

POLICY BRIEF: ASSESSMENT OF GENDER AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IN REDD+ IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMME



KEY MESSAGES

Faced with limited economic opportunities, women and marginalized groups rely heavily on forestry for their survival and therefore need to be considered in all sustainable forest management programmes.

Women and marginalized groups did not equally participate in RIP interventions. These interventions largely benefited men and landowners.

In some RIP intervention areas, marginalized groups lost access to forests prior to the provision of alternative livelihood opportunities.

The adoption of a mandatory quota system for women and the marginalized in the RIP will help ensure equitable access to programme benefits.

Some alternative livelihood activities do not yield comparable income to extractive forest-based activities.

More research and monitoring needs to be done to ensure alternative livelihood programmes yield sustainable incomes for forest-dependent communities.

INTRODUCTION

Ethiopia's forest sector is central to mitigating the negative effects of climate change, contributing to environmental sustainability, and stimulating the national economy. Forestry is also central to the livelihood of rural women and marginalized groups (such as destitute households, youth, ethnic minorities, and persons with disabilities) who have limited alternative economic opportunities.

To Reduce Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD), the Forest Sector Transformation Unit is using the REDD+ Investment Programme (RIP) to promote sustainable forest management by providing alternative environmentally friendly income-generating activities to forest-dependent communities. These alternative livelihood opportunities are intended to reduce drivers of deforestation and forest degradation (DD) and strengthen afforestation and reforestation (AR).

There is a growing realization that women and marginalized groups have a vital role to play in sustainable forest management. Thus, as part of the National Forest Sector Transformation Plan, the RIP is envisaged to be an inclusive intervention, which provides equitable access to assets and other livelihood support systems to women and marginalized groups.

This policy brief aims to outline the challenges related to gender and social inclusion in RIP areas and provides key insights from a comprehensive gender and social inclusion impact assessment report and sets out subsequent policy recommendations.

CHALLENGES TO GENDER MAINSTREAMING RIP INTERVENTIONS

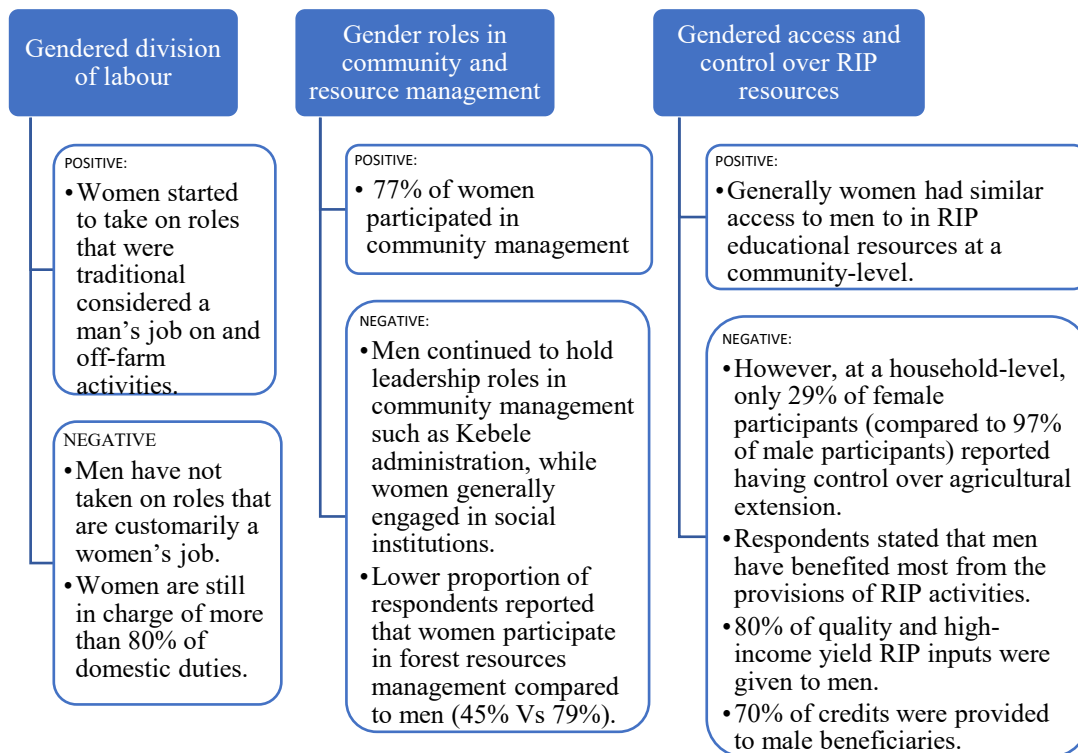
It is acknowledged that policies and practices that empower women in the forest sector yield significant benefits to household food security and the sustainable management of forests. Women typically collect spices, edibles fruits, and other non-timber food products to support their livelihood and many women have highly specialized knowledge of trees and forests in terms of biological diversity and sustainable management practices.

Due to Ethiopia's observable gender gap, women's low status is manifested in their lack of decision-making opportunities, asset ownership, and are overburdened by farm activities and domestic responsibilities. Particularly in the forestry sector, women are frequently disadvantaged – for a range of interrelated cultural, social, economic, and institutional reasons – in their access to and control over forest resources, and in the economic opportunities available to them.

There is a widespread societal, cultural, and institutional perception of what work should be done by women and what should be done by men. A significant issue is the full assignment of domestic responsibilities to women. Another issue is in the agricultural sector – which is the largest employer of Ethiopian women – men are generally in charge of high-value crop production, while women are usually in charge of livestock management. Many women work for a very low wage or exchange their labour for food. These perceptions of the gendered division of labour have resulted in 68.5% of Ethiopian women being employed as unpaid family workers and 24.8% being self-employed in the informal sector.

Another challenge to narrow the gender gap in RIP involvement is the programme's approach which dictates no two individuals from the same household can benefit from the same RIP interventions. Since most households are male headed it is usually the man who is engaged in RIP activities, leaving women behind.

ASSESSMENT OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN THE REDD+ INVESTMENT PROGRAMME



CHALLENGES TO SOCIAL INCLUSION IN RIP INTERVENTIONS

Similar to women, marginalized groups have limited access to resources or assets from which they can derive sustainable livelihood, and thus derive their livelihood from the forests and its by-products. They are generally landless and move from one area to another in search of better living conditions or economic opportunities.

The societal perception of economically marginalized groups is a significant cause of social exclusion in RIP areas. Minorities and other marginalized groups are generally not well informed on issues at the kebele level and are not made aware of community-level projects and programmes. When marginalized groups go into the kebele, their voices are not heard, and their concerns are not addressed.

ASSESSMENT OF SOCIAL INCLUSION IN THE REDD+ INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

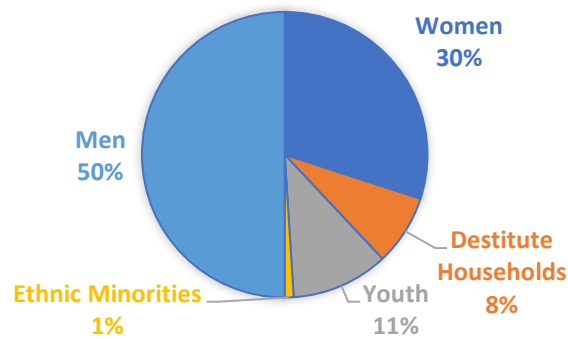
Landowners near RIP intervention areas are largely participating in the alternative livelihood programmes. However, marginalized groups are generally not informed of RIP interventions in the community. Many minorities and economically marginalized reported losing access and control rights to forests before being provided with a livelihood alternative. Consequently, project non-participants were adversely affected by RIP interventions as they were denied access to forests from which they previously derived their livelihoods.



Pressingly, many women and economically marginalized groups noted that the remuneration received in RIP's alternative livelihood activities were not comparable to their previous forest-based livelihood activities. Therefore, the interest-based RIP approach has not been observed to raise the participation of women, minorities, and economically marginalized groups of society.

OVERALL PROGRAMME ENGAGEMENT

The RIP set out the goal of ensuring 40% of all beneficiaries are women. However, the results from the gender and social inclusion impact assessment demonstrate the following programme engagement:



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Improved participation in RIP interventions

- Create a compulsory quota for women and marginalized social groups to improve participation in alternative livelihood programmes.
- Allow the participation of more than one member per household in RIP interventions, so that women in male headed households may also participate in RIP areas.

Improved viability of RIP interventions

- RIP intervention measures need to consider opportunity costs of the local community. Particularly in cash crop dominated areas, the low income yielding alternatives livelihoods are not a viable option.
- Viable enterprises need to be identified and implemented specifically for women and marginalized groups prior to their restriction of forest access.
- In order to make alternative livelihoods to support sustainable forest management viable, policy makers need to strengthen forest-based products value chain, to ensure non-timber forest products are profitable.
- Create marketing and processing cooperatives for non-timber forest products such as spices, forest coffee, and honey, to standardize and grade production and to help find new domestic and foreign markets for such products.

Improved programmatic monitoring and evaluation

- Regional and community level RIP offices need to ensure continuous supervision and monitoring of forest-based enterprises so that the inclusion guidelines are followed.
- Monitoring for market segmentation needs to be conducted in order to avoid the risk of price fall of products created by RIP alternative livelihood programmes.

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