

# Gender, Tenure and Community Forests in Uganda and Nicaragua

Anne Larson & Esther Mwangi

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# Goal of the research

- To improve women's rights to forest resources and livelihoods through increased participation in decision making
- To enhance stakeholder uptake of policies, practices and strategies to promote women's participation



# Background

## ■ Nicaragua

- RAAN, indigenous communities in 5 territories
- Titled communal territories
- No specific mention of gender in forest policy, though gender equity is general principle

## ■ Uganda

- Mpigi, Masaka, Rakai districts
- State forests
- Specific mention of non-discrimination, women's participation, affirmative action, overcoming gender barrier, etc. in Forest Policy and others

# Specific activities

- understanding obstacles at multiple levels (research)
- experimenting with a community level process to overcome obstacles (ACM)
- promoting uptake of different vision/perspectives, policies and methods at multiple levels (advisory committee)
- measuring impact/influence (our success at the two previous points)

# Why? Our theory of change:

- careful coordination between research and action partners and men and women in communities
- joint priority setting, open information flows, local problem solving, and capacity building
- multiple levels of engagement

# Research...

- Obstacles to women's participation in decisions
  - *Nicaragua*: “forests and gender” only being considered now, very incipient, and women are shut out of forestry decisions at all levels
  - *Uganda*: in spite of legal framework, policies and strategies, women are shut out of forestry decisions at all levels

# ... to action (1)

## Adaptive Collaborative Management:

Facilitation of processes to implement self-identified solutions to forest-related problems focusing on women's inclusion and/or improved participation (next presentation)



# Research to action (2)

## Promoting uptake: “advisory committee”

- Rationale:
  - a group of people for continued dialogue on the project ideas
    - to give feedback,
    - to disseminate findings, and
    - to talk to each other.
- Who?
  - Policy makers (central, local), NGO representatives, researchers

# Results so far

- Guide and advise research
- Propose ways in which research findings can be used, presented
- Identify opportunities for funding women's/community projects
- Help meet demand for services by women/communities—mostly tree planting (seedlings, training)
- Identify opportunities for linking with other actors

# Research to action (3)

## Assessing influence

- Perceptions of communities, policy makers, practitioners before (and after) research: attitudes AND behavior
- Community level survey before (and after)



# Opportunities and challenges

- Challenging to integrate all of these pieces, very important to work through committed, engaged and embedded local/ regional/ national institutions
- Advisory committee meetings not as frequent as we would like, but there is a lot of contact between meetings



# Opportunities and Challenges

- Understanding what policy makers really need to make change is not so clear when it comes to gender (culture, biases, deep-seated beliefs) – everyone agrees that “women’s participation is important”, but...



# In conclusion

- Changes in policies and legal frameworks are a good start. But implementation is still weak.
- Bureaucrats need budgets, clear strategies, training and monitoring
- Having impact commonly involves providing data and information (research) and challenging interests (political economy), but with gender issues it also involves challenging attitudes and deep-seated beliefs
- What is the best way for researchers to do this?



*Thank you!*