

Pros and cons of mixed and women only groups. What actions can be taken?

Initial reflections

Women only groups might have the same weaknesses of dominance as mixed or men's groups

We need both women and mixed groups- can and should move between the two

Men have always been forming men only groups

Pros of women only groups

- Women relax, feel connected
- The right to have a voice never questioned- not self censoring
- Women can be representing group not individual- safer
- Have space to identify issues and needs for women (in the sector)
- Space to gain skills
- More transparency and more effective

Cons of mixed groups

- Gain information and knowledge they will not get in women only groups
- Often more resources in mixed groups
- Should not leave the men alone- women must and can play a role
- Diversity is good for groups –bring in different perspectives and knowledge give more informed decisions

Actions:

- Used quotas to increase the number of women in leadership and groups
- Leadership training to bring about inclusive groups, both women's groups and mixed groups
- Affirmative action to make the forest sector real diverse
- Guidelines and requirements from donors should support women's inclusion
- Push government to implement exciting gender policies
- Invest in grassroots organisation
- Use forest certification or other standards to promote women's inclusion
- Change existing standards and safe guards to be gender sensitive

Barriers to Women's Inclusion

- **Lack of awareness** both in males and females
 - Leads to lack of discussion, reflection and action necessary to alleviate the problem.
 - Men who are in decision making positions are often not aware and would be powerful drivers of change
- **Not comfortable self-promoting**

Women are not often outspoken, and not expected to be vocal

Expectation to hold a nurturing relationship prevents the ability to set up boundaries that can protect women in their position.

- **Difficulty committing to high-power position:**
Women in decision making positions continue to have home responsibilities that exceed that of a male and are often unhappy when put in high-responsibility work positions.
- Women that have achieved positions of power **do not embrace female values** but rather adapt to the male dominated world

Some solutions to deal with barriers

- Increase **awareness** of benefits to include women in decision making with both m/f
 - Need to have **male proponents** of including women and enabling them to take part in decision making
 - Men need to understand that their behavior may be excluding certain stakeholders
 - Need to **identify successful models** of female alternative leadership that is highly effective (ex. Hilary Clinton)
 - Bringing up the issue in everyday discourse
 - Need to **model** behavior to understand where it is coming from
 - Need to make gender issues the norm and not just an add-on in the programs

- Not framing the problem as “gender” related but as a lack of inclusion of key stakeholder
 - Many organizations refuse to explicitly work on “gender” related issues and often “gender” project will not be funded. Use inclusion instead
 - Women need to be recognized as stakeholders
 - Need to study women’s role in M&E
 - Also need to change the way “success” is evaluated to
 - make visible women’s contributions
 - Reduce some responsibilities held by women to make time for other time commitments

Group Notes:

- 1) What does business case mean? This depends on who we create it for/who is talking; government, community or business?

Entrepreneurial skill development (ideas, visions, opportunities)

increase the capacity of the group to ensure commercial viability and/or sustainability

create a message that women's inclusion makes good results (how do we frame the message)

Efficiency versus transformative – should be both!

Applying scarce resources where it makes sense

- 2) Are women's center of excellence utilized in the best possible way in traditional forestry/projects/redd strategies
- 3) Use of authority/leadership to "hire" expertise – women not need to know everything (Burkina)
- 4) The many roles of women in the field of agriculture and energy high / education very low by example;
- 5) Women's cash contribution is often not recognized because not cash income – should be more visible
- 6) Price a premium for products that support specific objectives eg. women development should then translate into benefit sharing
- 7) How do we melt the two worlds between private and government, how do we connect the people to markets (discussion are in parallel and we need to find the intersection); public-private partnerships?
- 8) Make sure that our message is not intimidating, confusing or create false hope;
- 9) Utilize existing models to solve current problems with clear roles between PPP;
- 10) Women are already there, perhaps not well enough defined.
- 11) Activities must make sense to all, i.e. payback to the right holders