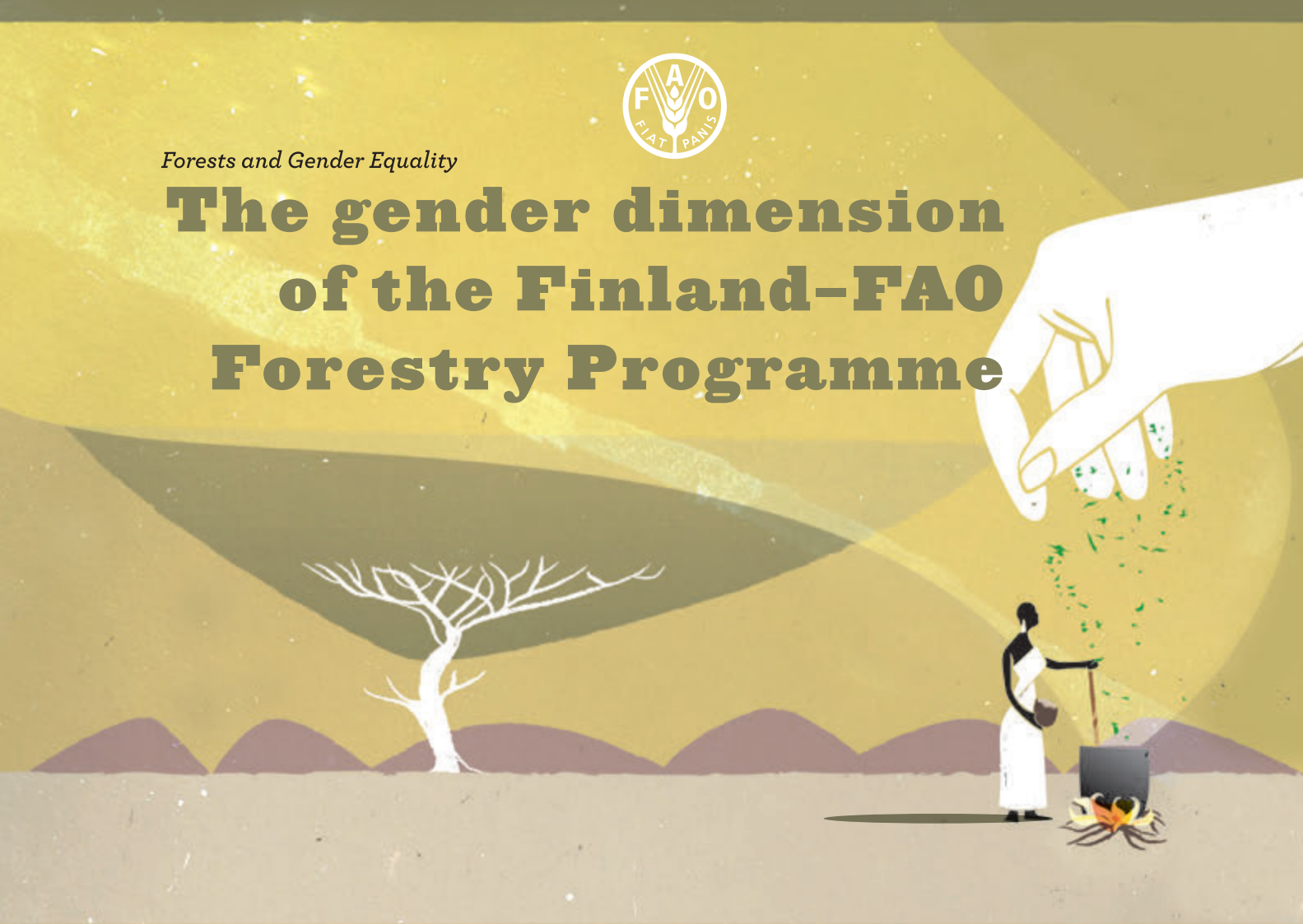




Forests and Gender Equality

The gender dimension of the Finland-FAO Forestry Programme



The Finland-FAO Forestry Programme aims to strengthen capacity by developing methodologies and tools for forest assessments and inventories. It applies these tools in five pilot countries: Ecuador; Peru; the United Republic of Tanzania; Viet Nam; and Zambia. The Programme is working to improve information on the many ways in which women and men manage, use and benefit from forests.

The tools developed by the Finland-FAO Forestry Programme support the collection of high-quality data on forest resources to provide a firm base for policy decisions. In pilot countries with existing national forest monitoring and assessment (NFMA) projects and national forest inventories (NFIs), the Programme helps to strengthen those and to avoid duplication. The Programme collaborates with UN-REDD, bilateral projects, international organizations and NGOs.

The measurement of biophysical parameters in forests, such as tree height, diameter and species, should be complemented in NFMAs and NFIs by the monitoring of socioeconomic aspects such as the employment generated by forest activities and the goods extracted and the benefits obtained from forests by local people. As recognition grows of women's important roles in, and knowledge of, local forest management and use, so too does the importance of collecting socioeconomic data that differentiates between women and men – "gender-disaggregated data" (GDD).



The challenge

It is increasingly clear that GDD is needed for effective forest policymaking, particularly to increase understanding of the different ways in which women and men use forests, and also of gender differences in decision-making, representation in community forest management groups, and forest access, use and knowledge. For this reason, the Finland-FAO Forestry Programme seeks to improve the collection of GDD in survey methodologies.

The initiative

Under the Programme, socioeconomic GDD is collected through interviews with key informants, focus groups and households. Key informants include village leaders and knowledgeable people in communities.

Focus groups comprise people with particular interests such as the management of forests, non-wood forest products and herbal products.

Through adapted sampling design and survey team training, interviews at the household level can generate valuable GDD. In the case of the United Republic of Tanzania, for example, a total of 3,483 households (2,879 males, 580 females and 24 pairs of both male and female heads) were interviewed throughout the country over a two-year period.

Survey design is specific to country information needs. In a broad sense, however, the household data collected includes: forest access; knowledge; forest products use and commercialization opportunities; and representation in forest institutions. This approach gives a more complete picture of how forests are used differentially by women and men than when only male or female heads of households are interviewed.

impact

The major gender-related impact of the Finland-FAO Forestry Programme is at the policy level. Data generated from the Programme documents the many differences between women and men's knowledge and use of forests. Such data can be used to improve policies, including by removing discrimination between women and men in access to and use of forest resources and, over time, to monitor the impacts of such policy improvements.

Social REDD+ safeguards also take gender into account. The Finland-FAO Forestry Programme has demonstrated how GDD can be built into NFMAs and NFIs to ensure that social safeguards on gender are adhered to in REDD+ programmes.

GDD generated by the NAFORMA Programme in the United Republic of Tanzania reveal that men are more involved in commercial forest products activities such as those for honey, production wood, and charcoal, while women have fewer opportunities for commercialization of the selected forest products to which they access and harvest. The data show both men and women collect human food plants. The NAFORMA data overwhelmingly show that firewood is the only source of rural energy for cooking and a high percentage of rural women collect firewood in forests.

These and other data, in the United Republic of Tanzania and elsewhere, provide strong evidence that most of the benefits of forest use that accrue to women are used to feed and educate their children. It is clear, therefore, that the collection of GDD is vital for ensuring the food security of millions of households worldwide and for alleviating poverty.