claims of local communities. If this opportunity is missed and governments and other partners implement REDD+ in a way that disenfranchises local communities and Indigenous Peoples then it will undermine effective tenure reform and the effectiveness of REDD+ itself. In Latin America, many Indigenous Peoples and communities fear that REDD+ will undermine their tenure rights (Alcorn 2013). Blomley (2013) argues that experience from community forestry indicates that if the REDD+ process results in the simplification or reduction of the tenure bundle to only user rights, this change may undermine the effectiveness of forest management measures. **Providing secure, enforceable and non-discretionary forest tenure rights, accompanied by simple and affordable procedures for management planning that are within the reach of rural communities is an essential element of success** (Blomley 2013). Fisher (2013) argues that tenure on paper is important, but even more important is that strong tenure rights are effective in practice. In some cases, communities have engaged effectively in community forestry even though their rights were only informally recognized, but not yet legally supported. Such cases may be useful pilots that can lead to policy changes towards stronger tenure rights over time.
- REDD+ offers potential revenue streams for state forestry administrations that are often severely constrained in terms of government budgets. Given the potential financial flows from REDD+ there is a potential risk that **REDD+ could lead state forestry departments to stop or even reverse the empowerment of communities** if donors and policy support the state agencies as sole beneficiaries of REDD+ carbon credits and/or distributor benefits. The state could also favor the individual titling of forests over community empowerment. The role of safeguards in mitigating this risk will be essential.
- In addition to the legal transfer of forest tenure rights, REDD+ initiatives that integrate community forestry require the establishment of legally recognized community-level management entities with which contracts for carbon credits can be developed over an area of forest that has been legally defined (Blomley 2013). Alcorn (2013) highlights the extreme diversity in self-initiated traditional community organizations and warns against the dangers of standardization. None of the regional reviews point to field experience of how these diverse forms can best be addressed aside from **working directly to adjust tenurial instruments to different situations**. While community managers should be expected to ensure that rules governing access and use are respected by members of their community, REDD+ processes should ensure that procedures for community empowerment clearly define government responsibilities for enforcement to back community rights of effective exclusion. Communities need to perceive that they are secure in their rights in order to be reliable carbon sequestration service providers (Borner *et al.* 2011).
- REDD+ initiatives must ensure that the participation of women, pastoralists, long-term resident colonists, Indigenous Peoples, tribal people, the poor and other marginalized, legitimate forest resource users are fully considered within the community empowerment processes.

3.2 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

3.2.1. Governance at the Community Level

Self-initiated structures: Community forestry systems have developed many different forms of community institutions or structures to make and enforce rules governing the access and use of the forest resources. The institutional structures of self-initiated forms of community forestry in Latin America are extremely diverse (Alcorn 2013). For Asia, Fisher (2013) found that the main lesson is that the features of successful systems

are extremely variable. In Nepal, Fisher (Fisher 1989, Gilmour and Fisher 1990) found that formal organizational features (such as committees) were often absent, and such organizational features tended to evolve, often appearing and disappearing over time. What these systems had in common were shared ideas about how forests should be managed and how decisions should be made. **The three regional reviews recommend the use of existing community structures (where possible) or promotion of processes that allow for the self-identification of user groups.** Moreover, they should be based on recognized use rights and allow for flexibility and diversity of forms.

Box 3. Governing from the Bottom Up

Governance often works best at the village level when all members can meet under the same tree to debate the use and the distribution of benefits from their forest lands.

Control of customary authorities by community governance structures: In Latin America, indigenous communities may have traditional authoritarian or inherited leadership, but that leadership is authorized and controlled by the community assembly. **Community forest management is typically controlled by, or is subordinate to, the community assembly and the assembly represents the full community.** These assemblies are comprised of household heads or all community members above a certain age. Assemblies deliberate in more or less democratic ways, making decisions by consensus. In some parts of Africa, there is a trend towards the transfer of forest management rights away from traditional chiefs and leaders to their democratically-elected representative bodies, often linked to other local governance structures such as local councils. **Most countries in Africa have built local village forest management institutions from existing user groups or other existing organizations although in other cases these groups are created by external actors.** In Malawi, self-initiated (referred to as “organic”) community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) structures are considered to have high potential for success, although it is recognized that these management bodies may be unrepresentative and undemocratic in nature (USAID 2010).

Geographic scale: If community forestry management entities are composed of many geographically distinct communities, each one sends representatives to community forestry management meetings. In Africa, this can weaken local governance, by making communication more difficult, as community members may feel much less involved. It can enhance opportunities for elite capture unless there is internal control. A review of community natural resource institutions across southern Africa found that the mobilization of membership and participation over wide geographical areas is both difficult and expensive. Wherever possible, the **principle of subsidiarity, or decentralization of natural resource management to the lowest possible level, should apply** (DSI 2008). In Asia, Africa and Latin America the situation is distinct.

Accountability and transparency: A study of forest management institutions in Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and South Africa found that, in many cases, the **accountability of community forestry institutions was largely upwards to central government ministries, rather than downwards to their elected constituency** (Matose 2008). There is a risk that upward accountability could be made worse under REDD+ performance-based contracts for enhanced carbon sequestration. In Mexico, community forestry is managed by community assemblies, where accountability depends on the strength of local governance, but federal regulations that require approvals of forest management plans also provide another instrument for discouraging mismanagement.

Elite capture can be a problem with community-level governance structures, particularly in relation to externally-initiated projects. The potential for this problem is higher in communities with low levels of literacy and numeracy, and among communities that have little tradition of transparency, open communications and accountability. The participation of traditional leaders was found to be central to issues of land use and community structures in Zambia, but elite capture by traditional leaders was common. Measures were devised to avoid this problem in Zambia (PFAP 2005).

Governance structures for commercial uses: **When commercial exploitation of forests for timber and non-timber forest products is added to community forestry, damage to forests and the community can be prevented by transparent processes that include accountable and transparent management**

of any funds generated. In the case of San Juan Nuevo, Mexico, capital from logging was used to seed new enterprises for the community that now generate more income than the forest (Alcorn 2005, Orozco-Quintero and Davidson-Hunt 2010). This community has developed corporate-style structures to manage their different enterprises, but all are accountable to the community assembly. Latin American also includes cases of illegal exploitation of community forests by force and intimidation, sometimes with state support. De Jong *et al.* (2010) caution against assuming Mexican experiences with forestry enterprises can be repeated in South America, given the current lawless frontier situations in Amazonian forests and the cultural differences between South America and Mexico.

Two-tiered structures: In some cases, **community forestry organizations have been organized into groups, associations, or federations, which may provide economic, political, or management benefits for the members.** Experiences from Tanzania suggest that two-tiered associations of community-level management structures are difficult to maintain, particularly where revenues generated through forest management are limited. Ensuring accountability between primary and second-level governance institutions has proven immensely challenging (Blomley 2006, Roe *et al.* 2009).

On the other hand, the FAO CAF initiative established an innovative two-tiered self-financing management structure in Burkina Faso in the late 1980s. Each of the six upper level federations have provided technical and managerial support to community-level management bodies for the past 25 years (Manuel Soto Flandez and Kabore Cyrille, personal communications), but no analyses are known to have been made of the strengths and weaknesses of this system.

In Nepal and India, community forestry groups have formed federations to pursue their shared interests. One of the most successful of these federations is the Federation of Community Forest User Groups in Nepal FECOFUN (Shrestha and Britt 1997, Ojha *et al.* 2008). Likewise in Mexico and Central America, federations of communities and support groups have been successful in getting policy reforms and opportunities to pilot their ideas that support community forestry.

In Guinea, the Forest Management Committees (FMCs) enable duly registered members to participate in collective decision-making, thereby directly influencing institutional policy. These collective forums enable all of the FMCs' rules to be created, modified or maintained as appropriate. The fate of constitutional rules, as well as collective decision-making rules, is therefore directly placed in the hands of ordinary members of the FMC. The experience arguably qualifies as a promising democratic decentralization or devolution of natural resource management. Meaningful and effective sets of powers have been transferred to democratically constituted and legally recognized bodies close to the citizens at the grassroots level (Balinga *et al.* 2012).

The approach to participatory forest co-management developed in Guinea has subsequently been replicated in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Both of these countries experienced years of war, and forests – as well as other natural resources – were plundered to finance the fighting (Baker *et al.* 2003). The work to develop forest co-management has been important in the post-conflict period as means to develop governance over resources and reduce conflict among stakeholders. USAID efforts through the Land Rights and Community Forestry (LRCFP) and Peoples Rules Yet some of those efforts in Liberia have overlooked the persisting variety of customary forms of forest management, including sacred groves (Lebbie *et al.* 2009).

Multiple natural resource management institutions: A problem noted in Malawi is the **proliferation of sector-based natural resource management institutions at village level with separate committees for the management of forests, wildlife and fisheries, all in the same village** (USAID 2010). This is particularly a problem if these institutions are not controlled by an overarching local authority or if donors or government programs impose their authority over the community. In Latin America, where community and supra-community assemblies are functioning well, multiple resources are often managed in coherent ways.

3.2.2. Governance and Stakeholders at Supra-community Levels

Development and implementation of policy, legal and regulatory frameworks: A key finding of this review is that the **greatest constraints to community forestry are found in the policy, legal and regulatory frameworks developed by the state and the ways government agencies apply these policies.** The general trend towards community tenure does not always translate as a move towards reduced control by the state. Even where community tenure is legally recognized, many factors hinder the delivery of benefits. Understanding of these factors cannot be easily separated from discussion of tenure (Fisher 2013):

Tenure relies on, and is conditioned by, governance. Effective tenure is both impossible to achieve without supportive policy and institutional systems, and rather useless without broader institutional capacity to do something with it (Cotula and Mayers 2009: 5).

The development and application of forestry and governance policies are critical constraints to community forestry in all three regions, but they are the most severe in Africa and Asia. Specific constraints that have been identified include the following:

- 1) Bureaucratic discretionary powers that apply to community forestry;
- 2) Cumbersome regulations limiting communities benefits, and freedom of action and right to decision-making (common for Asia and Africa);
- 3) Time limits on community rights – in Asia, rights are commonly transferred to communities for fixed periods of time;
- 4) Restrictions on harvestable products, especially on the commercial sale of forest products (major exceptions are in Latin America, Sahelian West Africa, Philippines, and the Pacific Island Nations);
- 5) Financial barriers, such as requirements that communities pay license fees or royalties in advance of harvest of forest products, high costs of preparation of forest management plans that are required and contain unnecessarily complex prescriptions, other high transaction costs imposed by government regulations (Fisher 2013, Blomley 2013);
- 6) Legal clauses allowing the state to withdraw rights transferred to communities;
- 7) Upper limits on the area allowed under community forestry;
- 8) Restrictions on community forestry to certain types of forests, often those most degraded or of lowest value;
- 9) Restrictions on communities' powers of enforcement or rights to retain confiscated products;
- 10) Overlapping or fragmented legal rights to land, trees and forests;
- 11) Failure to enforce laws equitably; and
- 12) Corruption, patronage and elite capture.

Bureaucratic and discretionary powers: **Bureaucratic and discretionary powers can severely limit the empowerment of communities.** In most countries in Asia, rights are “granted” or “allocated” rather than recognized as existing rights (Fisher 2013). In Nepal,⁹ the 1993 Forest Act authorized the handing over of community forests to all communities capable of and wishing to manage them. The actual implementation, however, is subject to a great deal of bureaucratic control (Fisher 2013). The law allows commercial harvest of timber by communities, but this is rarely included in approved management plans because of the discretionary powers of the District Forest Offices (Fisher 2013).

Cumbersome, complex regulations are very widespread constraints. Recognized rights are often subject to complex and counterproductive procedures and regulations. Requirements for detailed management planning greatly limits the capacity of communities to make decisions about forest management according to their own priorities (see FAO 2011). In the Philippines, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) “created a system... that makes it virtually impossible for

⁹ The description of community forestry tenure in Nepal is based largely on the personal experience of the author of the Asia review (Fisher 2013).

fledgling communities to establish sound management practices of their own”(Clausen *et al.* n.d.:70; see also Cronkleton *et al.* 2012).

Time limits: **Community forest tenure in Asia is usually granted only on a short or limited term basis** such as a lease, again most often on a discretionary basis rather than in recognition of pre-existing or universally applicable rights. Major exceptions are Nepal and PNG. In Cambodia, community forestry agreements are limited to a 15-year renewable term. As the forested areas are often in very degraded condition, this is not long enough to allow significant benefits to flow. Forest leases are also common instruments used by the state in Honduras and Guatemala, two Latin American countries where community tenure rights are very restricted.

Withdrawal of rights by the state: In the Philippines, community-based forest management (CBFM) is approved for 25 years renewable at the discretion of the DENR. In 2006, the DENR Secretary issued an **order that cancelled all existing CBFM agreements in the country because of concerns about misuse**. This decision was later reversed (Fisher 2013).

Failure to enforce laws equitably can be a constraint to community forestry. Legally empowered community managers are commonly required to pay applicable taxes and fees. At the same time, the widespread evasion of forest harvesting licenses and levies on products, such as charcoal, means that the market is flooded with forest products under their true prices – undercutting legal efforts by community managers in Tanzania (Blomley and Iddi 2009). In Zambia, the differential application of law enforcement to those engaged in illegal logging and forest use (i.e., protecting certain “untouchables,” while prosecuting others) acts as significant disincentive to communities seeking to create a level playing field when regulating forest use (PFAP 2005).

Corruption, patronage and elite capture. Forest resources have significant economic value and transfer to communities may represent loss of income for government agencies and government employees. The design of natural resource institutions and their policies are often driven not by considerations of efficiency and effectiveness, but rather by an “array of personal interests revolving around patronage networks and the exercise of political power” in Africa (Roe *et al.* 2009). **Failure to implement policies in favor of community forestry may be due to passive resistance from national government agencies, unwilling to cede power downwards, or reluctance to let go of personal benefits that have been secured under the *status quo*.** For example in Senegal, the national forestry agency used multiple strategies to prevent rural councils from exercising their legal rights for control and management of forest resources (Ribot 2009). Similar issues in Latin America include: corruption and abuse of power by authorities; corruption and illegal behavior by private sector with logging/mineral permits; inequitable tax structures; and NGOs acting and benefiting themselves as representatives rather than serving as honest intermediaries (c.f., WWF 2000). In Asia, where granting of community forestry rights is generally seen as discretionary, problems of corruption, patronage, or elite capture may arise. In Cambodia, for example, community forestry rights are granted for 15 years: degraded areas that have been improved under community management, however, may be reallocated to more powerful individuals or groups (Fisher 2013).

3.2.3. Effective Stakeholder Engagement Processes with Communities

Lessons learned on stakeholder engagement recommend that conveners of such processes include the following (Alcorn 2013):

- Avoid creating parallel processes. Rely on understanding and nurturing the emergent processes (self-initiated community forestry) already in the site. Work with existing community organizations wherever possible. Be cautious about forming new groups.
- Engage in shared learning commitments that incorporate local knowledge in action (versus consultation workshops). This approach has the additional benefit of empowering and invoking greater participation of women.

- Convene different stakeholders and facilitate continuing regular and emergency dialogues around issues.
- Use Free, Prior and Informed Consent/Consultation (FPIC).
- Enable women's participation by means other than the ineffective but common practice of adding a few women to consultation workshops or specified membership ratios on management structures. Engagement of women with local grassroots organizations where women play key roles or national women's organizations can offer an alternative venue.
- Engage federations and existing local multi-community organizations as representatives of local perspectives where they exist.

Gender: Numerous development organizations and researchers have examined the **gender dimensions of forestry and women's roles, knowledge and decision-making vis-à-vis forestry** over several decades. Both the FAO Forestry Department and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) have done significant work on this topic (e.g., Rojas 1993; FAO 1995, Aguilar et al. 2012; etc.). In Africa and Asia, women are most commonly involved in domestic and subsistence uses of the forest and the harvest of NTFPs and men tend to be involved in the harvest of timber, firewood, charcoal and commercial uses of the forest.

Years ago, Williams (1992, 1993) coordinated nine case studies of African forestry projects that successfully engaged women (in Kenya, Sudan, Somalia, Zanzibar (Tanzania), Zimbabwe, Botswana, Senegal, Mali, and Cameroon). These projects targeted specific activities with women and women's groups, employed women extension agents to work with women, and adopted other strategies to address various constraints to women's participation. These constraints included lack of; land; tree ownership and use rights; other materials resources; mobility; education and skills; cash, income and credit; labor; time; and formal and informal organizations, such as women's groups and cooperatives.

Although these and other approaches to making community **forestry and related efforts more inclusive of women have been piloted successfully, they have not been commonly replicated.** The three regional reviews found that there are **no simple formulas for ensuring strong engagement of women in community forestry.** Simplistic formulas that require a minimum ratio of women in community structures have not proven very effective.

For Africa, Blomley (2013) found that the empowerment of women in community forestry is frequently neglected. Again, it is common to prescribe ratios for women on management entities. Experience in Zambia was mixed. Initially and on paper, women's participation in committees was good. But a high percentage of silent women in committees did not enhance their functioning, effectiveness or representation. Women were vocal on some committees, but overall women's participation dropped when immediate gains were not seen (PFAP 2005).

For Latin America, most commonly women's concerns are only indirectly integrated into community decision-making to the degree in which the male heads of households take up their issues (Mitchell 2006). Interventions for encouraging women's participation are often ineffective unless built to strengthen local women's initiatives within local traditions (Alcorn 2013).

For Asia, formal community forestry is **often gender-biased or gender-blind.** Community forestry groups are formed with minimal consideration of the impacts on gender. Agrawal (2001) argues that participatory processes in community forestry can result in excluding women in South Asia. Many community forestry programs, attempting to take gender seriously, include regulations about the number of women who should be on committees. Such quotas are often ignored or lead initially to only token participation, although their participation may sometimes become more significant over time.

A recent CIFOR study looked at women's participation in community forest management in Kenya, Uganda, Bolivia and Mexico, as well as data in 10 countries analyzed by IFRI. This study found that **women's participation increased** when the community forestry institutions were less exclusionary.

Women's participation was also correlated with education and less disparities in the incomes in general, and between women and men specifically (Coleman and Mwangi 2013). The topic of gender issues is receiving increasing attention by those working on REDD+ strategies, programs, projects and UNFCCC negotiations.

3.2.4. Conclusions and Implications for REDD+

- All three regional reviews recommend that REDD+ should rely strongly on self-initiated, self-identified community groups whenever possible.
- REDD+ processes should start with an understanding of existing practices, rights and institutions. Where traditional institutions are strong and have influence over forest management and use, REDD+ processes should engage directly with such institutions, despite the fact that they may be less democratic and equitable than newly established and elected structures.
- The greatest opportunities for reliance on self-initiated community forestry is clearly found in Latin America where Alcorn (2013) concludes: key governance lessons for REDD+ can be summarized as in one recommendation – **allow self-initiated community forestry practice to lead the way as the most viable way forward to fit the diversity of situations in each country.**
- The greatest governance challenges for REDD+ are likely to be found at the level of the state. Key barriers include the following:
 - Resistance to community empowerment from government staff employing discretionary powers and a myriad of complex regulations and procedures that blocks the effective implementation of policies and laws favoring community forestry.
 - Entrenched and corrupt systems of patronage and clientism that exists between government staff, village leaders, illegal timber operators and highly placed government officials;
 - The failure of government to support a broader environment of sound forest governance and law enforcement.
- **REDD+ will probably not be successful at halting deforestation and forest degradation in situations that do not meet minimum standards of good governance.** An assessment of the likelihood of success of any PES-like REDD+ payments in the Brazilian Amazon by Borner *et al.* (2010) concluded that they are "...not likely to be successful under current conditions of land grabbing, insecure land tenure, and lack of adequately good governance. PES cannot substitute for enforcement."
- **The integration of disadvantaged groups (including women) requires tailored interventions that target these groups.** The use of simplistic formulas, such as the prescription of quotas for women's participation in committees or workshops, may not be sufficient. Community forestry support NGOs that put disadvantaged groups in leadership roles or that have expertise in the integration of disadvantaged groups should be engaged when possible.
- **Simple and verifiable procedures for developing forest management plans and procedures need to be within the reach of community groups and local forest managers** (Blomley 2013). A minimum standards approach for forest management, as suggested by Ribot (2002), may be an effective alternative to detailed forest management plans (Fisher 2013). This would define some basic parameters that are jointly agreed upon and that communities agree to respect, leaving the details of management up to the communities. Parameters could be simple, i.e., "no net loss of forest cover" or "no use of clear cuts." Compliance with the minimum standards would be monitored by a designated party.

3.3 BENEFITS AND INCENTIVES

3.3.1 Forest Management Benefits, Incentives and Costs

A core idea of REDD+ is that benefits will be forthcoming to communities that protect or manage their forests in ways that conserve or enhance the amount of carbon sequestered in the forest. It is therefore

essential to look at lessons learned regarding the benefits of community forestry, how these benefits serve as incentives and how benefits are distributed. The generation of benefits for communities is also central to any vision of community forestry that sees livelihoods and/or poverty reduction among the essential benefits – a common theme in REDD+ policy statements and concerns by donors (Fisher 2013). Benefits must be balanced against the different types of costs incurred by communities when they engage in community forestry. A wide range of benefits from self-initiated and externally-initiated community forestry have been identified in the regional reviews (although many are restricted in practice), including the following:

- Direct harvest of forest products, including wood products, food and medicines, as well as crops from agroforestry systems (most frequent benefit);
- Harvest and sale of forest products from natural or enriched forests, such as wood fuels, saw logs and highly diverse NTFPs, is another common benefit;
- Securing or enhancing tenure rights and their effectiveness;
- The pride and sense of empowerment of communities that have some control over their local forest resources;
- Community and household security benefits are linked to maintaining collective land rights and maintaining cultural survival;
- Risk mitigation (insurance), sometimes referred to as “safety nets,” such as a source of food or revenue during drought and famine, crop failure, war, other disasters or market failure;
- Access to a legal supply of forest products. Non-community forestry communities often harvest the same products illegally but are subject to fines and other penalties;
- Watershed protection, increased ground water and flow of springs;
- Forage and browse for livestock;
- Local climate amelioration;
- Payments for conservation and PES;
- Spiritual and cultural values (sacred forests, cemeteries, etc.); and
- An understanding of the key ecological role of forests as basis for many other benefits (“the pillar of the cathedral” concept).

It is often not a simple matter to determine which benefits provide the key incentives for a given community to protect and manage their forest. Communities may be motivated by marketing forest products, including income from the sale of timber to logging companies, for a good price. But there are cases where communities in Latin America have willingly sold timber for amounts far below its market value because their real incentive was to have protection from threatening logging and drug mafias that they received as part of the deal (Alcorn 2013). Real benefits may be very different from apparent benefits. This is a precautionary lesson for REDD+ proponents to be wary of simplistic assumptions.

In self-initiated community forestry, forests are maintained without external incentive payments. The innate benefits have served as adequate incentive for the maintenance of the forests up to the present time. The adequacy of benefits and incentives from externally-initiated forms of community forestry are difficult to judge until some period of time after the end of donor or external support to the target communities. This factor needs to be considered in the development of REDD+ programs. **The key question is: why and when do communities opt to continue forest management after projects end, or do these community forestry activities continue without project interventions?** Ultimately, a big part of the answer to this question depends on cultural values and household economics, yet few studies have looked in detail at the household economics of families in communities that include community forestry (Alcorn 2013). Household level values and benefits may be considerably different from community-level values and benefits, or reveal a different set of costs and benefits that indicate real community choices.

Some forms of community forestry generate most of their benefits at the household level. Others generate most of the benefits at the community-level. For example, the largest share of the revenues from Sahelian West African community forestry usually goes to the community members who cut the fuelwood that is

marketed in urban centers. Much of the benefits from forest management are individual, rather than communal. Few barriers prevent poorer members from becoming wood-cutters, thereby avoiding many of the problems of elite capture¹⁰. Across West Africa, revenues for individuals and households are generally relatively equitable in that individual benefits are directly proportional to individual effort – individuals are paid for the volumes of fuelwood they cut. Community forestry members are also employed as labor needed for forest management (patrols, early burning, boundary and road maintenance) (Noppen *et al.* 2004, Foley *et al.* 2002). In CAF community forestry in Burkina Faso, in some villages most of the wood-cutters are women.

In Latin America, some successful experiences with conservation agreements and PES that include community forests (Alcorn 2013). A meta-analysis of 301 studies of 40 PES schemes for watershed services in Latin America (Martin-Ortega *et al.* 2012) found: i) generally weak stakeholder inputs in the design of the programs; and ii) the mean value of payments for sellers is 60 percent higher than the payment for buyers – i.e., PES is generally subsidized. Another aspect of PES that has received very little attention is the transaction costs, which can be very high.

PES payments often go to the supra-community level of the management structure, not to households or individuals directly. The community-level institution must then decide whether to invest the revenues in community projects or to distribute the revenues to households or members. PES revenues are frequently invested in projects that are supposed to benefit the community as a whole. When revenues are distributed to households, household benefits are generally not proportional to household efforts and the benefits received are dependent on the proper functioning, good governance and accountability of the benefit distribution system. In Vietnam, for example, a community in Dalat Province is beginning management of a 500-ha community forest. The villagers have agreed, in accordance with their customs, that all households will get equal shares of the PES payment to the village, irrespective of actual work done by the household to patrol the forest. In this case, the community wants to take care of its more vulnerable members, such as elderly couples, who are unable to participate in the work (The Forest Dialogue, September 2013). It is critical that the benefit sharing or distribution be perceived as fair and equitable. In other cases, both community investments and distribution systems may be subject to elite capture.

Some community assemblies with well-developed governance capacities in Latin America have the power to remove leaders who make bad decisions. In some areas, community forestry income coming directly into community assembly control has proven to be successful basis for community development and further income generation for the community. In Mexico in particular, significant incomes are derived from community forestry (Alcorn 2013).

The regional reviews for Africa and Asia found that there have been **few critical and empirical analyses on the livelihood impacts and the extent of generation and distribution of tangible benefits** from community forestry to communities and individuals within those communities. Where income is documented, it is often presented in a way that obscures the number of people who actually share in the income. Fisher (2013) found that “there are virtually no attempts to present analysis in terms of costs compared to benefits” in Asia. This lack of research needs to be addressed. Overall, the cash returns from community forestry have generally been modest in both Africa and Asia (Blomley 2013, Fisher 2013). In many Asian countries, the main value of community forestry has been in terms of better (more secure) access to a legal supply of forest products for domestic use and consumption. The fact that the supply is legal is often a major positive aspect, even if the same products were collected illegally before (Fisher 2013).

¹⁰ Ribot (1998) found that for charcoal commodity chains in Senegal, where much of the charcoal making is done by migrant laborers from Guinea, the charcoal trade is controlled by the merchants, who reap the majority of the profits, and villagers get relatively little. The subsequent community forestry projects reviewed here have attempted to ensure greater benefits to community members.

The CAF (*chantier d'aménagement forestier*) community forestry in Burkina Faso provides a good example of benefit distribution amongst the primary stakeholders. As of February 2012, each community management group sold their firewood for 2200 francs FCA (FCFA) (\$4.42)/stere. 1100 FCFA (\$2.21) goes to the wood cutter, 200 (\$0.40) goes to a community fund, 600 FCFA (\$1.20) goes into the forest management fund and 300 FCFA (\$0.60) goes to the state as a tax levy. Under decentralization, the mayors of the recently created *communes*' (local government) are pushing for a share of this tax levy (Sienou 2012). The management fund is used to employ their own full time support staff and to pay for forest management activities, much of which goes for laborers from the communities.

Externally-initiated community forestry sometimes has net benefits for the poor, and sometimes has net costs for the poor. A follow up study five years after the end of the National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute (NAFRI) and IUCN NTFP project in the Lao PDR “suggested that the improved rankings (for the poorest segments of the population) had been maintained and that there had even been a continued improvement since the project ended” (Morris *et al.* 2008: 66), with the number of people in the poorest class falling from 33 percent to 13 percent over 10 years. An analysis of the impacts of co-management on the Budongo Forest Reserve in Uganda showed that the forest-based income of the wealthiest quartile increased by 25 percent while that of the poorest quartile decreased by 15 percent – although the program was intended to alleviate poverty (Jagger 2008). Similar findings have been established in Tanzania, where community forestry “costs” (mostly transaction costs) were generally evenly distributed across poor, medium and wealthy households, while benefits were enjoyed by the richest households (Meshack *et al.* 2005).

Lack of participation and receipt of benefits by poorer households can be explained by various factors. The poor often lack representation in management committees, and limited opportunities exist to hold management committees accountable. The poor often suffer disproportionately from increased protection and conservation measures introduced through community forestry. The imposition of licenses, fees and other upfront payments to harvest products from village forests mean that it is only middle income and richer members of the community who can take advantage of the economic opportunities presented by community forestry (Blomley and Franks 2009).

The contribution from timber harvesting and processing in accounts of income generation from community forestry in Asia is the very limited (Suzuki *et al.* 2008). Reasons cited include factors such as elite capture (Vietnam), opposition from the large-scale logging industry interests and the state forest departments in India and Thailand, and “complex and over-regulatory environments” in the Philippines (Fisher 2013). Timber harvest by community forestry organizations is not typical for Nepal, but there are successful examples, including one sawmill that was successfully operated as a joint venture, of four community forestry units at Chabas beginning in 1996 (Timsina 2005).¹¹

Financial benefits received to date from African community forestry outside of West Africa are small and generally exceeded by costs incurred from fulfillment of management responsibilities (Blomley 2013). This is especially true where the main motivation behind donor and government support for community forestry was conservation and forest restoration. Community forestry in Tanzania was contrived as a strategy for restoring degraded forests and utilization was given little attention. Revenues from forest management are small and confined to a few well documented cases (Blomley and Iddi 2009). Community forestry benefits in Ethiopia are now perceived by many to be far outweighed by the costs (both in establishment and maintenance – O’Hara 2011). In Mozambique, community forests are mainly located in conservation areas, totally degraded forest areas, or areas containing only low-value timber (Mustalahti and Lund 2010). In Namibia, accessibility and distance to markets meant that in many cases, forest products could not be marketed profitably (CFN 2011) In Zambia, actual benefits received by communities in the implementation

¹¹ For the Chabas sawmill, see also Kelly and Aryal (2007).

of JFM is very limited (PFAP 2005). With some exceptions, revenues from community forestry in Cameroon remain small.

3.3.2 Conclusions and Implications for REDD+

- REDD+ payments could fill an important “incentive gap” for communities. In many areas, such payments could occur while forests are being restored and before more tangible economic benefits from sustainable use become available (Blomley 2013) or until greater commercial harvest and marketing rights are conferred by the state.
- **Too much emphasis on protection, rather than sustainable use, can disadvantage communities and may negatively impact the poor in particular.** If REDD+ programs fail to integrate local interests for utilization and sustainable use, even with the additional payments from REDD+, there may be insufficient incentives to maintain long-term interest in forest maintenance and to prevent conversion (deforestation).
- There is a **need for detailed and critical cost-benefit analysis of community forestry and REDD+ activities from the point of view of community households.** Serious efforts need to be made to assess costs, especially the transaction costs and opportunity costs of lost access to certain products (Fisher 2013).
- Capture of benefits by elites within communities and by outsiders (including governments) is an issue in community forestry and similar issues will arise and need to be addressed in implementing REDD+ (Fisher 2013, Blomley 2013).
- Some NGOs in Latin America are proposing that REDD+ cash payments should go to the NGOs who would then provide NGO-mediated, indirect, non-cash benefits to communities. REDD+ decision makers need to weigh the pros and cons of this option very carefully. Some NGOs are receiving REDD+ preparedness funding for work in communities without the affected communities knowing they are being integrated into REDD+ programs (Alcorn 2013).

3.4 CAPACITY BUILDING

3.4.1 Importance of Capacity Building at the Community Level

Community members and managers in self-initiated forms of community forestry have been able to function under the conditions that have prevailed up to the present. Community managers for externally-initiated community forestry are generally faced with a range of capacity building needs, which poses one of the most difficult challenges for community forestry development. Self-initiated community forestry managers also face increased capacity needs as land, resource pressures and conflicts increase, as they move into commercial harvest and marketing of products, as they are held accountable for monitoring and reporting under changing legal obligations, and as they enter into contracts for payments for environmental services. Community forestry communities are frequently in remote, impoverished locations with difficult access, high levels of illiteracy and low levels of government services. They are sometimes fully occupied with their existing livelihood activities and thus may have little extra time to dedicate to new project activities.

Key skills that are needed within community-level community forestry management institutions include: technical skills in forest management and monitoring; bookkeeping, financial management and forest enterprise development; capacities for good governance and leadership; adaptive management, communication, planning, monitoring and evaluation and record keeping. A high turnover of members within many community management structures underscores the need for ongoing capacity building and training needs for community forestry. A common associated need is for literacy and basic numeracy education. Lack of literacy reduces the capacity of individuals to fully understand many institutional issues, reduces transparency and, thus, the extent to which leaders can be held accountable. Illiteracy among women may limit their levels of involvement in community forestry committees. Strong examples do exist, nonetheless, of illiterate communities successfully governing and managing community forestry activities,

with assistance from trusted technicians. **The weak marginal capacity of community forestry managers is also manifested through their weak bargaining positions when rights and responsibilities are being negotiated with national government agencies.**

Community forestry capacity building that has proven especially effective at the community-level includes: bookkeeping and business management; community-based mapping; learning by doing, monitoring and evaluation of forest regeneration (c.f., Peters 1994); forest management planning in accord with local values and concerns (within communities' own development plans), such as the facilitated "life plan" development (integrated plan for community development based on an analysis of the community's natural resources and social assets) found in Latin America, all of which can further contribute to good governance, planning and adaptive management (Alcorn 2013).

In Malawi and Tanzania, reviews have pointed to the uneven playing field during community forestry planning processes, which leaves such processes open to manipulation and skewed outcomes (FGLG 2007, Blomley and Ramadhani 2006). **This situation points to the need to go beyond traditional views of capacity (namely the more technical and procedural skills related to effective forest management and leadership) to ones that embraces governance, representation and accountability.**

In Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia, the local forest management committees chose a user-defined model for how citizens participate in FMCs. They participate in three major ways: membership; elections; and decision-making. FMC members must register and pay a small (US\$0.50-1.50) subscription fee as well as purchasing at least one share or annual membership fee (worth approximately US\$2.30-4.00). This arrangement yields a model of membership that is "user-defined" arising from "coalescence of interest" (Murphree 2000). User defined models of membership differ from community forestry arrangements that extend membership to all people living in specific geographic or administrative areas. Programs based on the latter, such as Zimbabwe's Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) are sometimes hampered by low per capita benefits (Bond 2001, Emerton 2001), high transaction costs (Frost *et al.* 2007), and institutional conflict and inertia (Campbell *et al.* 2001).

The three regional reviews agree on the **importance of capacities for good governance at the community-level.** Most forms of capacity building will contribute indirectly to improved governance. However, the three regional reviews found little in the way of community forestry capacity building initiatives that directly target the development of improved governance capacities at the community-level.

3.4.2 Capacity Building of Community Forestry Support Institutions

Forestry department and other government agencies, local, national and international NGOs, projects and sometimes private sector businesses, such as timber companies or service providers, may provide valuable support to community forestry, and thus could be considered "community forestry support institutions." Such a support role is very often not a traditional role for state forestry departments. **During the 1980s and 1990s much of the discussion about community forestry focused on the need for a "paradigm shift" in the way forestry was practiced and in the thinking of forest professionals** (Gilmour and Fisher 1990). For example, many forestry departments have traditionally had a paramilitary structure and the role of a forester has been one of enforcement, protection and exclusion creating a history of antagonistic relations with communities.

To support community forestry development, forestry departments need to function as service providers nurturing community forestry and providing technical assistance (Arnold 2001). It is unrealistic to achieve this approach through brief training programs. More is required than just new skills and knowledge: the change in attitudes and mission must be supported at all levels of forestry departments and forestry training institutions (Fisher 2013). **Such changes come slowly and may require a generational change** (Blomley 2013). Nepal took about three decades to complete the reorientation. In Tanzania, where early experiences of community forestry involved a complete reorientation of district forest staff, this change resulted in some foresters suddenly finding themselves to be key actors in local

development efforts and experiencing a new-found respect among local communities (Wily 1998). Mexico provides positive examples of capacity building to reorient the missions of forest departments in Oaxaca to include women and to create synergies for supporting community forestry management. (Alcorn 2013).

Fisher (2013) reports that the need for capacity building in modified forms of silviculture adapted to the capacities of community managers are commonly recognized in Asia. Reliance on sophisticated inventory techniques is a common constraint for community forestry development. The low cost of village labor and the permanent presence of communities in close proximity to the forests, with very low transportation costs, are potentially major economic advantages of relying upon community managers rather than state forestry departments or private sector logging companies. These advantages should potentially allow for developing more intensive forms of forest management under community forestry (including solutions to the classic problem of high-grading in high-diversity tropical forests). Simple selection procedures and silvicultural prescriptions that did not require detailed inventories and that aimed at producing a variety of forest products needed by communities were successfully tested in Nepal in the late 1980s and 1990s (Gilmour *et al.* 1990). Nonetheless, overall progress in developing community-adapted silviculture has been slow in Nepal.

3.4.3 Successful Approaches to Capacity Building

Although it is not well-documented for community forestry, it is routinely reported in discussions of field experience that adults learn best by doing or “experiential learning” (Alcorn 2013). One of the best techniques is the **use of structured cross-site exchange visits, or study tours, with self-analysis among communities** (Alcorn 2013). Two-way learning is particularly important so that project implementers and communities can understand each other’s concerns and information. Good communication requires dedicating time and funding to maintain trust and commitments.

Community and participatory mapping of tenure and access rights and land uses are important tools that have been used in community forestry land-use and forest management planning for more than 20 years. Community sketch maps can be adjusted and validated using Geographic Information System (GIS) readings or communities may use Global Positioning System (GPS) and GIS, as in the Philippines. The important element is not the technology per se, but the community control of the process (Alcorn 2001). Mapping has demonstrated the superposition of external actors with their own interests, and may be used by communities to assert rights and negotiate with others (Alcorn 2000, Chapin *et al.* 2005)

There is a growing trend towards **locally-based forest monitoring systems for community forestry** (Fry 2010). Monitoring allows community managers to assess the impacts of their management systems and to document impacts for oversight authorities. Forest monitoring, when implemented, has historically been undertaken by external agents such as government foresters, which can be expensive. A global initiative called Monitoring Matters (MOMA) has demonstrated that local monitors, with a day’s training, were capable of producing data on forest disturbance and condition comparable to data collected by those with formal scientific training at a small fraction of the cost (Danielsen *et al.* 2011). Guidelines for supporting locally-based monitoring of forest (and carbon) stocks have been developed by the Think Global, Act Local project following field development in Africa and Asia (Verplanke and Zahabu 2011). A manual for community based monitoring of natural forest regeneration (Peters 1994) has been used in many community forestry and NTFP projects in Asia and Latin America. Communities are measuring and monitoring carbon and biomass in forests in the Philippines (Alcorn 2013).

The Center for People and Forests (RECOFTC, originally known as the Regional Community Forestry Training Center for Asia and the Pacific) has been running training courses for forestry department and NGO staff for 25 years. Two clear lessons (Triraganon 2002; Fisher 2013) from their community forestry training are:

- Training must be field-based, or at least have a significant field component.

- Single training events are not very effective. They must be followed up by long-term mentoring or coaching.

3.4.4 Conclusions and Implications for REDD+

The following types of community forestry capacity building important for REDD+ have been identified in the three regional reviews:

- Training to manage, and collaborate on, the technical aspects of sustainable forest management;
- **Development of governance capacities** for community-level internal enforcement mechanisms to ensure compliance with forest access and use rules for enhanced carbon sequestration;
- Development of low-cost tools and expertise for community-based managers to monitor forest conditions, as well as carbon stocks;
- **Development of social science expertise among government and NGO staff working with communities to understand how institutions work for effective community forestry.** The staff must understand existing community values, norms and authority structures, how to identify forest user groups and the conditions of their access rights and how to facilitate community-level decision-making. They may also need to collaborate outside of the forestry and conservations sector, with those whose particular expertise lies in institutional strengthening at nested levels;
- Training and support to effectively analyze and address gender and other social diversity issues, and engage all key stakeholders, including women, indigenous peoples, and vulnerable or marginalized people
- Development of basic business and financial management skills, including cost-benefit analyses and financial planning; and
- **Contract and negotiation skills of community forestry managers for understanding and negotiating equitable and viable contracts, based on agreed performance to reduce deforestation.** Most community forestry managers are very ill equipped to understand, let alone intelligently negotiate with, the modern world of finance. A major current concern for community forestry capacity building in relation to REDD+, especially in Latin America, lies in the immediate danger presented by “carbon cowboys” (c.f., Lang 2012, BioCarbon Fund 2012) who offer contracts that conflict with all of the guidelines being developed for REDD+ or that are fraudulent in nature. **Communities need capacity building to handle offers of fraudulent contracts.** There is a need for adequate grievance and recourse mechanisms, and for education about recourse mechanisms and how to prevent fraud that can take away a community’s forest rights.

3.5 SCALING UP COMMUNITY FORESTRY INITIATIVES

3.5.1 Experiences from National Community Forestry Initiatives

In Latin America, national community forestry programs supported by donors have had limited long-term impact. The most effective scaling up in Latin America tends to be self-initiated (Larson *et al.* 2010) and based on interactions among communities in a given landscape, such as a watershed (Alcorn *et al.* 2010).

Community forestry in South America has already been “scaled up” in the sense that it covers huge geographic areas and receives widespread legal recognition. Half of the Amazon forest, a key focus for REDD+, is under protected areas and vast indigenous territories (RAISG 2012). Community forestry achieved this large geographic scale in Latin America because of broad acceptance of self-initiated community forestry as a legitimate land use and its subsequent legalization. In Africa and Asia, where most legally recognized forms of community forestry began as externally-initiated pilot projects, scaling up involves a trial and error period to develop pilot initiatives that prove workable in administrative, technical, social and economic terms.

A key condition for scaling up community forestry from pilot initiatives is an appropriate framework that defines the procedures and conditions for the empowerment of community management structures for community forestry. Legal and policy reforms can only be done by government, but civil society movements have created the political will to make reform. For efficient scaling up, legal frameworks need to be straightforward, easy to understand and apply, and provide for strong tenurial rights while allowing for flexibility in community governance structures. They should avoid imposing unnecessarily complicated or expensive procedures on communities. The development of such policy and legal frameworks is generally much more successful when it is informed by tested, proven pilot initiatives (Fisher 2013). Policies for community forestry in Nepal were formalized after 15 years of field experimentation. After the policy was put in place, scaling up was primarily demand-driven by other communities who had become aware of the new opportunity. Vietnam and Lao PDR also developed national policy frameworks following a period of experimentation with pilot initiatives (Fisher 2013).

The development of tested, operational community forestry systems in a new area often takes considerable time. Pilot initiatives must be adapted to the local ecological, social and economic conditions and must be perceived as positive by the pilot communities. **Undertaking the necessary policy and legal reforms for scaling up may also take a considerable amount of time and the reforms are often incremental.** In Nepal, this all took place over three or more decades. The policy, legal and regulatory frameworks for community forestry in most countries are still far from optimal.

Tanzania has one of the few national community forestry programs in Africa. Developed from 2003 onwards, it aimed to integrate community forestry into the strong national decentralization program. Forest extension responsibilities were transferred from central to local (district) government with funding for district-wide support from block grants from bilateral donors. This reorganization resulted in a massive expansion of community forestry coverage (Blomley 2006). However, scaling up remains supply driven (externally-initiated) due to low awareness and low levels of benefits received by communities. Where forest management rights and responsibilities are fully transferred to community managers and benefits are more substantial, demand is growing faster than government capacity to respond.

Gambia has a growing, increasingly demand-driven national community forestry program financed by donors and government. The main incentives that make the program popular include community revenues from the sale of firewood, increased community control and management of damaging wildfires and assistance in gaining legal title to part of the community's lands. The government is experimenting with new models of service delivery through outsourcing to NGOs and private service providers (Brown 2000).

In both Tanzania and Mozambique, the transfer of responsibility for scaling up community forestry to local government ran into significant conflicts of interest. Local governments in both countries are confronted with losing the significant revenues from levies on the harvest of forest resources within their jurisdiction. The problem is complicated by the fact that district staff and councilors are often entangled in various patron–client relationships with higher ranking officers, forest products traders, local governments, and communities (Mustalahti and Lund 2010).

3.5.2 Conclusions and Implications for REDD+

- Self-initiated forms of community forestry already have functioning community institutions and present the greatest potential for scaling up through REDD+.
- Where community forestry has been externally-initiated, key conditions for scaling up are the development of tested, proven pilot initiatives and the development of policy, legal and regulatory frameworks for the empowerment of community managers.
- **The incentive for a community-driven scaling up approach is the delivery of concrete and tangible benefits for communities complimented by the development of adequate capacities**

within community support agencies (government, NGOs, private sector) to respond to growing grassroots demands.

- The loss of government revenues, as well as the loss of personal benefits that foresters and other government staff obtain from rent-seeking, may work against the scaling up of community forestry initiatives and REDD+ interventions.
- **Working through local governments for scaling up can be effective but requires dedicated resources and capacity building to be effective.** Conflicts among national, regional and local levels of government, or among different natural resource management bodies and sector agencies, may hinder the expansion of community forestry programs.
- Most REDD+ interventions that seek to build on community forestry will require significant injections of funding beyond those provided through carbon payments alone. Insofar as REDD+ programs are planned to be of 25 years or more duration, if they build upon community forestry systems, then potential international funding for REDD+ could be a way to broaden and lengthen donor support.
- **Community forestry governance works best at the local level, generally that of the village, where all members can be directly engaged.** REDD+ should take advantage of the economies of scale presented by multi-tiered community forestry institutions, but only if the upper level(s) is (are) fully accountable to the lowest community-level.

3.6 SUSTAINABILITY OF COMMUNITY FORESTRY

3.6.1 Environmental Sustainability

The most severe threat to forests is conversion to agriculture and other land uses and the associated fragmentation of the remaining forest. Forests are degraded and biodiversity can be lost from many forms of unsustainable use, such as overcutting, high-grading, over harvest of NTFPs, overgrazing, and loss of keystone species. Fire use and management, such as burning to renew pasture grasses, or use of fire as a forest management technique, can have huge impacts on some forests. **All these threats can potentially be prevented or minimized by community managers.** Climate change is a growing environmental threat beyond community control but whose impacts may be mitigated through community forest management.

Millions of ha of forest have been managed sustainably under community forestry in Latin America (Alcorn 2013). There is broad consensus that self-initiated forms of community forestry have made significant contributions to the maintenance of healthy forests in many parts of Asia and the Pacific. However, the levels of effectiveness vary in sustainable management. There is a consensus that many externally-initiated community forestry programs in Africa and Asia have maintained or improved forest quality. This is very clear in Nepal and India (Fisher 2013). Numerous studies of Tanzania, Uganda and Ethiopia identified forests where forest condition is improved and disturbance levels are significantly lower in forests managed by communities after external programs were initiated (Blomley *et al.* 2008, Lund and Treue 2008, EMPAFORM 2009, Jerane 2007).

However, more detailed analyses in Tanzania, Gambia and Ethiopia point to the displacement of harvesting impacts to other unmanaged forests (known within the context of REDD+ as “leakage”), especially when areas managed under community forestry agreements were subjected to reduced harvesting (Winberg 2010, Vyamana 2009, O’Hara 2011, Brown 2000). In Tanzania, this displacement was particularly evident in areas where JFM had been established, but much less widespread in areas where full management rights and responsibilities had been devolved through community-based forest management (Vyamana 2009).

Conversion of forest land to industrial agriculture is a leading cause of forest destruction. In Latin America, for example, large landholders sometimes hire farmers to clear forest and farm the land for one or two years,

until it is converted into pasture and thereby advancing the agricultural frontier further into the forest. Humid forests have been found to regenerate very well under traditional, long-rotational swidden systems, or under forest management practices known as “assisted natural regeneration techniques.” This regeneration often aided or enriched by planting or favoring high-value species. Traditional swidden with enriched fallows offers a basis for social and environmental sustainability of community forestry in Latin America (Alcorn 2013). **Environmental sustainability is generally a greater challenge for “externally-initiated” and for commercially-oriented forms of community forestry than it is for older “self-initiated” forms that have already been functioning for long periods of time.** Reforestation or restoration of degraded forests done by planting a limited number of species does not renew the rich biodiversity and multiple livelihood benefits of natural forests.

The future environmental sustainability of community forestry depends on interrelated social, political and environmental factors. Fire poses a major risk factor for humid forests when the forest is disturbed beyond a critical point. Frontier areas of the Amazon are riddled with gaps from agriculture and pasture clearings, and these gaps can allow fire to spread into the forest during periods of drought, such as the two exceptional droughts in 2005 and 2010. Climate change is predicted to increase the chance of fire in forests such as the Amazon (Pearce 2008). The assisted natural regeneration and enrichment techniques of community managers in the Amazon can be used to aid forest regeneration after fire and could at least partially counteract the increased risks of fire (c.f., Alcorn 1990, Padoch and Pinedo 2010). In the Congo Basin and parts of Southeast Asia and the Amazon, the uncontrolled bush meat trade has resulted in the “empty forest syndrome” over broad areas and the impacts of wildlife absence on forest sustainability are not well known.

Experience from Tanzania, Ghana, Kenya, Namibia and Guinea suggests that **wildlife populations can increase with improved forest condition under community forestry, generating an important additional biodiversity benefit** (Blomley 2013). However, this increased wildlife may lead to increased crop damage. Communities often tolerate this problem if the wildlife generates other benefits for them or if they are empowered to manage the problem, but communities empowered to manage their forests are rarely empowered to also manage their wildlife (Schreckenberk and Luttrell 2009). Human-wildlife conflicts often affect women and the poorest households most strongly because their fields are often located closest to the forest and they lack resources to protect their crops in Africa and Asia.

3.6.2 Financial Sustainability

While community-based forest enterprises, such as sawmills, can be operated as self-financing entities with paid labor, it is **relatively rare for the community-level forest management itself to be done as a self-financing business.** Financial benefits of community forestry are usually small because communities generally gain limited, if any, rights for commercial uses of the forest, except in the case of Mexico where logging sustains community businesses and forests. Major donor instruments provided the funding to reform the Mexican national forestry program to refocus on supporting community forestry.

Forest management incurs costs that vary greatly from one situation to the next. Costs may include professional services, access road maintenance, controlled burning, firebreak maintenance and other fire prevention costs, patrolling, nursery operations or purchase of seedlings for planting, direct seeding, audits, and communications. Labor is often a major item and it may be volunteer or paid. In most forms of “self-initiated” community forestry in Latin America, labor contributions considered to be a standard obligation of community members and are not paid while some dedicated jobs are paid (Alcorn 2013). At the community level, the overall paucity of financial benefits generated from most externally-initiated community forestry initiatives in Africa and Asia is a clear challenge to financial sustainability of community forestry and limits the type and scope of management activities that community managers can undertake. Alcorn (2013) argues that without knowing the particular details of a given community forestry site, it can be postulated that if the particular example of community forestry is self-initiated and self-sustaining, it has achieved sufficient economic and financial sustainability under current conditions.

Most Sahelian West African community forestry initiatives generate revenues from fuelwood for urban markets, which place them in a better position to cover management costs. One of the best and most unique cases of financial sustainability comes from the CAF community forestry initiative in Burkina Faso. Nearly 30 percent of the revenues from firewood sales go into a management fund that pays support staff salaries, local labor and other forest management costs. Each of the six federations of community management units employs a university graduate forester and other staff that support the community-level CAF managers. This self-financing mechanism has been sustained since the end of donor funding in 1993 (Kabore Cyrille and Manuel Soto Flandez, pers comm.). In Senegal, the seven community forestry management groups supported by the USAID-funded Wula Nafaa program generated \$700,000 in revenues for themselves from charcoal sales in 2012 from the management of their dryland savanna forests (John Heermans, personal communication). Under the system of rural markets introduced in Niger in the 1990s, 50 percent of taxes levied on the transport of firewood to urban centers were retained by local management structures and largely used to defray management costs (Noppen *et al.* 2004). These low-value Sahelian forests producing low-value wood fuels provide one of the best examples of self-financing community forestry.

National community forestry programs in Africa rely on external donor support. This dependence is likely to continue for REDD+ pilot projects being implemented in countries such as Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) (Blomley 2013). Although the forest sector in Africa generates considerable revenues for government in many forest-rich countries, priorities of central government forest agencies usually revolve around law enforcement, licensing and production aspects rather than support for community forestry. One notable exception is in Gambia, where a 15 percent state tax levied on revenues from community forests is fed into the National Forestry Fund and used to scale up community forestry interventions to other parts of the country, without external assistance from donors (Brown 2000, Jammeh 2008).

Community forestry has been supported by donors in many countries in Asia, sometimes for decades. Nepal has had donor support for community forestry since the late 1970s. India, the Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand have also enjoyed long-term donor support. This long-term commitment of donors has generally been an advantage, but it makes analysis of community forestry's sustainability without donor support difficult. In both Nepal and the Philippines, **long-term support gave time for policies to evolve and to become fully institutionalized**. Community forestry continues in Nepal, with strong demand from communities even as donor support has declined. JFM in India started with World Bank support in the late 80s and now operates as an extremely large national program with little or no external support. PES could contribute to financial sustainability, but it does not appear to be financially self-sustainable nor maintain significant forest cover in Latin America, and may exacerbate equity issues unless it is designed to complement other locally-valued interests and objectives (van Hecken and Bastiaensen 2010a, van Hecken and Bastiaensen 2010b, van Hecken *et al.* 2012, Corbera 2012).

3.6.3 Socio-economic Sustainability

Socio-economic sustainability depends on the balance of benefits and costs as perceived by communities. Opportunity costs (restrictions on resource use and labor alternatives), transaction costs, social costs (obligations for volunteer labor, internal conflicts associated with the enforcement of the agreed rules on access and use) and the forest management costs must be weighed against the financial and non-financial benefits for communities and community members. Other factors that communities must weigh include the policy environment, the level of political support for community forestry, the perceived security of community rights, government enforcement against illegal logging, community cohesiveness and commitment to community forestry in the face of external pressures to leave the area (as in Brazil land grabbing) or pressures to make deals with powerful loggers and agroindustry.

Community forestry programs that emphasize forest conservation have been high on obligations and low on revenue generation. Community forestry programs that generate revenues require systems of benefit distribution and accountability. This requirement can create new sources of conflict within communities.

The perception of fairness in the sharing of costs and benefits is a key factor for the sustainability of community forestry.

In many cases, the financial costs of managing community forests have not been large, especially where forests have been managed mainly for products for domestic use. This situation changes when communities become involved in business operations or when government agencies or external certification processes impose requirements for bookkeeping, auditing or other administrative or management activities. REDD+ will likely increase the level of restricted access, imposing greater opportunity costs to communities. REDD+ may also impose costs related to monitoring or patrolling forests. **The overall perceived benefits of REDD+ must be greater than its costs to communities in order for it to succeed** as an incentive.

Large-scale commercial agriculture and biofuel development is an increasingly important driver of land-use change in many countries (World Bank 2011), which is already leading to land-use conflicts with community forestry lands. Pressures for conversion to smallholder agriculture also remain strong in many areas. Given the relatively limited economic contribution of community forestry identified in this review, **the long-term viability of community forestry appears uncertain in many cases without the creation of additional financial incentives, either from increased commercial rights for the sale of forest products or from environmental services, such as REDD+.** Some REDD+ projects are deploying community forestry as a core strategy. Analyses of these projects, such as one done for Tanzania (UN-REDD Tanzania 2012), indicate that REDD+ transaction, institutional and opportunity costs are likely to exceed any potential revenue generated solely through the sale of carbon credits on the voluntary or future compliance markets. Clearly, additional revenue streams from sustainable forest (or natural resource) management will be needed if opportunity costs are to be met (UN-REDD Tanzania 2012).

3.6.4 Conclusions and Implications for REDD+

- In situations where REDD+ transaction costs and opportunity costs to communities are greater than the benefits to communities from REDD+, market-oriented REDD+ projects may not be viable. This factor may be a particular constraint where the amount of carbon sequestered per community forest and, correspondingly, REDD+ payments are low. Limited financial returns to local-level forest managers and users threaten to undermine incentives for long-term management. The global prices of forest carbon are also a factor, and these prices are currently rather low. Hence, it is **advantageous for REDD+ to build on existing self-initiated community forestry activities** that have already achieved some level of environmental and socio-economic sustainability and offer other incentives in addition to those generated by REDD+ projects.
- Limited and insecure tenurial rights for communities limit the sustainability of community forestry, and would similarly impact the sustainability of any REDD+ efforts. **Policy reforms that could improve the strength and security of community tenurial rights** include the rights to forest management decision-making, rights to commercial harvest and marketing of forest products, rights to livelihood benefits of direct harvest and rights to exclude others.
- **Measures will be needed to address leakage from REDD+ supported community forestry areas managed under community forestry.** For example, the displacement of the harvest of fuelwood to other sites could be mitigated by incorporating sustainable management for fuelwood into the REDD+ supported community forests.



Sawmill belonging to ACOFOP (*Asociacion de Comunidades Forestales de Petén/ Association of Forest Communities of Petén*), Guatemala. The Spanish sign translation is: "Caution - Community Members at Work." Photo by Janis B. Alcorn

4.0 EMERGING REDD+ AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY ISSUES

KEY LATIN AMERICAN ISSUES

Adding REDD+ to existing “mature” community forestry is a process that is working in some areas and has given rise to enthusiastic endorsement of the future of REDD+ as it is visible now in Oaxaca, Mexico (c.f., Bray 2010, 2012a, 2012b). While this future transition from community forestry to “REDD+ community forestry” may be possible, the Mexican evolution is unlikely in the rest of Latin America without the kind of strong tenure and community-level institutions that have negotiated positive REDD+ outcomes with government and private sector in Oaxaca. Strong tenure and strong community institutions usually take considerable time to become consolidated at large scale.

The voluntary carbon market is already very active in parts of Latin America, but many red flags are being raised. Private sector involvement in REDD+ is found to add new challenges to community forestry. Mexico, Costa Rica and Panama moved quickly through the REDD+ Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) stage as the first stage in qualifying for Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) funding. Countries are to meet conditions established during R-PP approval, and then prepare a Social and Environmental Strategic Assessment (SESA). The SESA is expected to help revamp policies and agencies to integrate societies’ concerns and make REDD+ more likely to succeed. However, a voluntary market is not bound by SESA and it appears that the private sector has taken the R-PP as a “seal of guarantee” indicating government support for private investment. Private funds for preparation of individual projects are proceeding while FCPF funds wait for SESA process. So-called “carbon cowboy” deals of unscrupulous investors with indigenous communities resulting in contracts that would weaken community tenure and violate national and international law have become a scandal in Colombia, in one case covering some 40 million ha of community forestry. These fast carbon deals have created conflicts between and within communities.

Nonetheless, **many private sector investors are seeking socially and environmentally responsible investments**, and thus interested in projects that meet the standards set by some voluntary certification schemes, such as the Climate, Community and Biodiversity Standards (CCBS). By addressing these issues, the project developers increase the values of the investments and decrease risks.

To be successful, REDD+ needs to regain its momentum after the initial rush to REDD+ has stalled. A few years ago, many were arguing that REDD+ was too rushed and must somehow be slowed down. Analogies with the Gold Rush were used to describe a REDD+ Rush in field discussions until 2012. By 2013, the demand for quality carbon, however, had plummeted.

Long-term success depends on learning-while-doing and adjusting to findings and civil society concerns as implementation proceeds (Alcorn 2013). On the other hand, the scientific consensus on the urgency of taking measures to address climate change continues to grow. There is clearly a need to find ways

Box 4. Evolving Contexts

REDD+ is entering the scene in a different world than that in which community forestry evolved -- more population, increased land-grabbing and “the closing of the hinterlands.” In this context, harmonizing policies related to agriculture and other forest-related policies on trade, taxation, infrastructure, migration, and land tenure are critically important for creating enabling conditions for REDD+ success (c.f., Pirard *et al.* 2010, Pirard 2011).

forward that balance the need to go slowly so that community institutions and incentives match needs, and the urgency of the actions needed to mitigate climate change.

KEY AFRICAN ISSUES

Many countries are establishing REDD+ pilot field projects. A key issue has been demonstrating viable community benefits and ensuring that forest management and financial benefits are accrued by community-level management groups. Tanzania has channeled REDD+ funding to include community forestry pilot projects launched in 2008 and 2009, aiming to achieve early results and inform the national REDD+ strategy development. A recent external evaluation generated a number of important conclusions (Deloitte 2012), in addition to some of the same emerging lessons identified in this review.

Important questions remain regarding tenure rights over forests and, by implication, revenue that is accrued from carbon payments. This situation is particularly the case in areas where forest management jurisdictions are shared (i.e., in forest areas under JFM). Improvements in village-level forest governance will need to be implemented together with measures to address the broader environment of forest-sector governance, such as in Tanzania. Unresolved issues of tree (and ultimately carbon) property rights is resulting in limited progress in the REDD+ pilot project in some countries. As REDD+ projects look increasingly towards community forestry as a foundation for launching community-level initiatives, it will be important to ensure that safeguards are introduced to minimize the risk of elite capture. Transaction costs of establishing community forestry are high, as forest areas are fragmented and dispersed.

Experience from one REDD+ pilot project in Tanzania suggested that individual carbon payments, rather than group-based payments for carbon credits, may be more likely to benefit individuals and lead to positive behavioral change. Where agricultural expansion by individual smallholder farmers is a key deforestation driver, individual payments may be more likely to reduce deforestation. Payments made at the individual level, even if small, have the potential to reduce poverty and remove barriers to entrepreneurship (Campese, 2012). In other situations, however, alternative REDD+ benefit-sharing mechanisms may be more suitable.

Ghana has made the strongest moves towards establishing CBNRM approaches in both forestry and wildlife sectors. REDD+ initiatives have targeted areas outside government protection that are managed by communities for long-term natural resource management purposes, such as under the Community Resource Management Agreement (CREMA). However, as in other countries, the issue of tree (and ultimately carbon) property rights remains unresolved and is resulting in limited progress in project implementation. The IUCN-supported pro-poor REDD+ project operating in the Wassa Amenfi West District is developing tools to address this issue by registering planted trees in collaboration with the national Forest Commission.

The DRC has embarked on an ambitious set of pilot projects largely funded by the Norwegian government through the Congo Basin Forest Fund. Of the ten projects currently in operation, four have specific activities that focus on the implementation of community forestry. However, unlike Tanzania, many of these projects are either recently started or under preparation, and the legal framework for community forestry in DRC is legally ambiguous and still awaiting formal sanction (Bofin et al. 2011). As such, drawing conclusions at this stage from the DRC REDD+ experiment is premature.

KEY ASIAN ISSUES

There has been a considerable level of caution about possible negative impacts of REDD+ on people living in and around forests, and considerable discussion about safeguards (Sikor and Nguyen n.d.) and guidelines for benefit sharing (UN-REDD Vietnam Programme 2010). The concern with safeguards includes advocacy of the principle of FPIC as a prerequisite for community involvement in REDD+ (Anderson 2011).

One REDD+ pilot project is operating in three watersheds with a total population of about 90,000 in Nepal, and 65 percent of the 2011 payment of \$95,000 went for forest management activities. Less than a third (about 35 US cents per individual) was dedicated to development activities, and none of this amount was paid to individuals. For example, a major issue that arises in Asia is the likelihood that payments are so low

as to provide neither incentives for REDD+ involvement nor compensation for loss of access to previously available resources. Detailed assessment of the costs and benefits of REDD+ to communities is essential.

Political insecurity and frequent changes in forest policy are another key issue. The Nepali government, for example, is proposing to revise the 1993 Forest Act to impose much higher government taxes on products harvested from community forests. Another related issue is the lack of clear policy on who owns soil carbon. Communities only have management rights over the above-ground parts of trees and other vegetation in their forests. (Rana *et al.* 2012).

An emerging issue is that the **expectations of project proponents may be unrealistic** regarding the ease of selling carbon and the level of achievable benefits. For example, in another REDD+ pilot project in Cambodia (Sepahri 2011, Pact n.d.), community members were becoming frustrated with the long delays in promised revenues. After several years and considerable cost, no buyers for the carbon have been found on the voluntary carbon market, and thus there has been no money to make payments to communities.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

This review concludes that **community forestry has, in general, been effective in preventing the destruction and degradation of forests**. Community forestry clearly presents a major opportunity for REDD+ to better achieve its goals. However, the flow of benefits to communities, especially monetary benefits, is much less substantial than one would expect. Community forestry is based on the ability of communities to establish and implement rules governing the access and use of forest resources. Strengthening the effectiveness and security of community rights over forests and increasing the benefits communities derive from community forestry are clear strategies for strengthening community forestry and for achieving REDD+ goals.

For those interested in community forestry development and/or in integrating community forestry into REDD+ programs, there is a wealth of lessons learned and a huge body of literature. Perhaps the main lesson learned is that **supporting community forestry development is not at all simple and the results of externally-driven community forestry projects are very mixed**. Clearly, there is no “one size fits all” approach to community forestry development. Successful support to community forestry must be based on a strong understanding of the social, economic and environmental context of community forests in each country and must be tailored to adapt to those conditions. However, supportive policies are the foundation that enables or undermines community forestry.

Community forestry is very diverse, ranging from self-initiated traditional and modern systems that may have been discovered by outsiders to externally-initiated forms of community forestry that have been initiated with government, donor or other external assistance. Self-initiated forms of community forestry generally provide the best basis on which to build, as they have already integrated into the local socio-economic context and have already been sustained for some period of time. These self-initiated forms of community forestry are exceptionally diverse in terms of their forms of community institutions. They have generally evolved out of traditional, near-subsistence rural economies, but are increasingly impacted by land-use pressures, market forces, illegal logging as well as the larger challenges of corruption and weak systems of justice. The IUCN protected area category “Indigenous Country Conservation Areas (ICCA)” requires the existence and value of these systems.

The key thematic findings of this review are as follows:

Regional Differences: Latin America is the clear leader in community forestry with diverse self-initiated community forestry enjoying broad legal recognition across large areas. This presents a great opportunity for REDD+. The state has legal control of most forests across Africa and Asia where most of the legally recognized forms of community forestry have been externally-initiated by donors, NGOs and governments.

Empowerment of Communities: A major conclusion to be drawn from this review is that **community forestry has, in general, been effective in preventing deforestation and degradation of forests, despite the lack of strong community rights to effectively control access and use of forests in many countries**. The tenurial rights of communities are relatively strong in most of Latin America, but are

generally much more limited in scope across most of Africa and the Asia. Straightforward, easy to apply legal frameworks and state commitment to empowerment are critical to the success of community forestry.

Governance and Stakeholder Engagement: Even where the legal frameworks for community forestry are strong on paper, numerous governance barriers within state agencies that greatly reduce the effectiveness of their rights are commonly found. **The delegation of rights to communities is frequently restricted by the discretionary powers of government agencies** that use a wide diversity of procedures and regulations to limit the full empowerment of communities. These barriers reflect the level of political will and commitment for effective community empowerment in each country. Effective community-level institutions capable of establishing and enforcing rules governing access and use are critical. Self-initiated community institutions are generally the most effective and are highly diverse in nature.

Benefits and Incentives: Benefits accrued by communities have so far been limited, especially where externally-initiated community forestry has focused on conservation. It is **critical that communities perceive the overall mix of benefits as greater than the costs incurred and that costs and benefits are shared equitably**. Monetary benefits are surprisingly low in Africa and Asia. There is a major opportunity for increasing incentives for community forestry by increasing the commercial use rights of community managers.

Capacity building: **Community managers need a diversity of skills that include forest management, enterprise development, planning and capacities for good governance**. The capacity needs are especially great for externally-initiated forms of community forestry, for community managers engaged in commercial uses and for communities entering into contracts such as PES and REDD+.

Scaling up: **Tested, proven community forestry systems that enjoy strong community support are critical for scaling up. Straightforward and easy to apply policy, legal and regulatory frameworks for the effective empowerment of communities are also crucial**. Where these conditions do not already exist, it can take considerable time to put them in place. Latin America, with its extensive areas of forest under self-initiated community forestry and relatively strong legal frameworks, offers the greatest near term potential for REDD+ for scaling up, but there are dangers to scaling up too rapidly. Early experiences with the interactions between weak community institutions and private sector carbon market actors are worrisome.

Sustainability: The **most critical factors determining sustainability are social and economic**. The most important factors include: the effective empowerment of community managers, strong community institutions capable of developing and enforcing rules governing forest access and use and minimal standards for forest management, and good governance in state institutions.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

If REDD+ is to fully deliver environmental, social and economic benefits to society, all REDD+ partners – governments, donors, NGOs, the private sector and communities – will need to:

- **Support policy reforms** to provide clear, secure, enforceable and non-discretionary tenure rights that empower communities to make and enforce rules regulating access and use of forests. This should be accompanied by the passage of simple, low-cost and verifiable procedures for community empowerment and for approval of forest management agreements. Empowerment should integrate all legitimate stakeholders and user groups including women, poor households and Indigenous Peoples.
- **Develop effective measures to confront and mitigate the effects of vested interests within state institutions** that seek to block the implementation of government policies in support of community empowerment, restricting the flow of tangible benefits to the community-level. REDD+ proponents should identify the legal instruments to be used for empowerment and seek commitment from the

appropriate authorities for their application.

- **Give communities a high level of autonomy in adapting or defining their own management institutions** for community forestry. Self-initiated community management institutions should be favored in national policy and regulations wherever possible.
- **Significantly increase the benefits to communities** and community incentives for sustainable use of forests. Externally-driven management objectives for reduced deforestation and forest degradation need to be reconciled with local community needs and interests to assure sustainable forest outcomes. Community benefits must be significantly greater than the transaction, management and opportunity costs of community forestry or REDD+.
- **Develop capacity support to community-level management institutions** to reflect the mix of necessary technical skills (forest management, utilization and planning), enterprise development skills (financial management and bookkeeping) and governance capacities (accountability, communications and enforcement of rules governing access and use).
- **Respect the two most essential conditions needed for scaling up:** favorable legal frameworks and the existence of operational, proven community forestry systems. One of the greatest challenges to REDD+ is the question of how to balance the urgent need for climate mitigation through the rapid scaling up of REDD+ with the time frames needed for socially responsible programs that will not endanger the progress and successes of the past.
- **Include measures to control “leakage”** caused by the displacement of harvesting from managed forests to unmanaged areas. Such measures are needed to ensure environmental sustainability and may include the application of local bylaws to neighboring forests, and working at higher levels of scale. Communities need to be empowered by the state to enforce local regulations.
- **Enhance social and economic sustainability prospects** by strengthening community tenure and rights, enhancing and diversifying benefit flows to communities and by supporting minimum standards of good governance in state institutions.

ANNEX I: REDD+ SUPPORT

| | Country | FCPF Partner Country | UN-REDD National Programme | UN-REDD Partner Country | Forest Investment Program |
|---------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Asia | Bangladesh | | | X | |
| | Bhutan | | | X | |
| | Cambodia | X | X | | |
| | Indonesia | X | X | | X |
| | Lao PDR | X | | X | X |
| | Malaysia | | | X | |
| | Mongolia | | | X | |
| | Myanmar | | | X | |
| | Nepal | X | | X | |
| | Pakistan | | | X | |
| | Papua New Guinea | X | X | | |
| | Philippines | | X | | |
| | Solomon Islands | | X | | |
| | Sri Lanka | | X | | |
| | Thailand | X | | | |
| Vanuatu | X | | | | |
| Vietnam | X | X | | | |
| Africa | Benin | | | X | |
| | Burkina Faso | | | | X |
| | Cameroon | X | | X | |
| | Central African Republic | X | | X | |
| | Democratic Republic of the Congo | X | X | | X |
| | Ethiopia | X | | X | |
| | Gabon | X | | X | |
| | Ghana | X | | X | X |
| | Ivory Coast | | | X | |
| | Kenya | X | | X | |
| | Liberia | X | | | |
| | Madagascar | X | | | |
| | Morocco | | | X | |
| | Mozambique | X | | | |
| | Nigeria | | X | | |
| | Republic of the Congo | X | X | | |
| | South Sudan | | | X | |
| | Sudan | | | X | |
| Tanzania | X | X | | | |
| Uganda | X | | X | | |
| Zambia | | X | | | |
| Latin America | Argentina | X | | X | |
| | Bolivia | X | X | | |
| | Brazil | | | | X |
| | Chile | X | | X | |
| | Colombia | X | | X | |
| | Costa Rica | X | | X | |
| | Ecuador | | X | | |
| | El Salvador | X | | | |
| | Guatemala | X | | X | |
| | Guyana | X | | X | |
| | Honduras | X | | X | |
| | Mexico | X | | X | X |
| | Nicaragua | X | | | |
| | Panama | X | X | | |
| | Paraguay | X | X | | |
| Peru | X | | X | X | |
| Suriname | X | | X | | |

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