PAN AFRICAN FOREST-DEPENDENT INDIGENOUS PEOPLES FCPF CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM ON REDD+ PROJECT

Lessons, Challenges and Opportunities in Climate Change Gender Mainstreaming for Indigenous Women in Africa
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Mbololo Women in Cameroon Learning New Farming Practices. Photo FSAC
Introduction

The Forest Carbon Partnership Facility Capacity Building Project’s objective is to strengthen the knowledge of targeted forest depended IPS in REDD+ readiness at national level and knowledge exchange at regional level.

The roles played by both men and women in Indigenous communities, to mainstream gender is critical to ensure that women are at the center of the decision-making process in the design, implementation, and in benefit sharing of REDD+ programs.

The participation and meaningful representation of Indigenous women in the REDD+ readiness process is an important aspect of this project.

Indigenous women are twice marginalized, first as women, and then as indigenous women. They are important stakeholders that conserve forests, contributing minimal destruction and yet are the most affected by the effects of climate change. Women in most cases, are left out in the decision making processes that involve natural resource management based patriarchic indigenous cultures that accord no sense of land ownership or control to women. This ignores the indigenous traditional knowledge (ITK) vital in identifying the effects of climate change within communities. Indigenous women are predominantly fuel wood, water and medicinal plants collectors who provide caretaker roles to both their children and livestock. This enriches their understanding to monitor the diminishing forest resources, the quality and availability of pasture for livestock.

MPIDO has been supporting eight sub grantees from seven African countries namely; Ethiopia, Republic of Congo, Sudan, Liberia, Nigeria, two in Cameroon and Uganda. Gender mainstreaming is key in all these projects and identifying gender gaps, and addressing them has been a priority.

Involvement of IPs at various levels of REDD+ processes through capacity building, has improved the concept and terminology of IPs on climate change in Africa.

Knowledge products in the form of technical papers, national surveys and position papers have identified the critical role of indigenous women in Climate Change activities, capacity gaps on mitigation and adaptation, the significant role of Indigenous Traditional Knowledge (ITK) on Climate Change and the relationship between IPs and Climate Change financing.

A total number of 19 IPs are now participants in their respective national REDD+ processes. Ethiopia has 2, Uganda has the highest of 10, Nigeria 1, Liberia has 2 and Republic of Congo has 4 representatives. Ten of these are women, a 56.63% representation. Indigenous Peoples have commenced self-selection processes for structured representation at the national level. IPs in Republic of Congo have completed the process forming RENORSIPAC. This is critical considering that the sub grantee in the Republic of Congo (ADFAC) is both women focused and women led.
Implementation

Figure 1: MPIDO’s National level implementing sub-grantees

Key:
1. Uganda
2. Ethiopia
3. Sudan
4. Liberia
5. Nigeria
6. Cameroon (2 subgrantees)
7. Republic of Congo

In the Republic of Congo, Sudan and Cameroon, the selection of indigenous women led organizations in ADFAC () , SSHDA SAWA-SUDAN () and FFAC respectively has provided a dedicated focusing of to project benefits to direct indigenous women beneficiaries. FFAC focused its implementation to the Mbororo and pigmy women, working with grass root women groups on new and climate friendly agricultural practices.

ADFAC successfully facilitated the formation of a national IPs network- RENORSIPAC, whose transparent self-selection using well developed documentation that IPs not only work together to air their voice, but also that women are visible and are active participants at the national level REDD+ process. SSHDA SAWA-Sudan, based in the Darfur and Blue Nile states seeks community empowerment in environment and natural resources conservation as a key factor to sustainable development, peace, and health. SAWA-Sudan utilized songs, academic talks and theatrical drama in their awareness campaigns.

The other national level subgrantees ( ILCA, WATER, REPALEAC, CDI and PROBICOU) in their
respective countries have ensured gender main-
streaming to improve the overall gender equality
in the regional project. ILCA in Ethiopia produced
series of educative videos that created awareness
on the effects of climate change. A women-dedi-
cated video not only helped the women share their
experiences, but also boosted their confidence
that they can do as well as their male counter-
parts. ILCA adopted this approach of dedicated
women community meetings to ensure the voices
of women are heard as a result of low women
attendance, and cases of a man being the women
representative in some regional meetings/struc-
tures.

Women attend one of SAWA’s Climate Change
awareness community meetings. Photo by SAWA,
Sudan, April 2018.

WATER in Nigeria has ensured increased women
participation in project activities by being innova-
tive in implementation. Most of the community
awareness meetings were conducted in the eve-
nings, a suitable when most of the women are
home from their daily engagements which involve
farm work, market visits and other domestic
chores like fetching water and collecting firewood.

PROBICOU in Uganda and REPALEAC in Cameroun
ensured good gender representation in the num-
ber of women-led organizations that form part of
their national coalitions. The increased number
enable indigenous women-led organizations to
benefit from the capacity building activities target-
ing IPOs in the respective countries.

CDI in Liberia have a women majority in their proj-
ect teams, have dedicated community meetings for
women, and strategically ensured most of the FM
Radio guests are influential women, a practice that
elevated the voice, concerns and contributions
of women in REDD+ Liberia to the for front. The
influential women guests at the radio programs
have influenced administration and the community
appreciation of the role women play in the conser-
vation of forests around Cape Mount county.
The project has achieved an overall direct female
beneficiaries of 57 % ($5,628 of the total; with
Ethiopia at 66%, Uganda 55.52%, Nigeria 37.85%,
Liberia 36.51%, Cameroon FFAC 58.02%, Republic
of Congo 43.98%, Sudan 51.03% and Cameroon
REPALEAC 37.78%.

Indigenous women participants during a CBP
workshop by FFAC, Cameroon
**Key Outcomes**

- The project has improved the capacity of the national implementing subgrantees to track, record and analyzed gender disintegrated data in the progress reports, a key skill in tracking the involvement of indigenous women in REDD+ activities. This ensured that any gaps identified in the process were addressed progressively into the next project activities. Regional experience sharing on the gender aspect of the project and situation at national levels has been achieved though gender specific side events during each of the South to South Knowledge Exchange. Idea harvesting and lesson sharing was primed rudiment each event to inform and influence various stake holders on what can be done to better the involvement of indigenous women in the different countries. The SSKE in Douala, Cameroon, had a field visit to SURA MAMA, an indigenous women-led organization supporting indigenous Mbororo women in using available resources in the adaptation to the effects of climate change. This provided first hand experience on the efforts of women to adopt to climate change.

  MPIDO produced a gender position paper on the role of women and indigenous traditional knowledge (ITK) to the 22nd UNFCCC COP in Marakech, Morocco seeking to influence decision makes on the critical role of women in climate change.

- Improved gender responsiveness from REDD stakeholders and communities has been informed through innovative project activities that ensured women were fully involved in the implementation process, as outlined in the project. Drama, songs and dance, videos, banners and radio broadcasts were used by sub grantees to ensure that messages reached everyone.

- During support missions by MPIDO’s team, a gender equality check list was used to evaluation the implementation and inform pro-active implementation adjustment.

- Increased indigenous women representation to national REDD+ process has been achieved through self-selection, identification and nomination of influential women into various committees. A total of 10 women from the seven Implementing countries have been engaged to the national REDD+ processes. In Nigeria, women are now represented by Joy Ogar in the Regional REDD+ secretariat while in Uganda, more women-led organizations have achieved visibility to the national REDD+ processes through the Coalition of Indigenous Peoples’ Organizations in Uganda.

- The participation of indigenous women in the formation of representing organs, and in the self-selection process has been achieved, ensuring that women are part of the representation to national level processes. In the Republic of Congo, women were well engaged with the working group developing the self-selection documentation and in the implementation of self-selection with IP organizations.

**Challenges**

- The double marginalization of indigenous women are marginalized, makes it difficult to convince them for their meaningful engagement with their male counterparts. This therefore meant that there had to be dedicated activities in the project implementation intended to boost their confidence. This was evident in Ethiopia where dedicated discussion groups during capacity building trainings encouraged women to present their opinion to the combined discussion. The limited organizational capacity of the indigenous women-led organizations in the project affected their ability to monitor, amplify and sustain achievements of the project on gender issues. This made it difficult to be on track gender equality in some activities.

- In some cases, women faced opposition from the men within the REDD processes, making it
even harder to achieve their set objectives with a direct grievance recorded in the Republic of Congo. Support missions and constant communication with MPIDO and supported through the national REDD+ office resolved the grievance hence promoting the positive appreciation of the efforts of women-led organizations.

Lessons learned

• Indigenous women play an important role in the REDD+ process and therefore cannot be ignored in the design, implementation and benefit sharing of REDD+ programs. The continued dedicated effort to encourage the meaningful participation of women in the national REDD+ processes cannot be underestimated.

• The monitoring and recording of gender integrated data was a good way of tracking how women have participated in the whole process and how countries made improvements based on this. This provided an immediate indicator for the implementers to mainstream gender in the project.

• South to South knowledge exchanges were a good space for experience and knowledge sharing between sub grantees and show casing what more they were doing, besides what they report. It was also a learning process on how to better share knowledge between them and MPIDO. The next implementation under additional financing should have an increased focus on regional exchanges as a means of improving the experience sharing.

• Communication tools like radio programs and music and songs in the local language worked very well for both men and women and in communities. Innovative ways of getting feedback like “call back airtime” in Ethiopia worked very well with a majority of listeners who gave feedback being women.

• There is need to continuously engage and sensitize indigenous men on the importance of bringing women on board, as equal participants in the REDD+ process. Their role in the environmental ecosystem entrusts women with critical knowledge as well as important influencers in the REDD+ processes.

• This project increased IPs’ visibility at national level. This increased visibility informed and influenced various stakeholders on the role of indigenous communities on REDD+. Even more critically, the voice and input of women has been accommodated into the various national REDD+ processes.

• Dynamic time to deliver meeting to ensure that women are reached at their convenient time was highly commendable. This worked well in Nigeria where awareness meetings were held in the evenings when communities were finished with farm work, fetching water, and other engagements.

• Women dedicated activities in areas where indigenous women are more marginalized ensured that they were brought to the limelight, and that they were able to fully participate, boosting their confidence in their abilities. This was practical in Ethiopia where the women dedicated videos were used in order to show their vital role.

• Intentional selection of women was also done to ensure there was a balance in the number of women participants in community awareness meetings on REDD+. This was also in Ethiopia where in some cases in the past, men were sent in as “women representatives.”

• Music and drama when used in the proper context, work very well in creating awareness. The relevance and acceptability of the message and mode of delivery was highly commendable.

Opportunities and Way Forward:

This project has made some headway for indigenous women, either as individual beneficiaries, or as women groups and or organizations. A lot still needs to be done in future in order to ensure that all the gains are not lost.

The following are recommendations from lessons learned, for both implementing organizations, partners and sub grantees in different countries;

• Experience sharing has been one of the strategies which have worked well, through the South to South Knowledge Exchanges. However, these have been general. To enhance what has already been learned, a regional gender knowledge exchange is recommended, to bring together indig-
enous women from all over the REDD+ countries, and provide a space where they can share what their challenges are and what opportunities exist for the future with regards to their full participation.

- Indigenous women led organizations need more support to build their capacity in how well to run them. Build on what they have to make them better. These organizations and their leaders should be independent and not need to feel like they need men to cushion them against opposition.

- Communication tools used should work for both men and women. Radio programs which are in the local language have proved to be successful if they are used in a timely manner. A radio program is beneficial if aired when women are at home after their day's work.

- Strategic approaches which are culturally acceptable should continue to be used. SAWA Sudan for example fast tracked some of their programs to ensure that they had fewer activities during the holy month of Ramadhan, to give their mostly Muslim community enough time to concentrate on the activities of their holy month.

- Music and drama could be good mediums of expression especially for women and youth. They could be used to bring out clearly the challenges which women experience.