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LESSONS LEARNED FROM COMMUNITY FORESTRY IN LATIN AMERICA AND THEIR RELEVANCE FOR REDD+

FOREST CARBON, MARKETS AND COMMUNITIES (FCMC) PROGRAM

JANUARY 2014

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by FCMC.

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development by Tetra Tech, through a Task Order under the Prosperity, Livelihoods, and Conserving Ecosystems (PLACE) Indefinite Quantity Contract Core Task Order (USAID Contract No. EPP-I-00-06-00008-00, Order Number AID-OAA-TO-11-00022).

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This report is one of four reports on "Lessons Learned from Community Forestry and Their Relevance for REDD+." The series comprises three regional reviews on this topic, prepared for Latin America (by Janis Alcorn), Africa (by Tom Blomley) and Asia (by Robert Fisher). The global synthesis of the three regional reviews was prepared by Roy Hagen. Paula J. Williams has managed and served as the overall editor for the three regional reviews and a global synthesis. All four reports have been edited by FCMC.

Photo credit - Sawmill belonging to ACOFOP (*Asociacion de Comunidades Forestales de Petén*/Association of Forest Communities of Petén), Guatemala. The Spanish sign translation is: "Caution - Community Members at Work." Photo by Janis B. Alcorn.

Please cite this publication as:

Alcorn, Janis B. 2014. Lessons Learned from Community Forestry in Latin America and Their Relevance for REDD+. USAID-supported Forest Carbon, Markets and Communities (FCMC) Program. Washington, DC, USA.

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ACRONYMS AND GLOSSARY

ACOFOP	Association of Forest Communities of Petén, Guatemala, *Asociación de Comunidades Forestales de Petén*
AIDESEP	National Indigenous Federation in Peru, *Asociación Interétnica de Desarrollo de la Selva Peruana*
Asamblea	a legally-defined Assembly of representatives taking decisions by consensus, including creating and enforcing local regulations/by-laws. Asamblea (capitalized) is differentiated from *ad hoc* asamblea – meetings called by government, NGOs or donor projects.
BCPs	Biocultural Community Protocols
CIDOB	Indigenous federation of the 37 Indigenous Peoples of lowland Bolivia, *Confederación de Pueblos Indígenas de Bolivia*
ANR	Assisted natural regeneration, a forestry technique alternative to plantations
APG	Indigenous Federation of Guarani in Bolivia, *Asamblea del Pueblo Guarani*
caboclos	smallholder farmers, term used in Brazil and bordering areas
campesinos	smallholder farmers, peasants, term in widespread use
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CDM	Clean Development Mechanism
cesión en uso	a government document authorizing forest use in Peru
CIFOR	Center for International Forestry Research
chicle	latex sold for use in chewing gum, from the tree species *Manilkara zapota*
CNS	see NCEP
COINACAPA	Bolivian brazil nut cooperative, *Cooperativa Integral Agroextractivista Campesinos de Pando*
COICA	Coordinator of Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon River Basin
criollos	smallholders that depend on free range livestock in the Gran Chaco region of Argentina, Paraguay and Bolivia
ECO-RCA	Eco-Reserve Amarakaeri Communal Reserve, Madre de Dios, Peru
fainas	cultural tradition of voluntary labor for community benefit, also known as *mingas, tequios, cargos*
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FCMC	Forest Carbon, Markets and Communities Program
FCPF	Forest Carbon Partnership Facility
FENEMAD	Indigenous federation in Madre de Dios, Peru, belongs to AIDESEP, *Federación Nativa de Madre de Dios*

FIP	Forest Investment Program
FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (EU program)
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent (or Consultation), as defined and interpreted by national governments
FSUTPC	peasant-labor organization in Pando region of Bolivia, *Federación Sindical Unica de Trabajadores Campesinas de Pando*
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IACHR	Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the associated Inter-American Human Rights Court is also represented by the same acronym
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
ICAA	USAID Amazonian-Andes Conservation Project
ICRAF	World Agroforestry Center (formerly known as the International Council of Research on Agroforestry)
IFRI	International Forestry Resources and Institutions
ILC	Indigenous and Local Communities, acronym used by CBD
ILO 169	International Labour Organization Convention 169
IPs	Indigenous Peoples
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
loteadores	people who clear land and sell it illegally in "lots" to new frontier immigrants
mesas de concertación	consensus-building roundtables that may be set up for regular meetings or *ad hoc* in response to issues, to bring the parties to the table with government to sort out a consensus on a way forward
NCEP	National Council of Extractivist Populations, formerly The National Council of Rubber Tappers in Brazil
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NTFPs	Non-timber Forest Products
ONIC	National Indigenous Federation in Colombia, *Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia*
OPIAC	Indigenous Federation in the Colombian Amazon, *Organización de los Pueblos Indígenas Amazónicos en Colombia*
OTB	the legal personality of community Assemblies that enables them rights to participate in decisions and hold government accountable in Bolivia established by law in the 1990s, *Organización Territorial de Base*
PES	Payments for Environmental (or Ecological) Services
planes de gestión territorial	see *planes de vida*
planes de vida	development plans derived by local participatory processes that include an assessment of development options using cultural values and information about local natural resources,

	taking into account restrictions so that the planned development will be sustainable, includes land use planning and zoning
PROCYMAF	World-bank and Mexican government funded community forestry program, initiated in 1997
proyectismo	a situation where people become accustomed to depend on project assistance, and don't want to lose their resulting relationship with an NGO or local elite patron, and also are used to critically describe the development strategy applied by governments that relies on projects rather than larger scale reforms or investments to achieve development change
PRRGP	USAID Property Rights and Resource Governance Project
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, plus the conservation and sustainable management of forests and the enhancement of forest carbon stocks
R-PP	Readiness Preparation Proposal
ribereño	smallholders along rivers in Peru
rondas	local defense posses authorized by Peru law 27908 for *campesino* and indigenous communities
SESA	Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment, undertaken during REDD+ Readiness stage by countries receiving funding from the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) and also undertaken by World Bank for other work
swidden	indigenous shifting agroforestry systems known as *milpa*, *chacra, roza-tumba-quema* and other local terms across Latin America, sometimes called "slash and burn"
TLC	free trade agreement, also known as Trade Promotion Agreements (TPAs), such as the U.S.-Peru TPA, *Tratado de Libre Comercio*
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UN-REDD	United Nations REDD+ Programme
URACCAN	University of the Autonomous Regions of the Nicaraguan Caribbean Coast, *Universidad de las Regiones Autonomos de la Costa Caribe Nicaraguense*
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VCS	Voluntary Carbon Standard
VPAs	Voluntary Partnership Agreements under FLEGT
xate	leaves of the Chamaedorea palm, sold into the floral trade

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people kindly helped with sharing information and offered feedback on drafts, including: Omaira Bolanos, Carol Colfer, Augusta Molnar, Michael Richards, David Bray, David Kaimovits, Deborah Barry, Peter Cronkleton, Gabriel Labbate, Simone Lovera, Alejo Zarzycki, Daniel DeCaro, Daniel Klooster, Carolina de la Rosa, Harry Jonas, Susan Charnley, Thomas A. Perreault, Nick Winer, Mariana Panuncio, Kayte Meola, Daniela Carrion, Tim Cadman, Yeon-Su Kim, Bob Fisher, Tom Blomley, Roy Hagen, Paula Williams, Diane Russell, Stephen Kelleher, Beto Borges, Rebecca Anzueto, Susan Stone, Peter Kanowski, Joel Scriven, Fariborz Zelli, Susan Caplow, Gert VanHecken, Romain Pirard, James Michael Gibbons, Liliana M. Davalos, Diego Martino, Sean Alcorn, Gary Martin, Carlos del Campo, Juanita Cabrera-Lopez, Richard Smith, Hugo Che Piu, and others. The author also acknowledges the contributions from the work of all those who have assessed, discussed, debated and published lessons learned from community forestry in Latin America over the past 30 years; and the work of all the communities who have learned from own efforts in community forestry and shared their insights. This report is based on a review completed in 2012, which was subsequently revised in response to reviews by USAID, Scott A. Hajost, FCMC Chief of Party, and Paula J. Williams who led the production of the Community Forestry Lessons for REDD+, including three regional reviews and a global synthesis. Thanks are also due to Arjun Khosa, Colin Silver and Maggie Roth for their able assistance in research, editing, formatting and production at FCMC.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-supported Forest Carbon, Markets, and Communities (FCMC) Program commissioned this review of lessons learned from community forestry in Latin America. This review analyzes experiences and key lessons learned over three decades following the introduction of legal and policy reforms supporting community rights over forests as well as community involvement in the management of forests. It presents some key lessons from community forestry that are highly relevant for REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation).

KEY FINDINGS ON COMMUNITY FORESTRY IN LATIN AMERICA

Regional Characteristics: As a region, Latin America has the most area under community forestry management, with diverse forms of self-generated community forestry enjoying broad legal recognition across large geographic areas. Community forestry in Mexico and Central America differs significantly from community forestry in the Amazonian region of South America. South America has over 90 percent of the region's forests. Only 1.4 percent of forests in Latin America are plantations; over 98 percent are natural forests. Community forestry is broadly effective in maintaining forests.

Empowerment of Communities: Community forestry is based on the recognition of the rights of communities to establish and enforce rules governing the access and use of forests. These tenurial rights of communities are relatively strong in most of Latin America. Clear legal frameworks for community forestry have been critical to success. Self-generated community forestry has prospered in frontier areas where there are no clear legal frameworks, but these systems are now under increasing threat.

Governance and Stakeholder Engagement: Effective community-level institutions are capable of establishing and enforcing rules governing access and use of forests and of equitably sharing the costs and benefits of community forestry. Self-generated community institutions that fit both local cultural and ecological conditions and national jurisdictional frameworks are generally the most effective.

Benefits and Incentives: Major financial, livelihood and environmental benefits often accrue directly to communities in Latin America. REDD+ can learn from the analyses of lessons learned from the many Payments for Environmental Services (PES) schemes that have been applied in Latin American community forests. Mexico is the leader in community forest management plans that generate significant income from sustainable logging, and in integrating PES and REDD+ into existing community forests.

Capacity building: Community managers are more effective when they have capacities for good governance and skills, or access to people with skills, such as forest management, enterprise development, planning and bookkeeping. Government foresters and other officers are more effective when they have the skills to support community engagement.

Scaling up: Scaling up works best by following the rule that "one size does not fit all." Higher-scale systems can nurture local systems to leverage benefits and sustainable forests. Social movements have generated the best scaled-up systems in Latin America, as well as contributed to appropriate adjustments.

Sustainability: The critical factors determining sustainability are social and economic. Important conditions include empowerment of community managers as decision-makers, strong community institutions capable of developing and enforcing rules, and good governance in relation to national institutions and agencies.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REDD+

Sub-regional Strength Through Diversity: Build on a firm understanding of existing practices, rights, institutions, threats and opportunities in any given country. Build capacity for REDD+ by experiential learning and cross-site visits. Build cross-cultural communication and diversity appreciation within government agencies. Support diversity rather than aiming for standardization and homogeneity. Seek to build frameworks that nurture community forestry at sub-regional levels, as part of nested REDD+.

Empowerment of Communities: Refocus on "discovered" self-generated community forestry, taking "Ostrom´s Law" as a guide – if it works in practice, it can work in theory and policy. Find out what works in practice. Use Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) and Biocultural Community Protocols (for participatory research) as appropriate in national contexts. Grant communities autonomy in defining forest management institutions.

Governance and Stakeholder Engagement: Collaborate with civil society movements, convening the range of stakeholders in fora that promote two-way communication with community forestry constituents. Improve enforcement against illegal logging, and prevent land-grabbing and illegal activities that threaten community security. Develop supportive agricultural, macroeconomic and other sectoral policies. Rely on nurturing emergent processes and existing organizations. Support development of rights-based approaches and recourse mechanisms. Support policy reforms that empower communities to make and enforce rules that regulate access and use of forests, integrating the interests of women, poor households and indigenous peoples. Identify the legal instruments for empowerment and build pressure for their application.

Benefits and Incentives: Strengthen community tenure and rights. Support standards of good governance so benefits reach the intended beneficiaries. Community benefits need to be greater than the transaction, management and opportunity costs of community forestry and of REDD+. Empower communities to enforce local regulations and national laws, and extend local bylaws and regulations to neighboring forests to reduce leakage.

Capacity building: Strengthen community forestry leaders' participation in public fora regarding REDD+. Support the genesis of culturally appropriate accountability for REDD+ even when the cultural logic may not be understood by outsiders. Develop capacity of community members, government, and other partners in a mix of technical skills (forest management, utilization and planning), enterprise development skills (financial management and book-keeping) and governance capacities (accountability, communications and enforcement of rules governing access and use), to increase the likelihood of community forestry success.

Sustainability and Scaling Up: Nurturing emergent and existing organizations and facilitate locally driven upscaling. Document the population in forests – including people currently invisible to the state because they are undocumented or because their communities are found in areas formally designated as state forests – by implementing population surveys and maps. Knowing the characteristics, distribution and size of those "invisible" populations provides essential, real information for REDD+ options, including long-term forest leasing or tenure recognition as opposed to logging concessions that disrupt existing forest populations and trigger new migrations into forest. Make a sustained effort to ensure that women and other vulnerable populations participate in debates so they are recognized for their roles as key forest stewards. Support the creation and implementation of locally generated development plans (*planes de vida, planes de gestion territorial, ordenamiento territorial*) that include community forestry and REDD+. Support community-based mapping, which offers an excellent entry point for helping communities assess their forests and plan their use for enhancing their livelihoods, and scenario construction and analysis, which can be useful for determining whether or not they wish to incorporate REDD+ into their local development plans. Build broad especially urban, public awareness of community forestry issues to build political will to address those issues.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE COMMUNITY FORESTRY REVIEW

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change's (UNFCCC) success at storing atmospheric carbon in forests in Latin America depends on the long-term maintenance of forests. Forest maintenance in Latin America in turn largely depends on community forestry – the direct control and management of forests by men and women in *campesino, caboclo, ribereño, criollo,* Afro-descendent and indigenous communities. The REDD+ mechanism (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) under the UNFCCC is also tasked with social benefits, and, like community forestry, is challenged to "integrate outcomes of ecological sustainability, social equity, and economic efficiency in which objectives for long-term use of the resources are well defined so that expectations of [communities] and the society at large remain consistent" (Pagdee and Daugherty 2006: 33). REDD+ and community forestry are social and political processes whose success is measured by the quality, presence and absence of forest.

Lessons about the importance and means of engaging communities to achieve forest conservation and management should not have to be "re-learned" by REDD+. This report identifies the community forestry lessons of relevance to REDD+ design and implementation. REDD+ will be more successful if built on the shoulders of lessons learned from community forestry – how these systems tick, what drives conservation and wise management, what interventions are likely to serve only as stopgap measures, what conflicts can undermine success, and what policy and practice barriers can be avoided or removed to ensure a smoother REDD+ road ahead.

Community forestry evolved along with the "participation" and "appropriate development" reform trends in international rural development and conservation (Alcorn 2000, Borrini-Feyerabend 1997, Chambers 1995, Jackson and Ingles 1998, Larsen *et al.* 1998, Moris 1981, Russell and Harshbargar 2003, Springer and Alcorn 2007, Warren *et al.* 1995, Weber *et al.* 2000, Wyckoff Baird and Brown 1992, others). Other trends that affected community forestry in Latin America in the past thirty years include decentralization and neoliberal economic reform trends, which have see-sawed back and forth with recentralization and socialism reform trends (Santiso 2003; Dickovick 2011).

Box 1. What is community forestry?

For this FCMC series of reviews of community forestry, the team members have agreed that community forestry encompasses the following:

> **Community forestry** is an evolving subcategory of forestry under which communities or groups of people have partial to full rights over specific forests, including the rights to establish, implement, and enforce rules governing access and use of those forests. These rights may be formal legal rights, or traditional or customary rights: the latter may, or may not, be legally recognized by the State. Community forestry systems may be initiated by the community or be developed as a result of outside intervention by governments or various development partners. Participatory Forest Management, Community-Based Forest Management or Joint Forest Management can be considered to be types of community forestry if communities have rights to participate in significant decisions on how the forest is used or managed. Community forestry may include not only management of natural forests and woodlands, but also community or group plantations and woodlots.

1.2 METHODOLOGY USED AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

FCMC commissioned three regional reports and a global synthesis report to examine lessons learned in community forestry, and their relevance for REDD+. This report focuses on Latin America. This review summarizes REDD+-relevant lessons from the wide diversity of community forestry efforts by communities, Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), donors and government agencies over the past 30+ years.. This review is a qualitative meta-analysis of other studies, some of which may have used definitions different from the definition of community forestry adopted for these reviews.

The methodology for this review and synthesis of lessons from community forestry relies on triangulation across existing documents, including some 500 publications and reports (see bibliography), and field experiences shared with colleagues. The literature tends toward being: i) descriptive academic studies (indigenous forest management practices, traditional agroforestry practices, particular project activities, etc.) in fixed time periods with little attention to representativeness for generalizing findings to the landscape, national and/or regional scale; and ii) NGO and donor documents that, with some exceptions (e.g., Springer & Alcorn 2007), do not evaluate against a baseline but tend to describe what projects are going to do – promoting their programs to donors. Project evaluations are seldom published nor used as baseline documents for follow-up years later. A third problem is that the literature tends toward *ex ante* advice for designing interventions and policy rather than evidence-based evaluations of outcomes and the scale of their impacts (Bohringer and Loschell 2006, Helming *et al.* 2011, Ojha *et al.* 2012). Few researchers have focused on a specific site over the long-term to identify and assess cause and effect relationships between activities and forest conditions.

The leading source of long-term, systematic analysis comes from the International Forestry Resources and Institutions (IFRI) program, which is a collaborative research program learning from changes in forests owned by governments, private organizations, and communities across Bolivia, Colombia, Guatemala, India, Kenya, Mexico, Nepal, Tanzania, Thailand, Uganda, and the United States (Ostrom 2011).[1] USAID's Amazonian-Andes Conservation program (ICAA) recently joined with the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) to initiate long term monitoring of changes at key sites in the Peruvian Amazon (CIFOR 2012). CIFOR is also working with the World Agroforestry Center (ICRAF) and Bioversity International for long-term monitoring of "sentinel sites."

The lack of long-term analyses may exist because: i) donors rarely fund baselines and follow-up five to ten years after projects end or policies are introduced; or ii) few proposals for such work are presented to donors. The meta-analyses that have been done are based on limited, project-specific studies that suffer from the weaknesses and biases noted above. Disciplinary divides also limit understanding, as foresters seldom interact with agronomists who understand traditional agrarian mosaics of forests and fields. Nonetheless, the literature reviewed shows a consensus on community forestry lessons – largely expert opinion derived from field experiences with activities designed to implement NGO or agency solutions.

The pattern of failing to establish baselines and long-term programs to monitor and analyze outcomes over time is now being repeated in REDD+. A review of lessons from early REDD+ projects found that claims regarding the socioeconomic and biophysical impacts of REDD+ projects were rarely based on assessments of outcomes and lacked rigor (Caplow *et al.* 2011):

> ".. In particular, the counterfactual scenarios for establishing socioeconomic impacts are vague, unscientific, or omitted completely. We conclude that drawing specific lessons from pre-REDD+ projects for the design or evaluation of current REDD+ projects is tenuous. Rigorous project

[1] IFRI was initiated by Nobel laureate Dr. Elinor Ostrom and her colleagues at the Workshop on Political Theory at the University of Indiana and collaborating institutions in the 1990s. The IFRI program subsequently expanded to include fourteen Collaborating Research Centers around the world, coordinated by an administrative center at the University of Michigan, supported by World Bank, USDA, and other donors. Publications from the IFRI research are important sources of lessons learned on common property forest management regimes in Latin America and elsewhere.

evaluations are challenging, expensive, and time-consuming, but because they are so critical for learning about what works for people and forests, evaluations of current REDD+ projects must use improved methods. In particular, much better care should be taken to construct credible – and where possible, consistent – counterfactuals for both biophysical and socioeconomic outcomes."

An excellent meta-analysis of forty Latin American community forestry cases (de Jong *et al.* 2010a) concludes:

"The community forestry development establishment has indeed observed the self-generated forestry models, but has failed to interpret those adequately to propose forestry development models that are acceptable to local forestry protagonists. Externally proposed forestry development models do not last unless they are rooted in the local social structures, economies, and value systems. If they don't meet these conditions, they become ephemeral and constitute a drain on national and international resources. Even though linking to export markets appears to be necessary in order to achieve some significant economic benefits, they are not the best departure points from which to design new models, unless those models have truly been adjusted to local realities. And the only ones who can truly judge whether or not that is the case, are the local producers, and nobody else."

There are relatively fewer reports of community-based reforestation in degraded areas in smaller patches of forest, often for improving watersheds (Alcorn *et al.* 2010) or renewing degraded agricultural areas. Reforestation experiences are of less importance for REDD+ in Latin America, in terms of tons of carbon potentially conserved by reforestation patches versus tons of carbon conserved in the large standing forests. Nonetheless reforestation can play an important role for restoring watersheds and other areas that were deforested and abandoned within both forested and agricultural mosaic landscapes. Reforestation can be controversial when it conflicts with the rights and land use practices of local residents. For example, the Pico Bonito reforestation and carbon offset project, which aimed to bring benefits to 24,000 residents living in and around a national park in Honduras, ran into issues in 2011, because communities did not follow the strict Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) requirements to reforest in large blocks with specific techniques, but rather did reforestation in mosaics of smaller areas according to their own criteria. As a result of the local methodological variation, the World Bank cancelled CDM involvement. In Brazil, where reforestation has received much publicity, 90 percent of official reforestation uses exotic pines and eucalyptus for rapid harvest in large industrial plantations (Mancano Fernandes *et al.* 2012).

Further study is needed to compare the costs and survival rates in large reforestation projects versus self-generated efforts to reforest where NGOs create community nurseries using native seeds gathered from nearby forests or "assisted natural regeneration" (Alcorn *et al.* 2010, Shono *et al.* 2007, Smith and Scherr 2003), including traditional swidden fallow regeneration or enclosure from cattle. There is little information beyond promotional tree-planting materials for many reforestation efforts. In one local NGO-assisted reforestation effort with a federation of 32 communities in the Upper Parapeti River in Bolivia, tree survival two years after planting of young native tree saplings ranged from 5 to 90 percent, for different communities in similar ecological conditions (Alcorn *et al.* 2010). The reforestation success depended on community members' commitment to care for the newly planted trees so they become established. Reforestation programs can paradoxically contribute to deforestation, through displacement of activities into new zones and replacement of high biodiversity-value forests with monoculture forest plantations (Scriven and Malhi 2012). Women play important roles in reforestation via agroforestry in traditional Amazonian swidden agroforestry or forest garden systems (Perrault 2005) and in frontier areas after logging degradation (Kelly 2009, Shillington 2002).

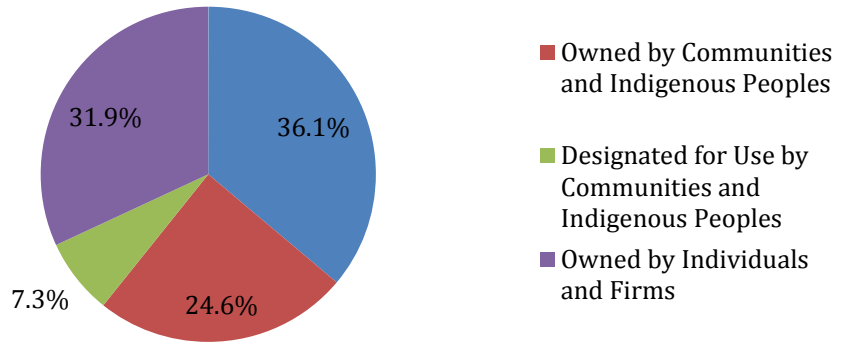
2.0 OVERVIEW

This report tells the story of community forestry in Latin America and offers lessons and recommendations for REDD+ to create more sustainable forests by enhancing two-way collaboration between forest communities and the larger regional, national and international economies and societies in which they are embedded.

This section gives context to the lessons in subsequent chapters. Latin America has a rich community forestry history (Bovarnick *et al.* 2010). The region contains five of the ten most biodiverse areas in the world, in Mexico, Brazil, Peru, Ecuador and Colombia. The world´s most diverse tropical region, the Amazon, and 22 percent of the world´s temperate forests, are in Latin America. South America has 40 percent of the world's biodiversity and 25 percent of the world's forests. With 90 percent of the region's forests, South America is a key REDD+ area. Only 1.4 percent of Latin American forests are plantations, a significant difference from Asia and Africa. Latin America has 10 percent of the world's population in 16 percent of the world´s land area.

The region contributes only 11 percent of global CO_2 emissions but is highly vulnerable to global climate change as its economies depend on natural resources affected by climate change (IADB 2012). Latin America leads the world in emissions from deforestation, producing 47% of global emissions from deforestation. The regionwide expansion of highway networks and the agroindustrial expansion of soy in response to market demand are major drivers for these high rates of deforestation. Latin America also boasts over half the world's forest under existing and projected REDD+ private market projects, with 12.5 million hectares in Latin America compared to 3 million hectares in Africa and 7 million hectares in Asia (derived from data tables used in preparation of Nimz *et al.*. 2013).

Figure 1. Latin America Forest Tenure



Source: Adapted from *Turning Point: What future for forest peoples and resources in the Emerging World Order*, Rights and Resources Initiative, Washington, DC, 2012, Figure 1, page 8. Based on best available data (Dec. 2011) from 36 of the world's most forested countries, representing 85 percent of the world's forests. Data was compiled by CIFOR, ITTO and RRI.

Indigenous Peoples (IPs) manage territories that include a significant percentage of Latin America's forests. It is critical for REDD+ to acknowledge and support the self-determination rights of IPs in Latin America, integrating reforms that conform with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Many IPs and their advocates fear REDD+ "gone wrong" (Espinoza Llanos and Feather 2011, Lang 2011, Larson *et al.* 2012, Lovera 2012, Nhantumbo 2012, Phelps *et al.* 2010 and others). The policy challenges for engaging IPs have been laid out in some countries (Reed 2011 in Ecuador, Benavides 2012 in

Peru, ISA 2010 in Brazil). COICA – the federation uniting the national federations of IPs of all Amazonian countries – is promoting Indigenous REDD+ as an alternative.

Another difference marking the Latin American region is that community forestry has evolved in a context where rural people and communities have substantially greater rights to forests than in the African and Asian regions (Lawry *et al.* 2012) and exercise stronger *de facto* and *de jure* rights in state forest reserves. Community forestry in Latin America is closely linked with biodiversity conservation. In the Amazon Basin, indigenous territories cover an area larger than that covered by national protected areas. The two categories together cover 3.9 million square kilometers. Almost forty percent of the Amazon is in indigenous territories, and 20 percent in protected areas. (RRI 2012, RAISG 2012, Mongabay 2012).

The population of the Amazon Basin is 33.7 million people, including 385 different IPs of whom 71 are "uncontacted" groups. Almost all protected areas include resident communities that use and manage the forests in their immediate area. Generally there is little investment in park guards, and the emphasis is on shifting responsibility to communities, or *de facto* neglect by assigning responsibility for many parks to one supervisor in the capital city with little or no staff in the field. A clearly defined middle road, where government has some responsibilities and authorizes local responsibilities, is generally more successful. For example, Colombia developed a comprehensive policy on people and parks to guide government collaboration with people in order to achieve conservation (Gobierno de Colombia 2001, Premaur and Berkes 2012). Mexico has likewise sought to work with resident communities in protected areas.

In Latin America, the **types of community forestry** range widely, but can generally be categorized **"discovered"** or **"designed"** (Box 2). Self-generated community forestry existed in Latin America prior to the arrival of Europeans (see Alcorn 1990 and Freire 2007 for references on community forestry by indigenous shifting cultivators, also described as indigenous agroforestry). Latin American communities for millennia integrated agriculture and forests into managed landscapes, consistent with local ecologies, even in Amazonia. After the severe human population crash from European diseases, forests regenerated over vast areas (Denevan 1992, Nevle *et al.* 2011). Despite the Spaniards' systematic destruction of written pre-Hispanic records and the subsequent lack of good historical records, existing written registers show that communities continued to assert their rights over community forests against claims made by the new rulers from Europe. Guatemalan Mayan communities, for example, argued for their rights to community forests in Spanish courts in the late 1500s (MacLeod 1973). The Mexican revolution (1910 to 1917) was the first to reverse the Latin America *latifundios*[2] and renew recognition of community rights over lands and forests in Latin America.

Box 2. Discovered vs. designed types of community forestry

An analytical distinction proposed by Frances Seymour (1994): community forestry can be categorized as **"discovered"** by outsiders who study and intervene in community forestry that arose autonomously, or "self-generated" in response to internal and external conditions where communities assert tenurial rights; vs. ii) **"designed"** community forestry in which interventions are designed without engaging or acknowledging local self-generated systems that may exist.

Community forestry was formally recognized as a form of forestry by national governments in Latin America beginning in the 1980s (Wentzel 1998), a time when Mexican forest law formally acknowledged community forestry's legal existence and Chico Mendez defended the rights of rubber-tappers to their traditional forests in Brazil. The traditional agroforestry and natural forest management aspects of diverse swidden systems were likewise recognized and described by analysts in the 1980s (Alcorn 1981, 1990; Posey & Balee 1989). External interventions creating "designed" community forestry arguably began in the 1980s as well, with a series of donor-funded projects in areas such as the Pichis-Palcazu in the Central Selva of Peru (Moore 1989, Scrivener 2012a). Such external interventions can enhance, strengthen or weaken preexisting "undiscovered"

[2] *Latifundios* are large landholdings that include communities maintained for labor (*comunidades cautivas*) within the landholding in a sort of indentured semi-slavery arrangement. This arrangement continues in remote areas into this century.

(invisible to outsiders) community forestry systems, depending on the interventions and how self-generated systems respond to the imposition of "designed" community forestry (Seymour 1994, Larson *et al.* 1998, de Jong 2010). "Discovered community forestry" systems' self-generated integration into markets is widespread and diverse, with outcomes that depend on local factors and the value of external technical advice (Freire 2007, Scriven 2012a). Discovered community forestry often has incorporated external techniques and products, and responded to policies or other new factors – such as new markets – without a "designed" project being imposed.

Community forestry can best be understood by sorting the great diversity of management practices along a continuum among three "ideal types" (*sensu* Max Weber, Table 1).

Table 1. Spectrum of Community Forestry Types in Latin America

Low-Intensity Forestry Intervention (LIFI)	**Medium-Intensity Forestry Intervention (MIFI)**	**High-Intensity Forestry Intervention (HIFI)**
• Found in more remote situations of natural forest where community forests are large (up to several million hectares), population density is low and pressures on the forest are low • Tenure rights generally recognized by the state and internal tenure rights are regulated under customary law • Traditional, long-fallow swidden agriculture is often practiced • Non-timber forest products (NTFPs) are harvested for local consumption and/or sale, some logging may be done under agreements with the private sector • Practiced almost exclusively by indigenous, afro-descendent and some *ribereño* communities, primarily in South America	• Practiced in less remote situations where pressures on the forest are higher and forest blocks smaller • Communities enrich their natural forests with high-value trees that produce cash crops • These forestry communities may form logging enterprises and log their own forests in accord with forest management plans • Widespread in Central America, also found in agricultural transition frontier zones in South America • May involve both indigenous and non-indigenous smallholders	• Found in high-density areas (100+/km^2) where 10 to 25 percent of community lands are maintained in enriched/managed forest • Typically in colonization areas where land pressures and conflicts are highest and deforestation often results from the failure of government to guarantee community tenure rights • Incorporates commercially-oriented agroforestry systems, often focus areas for reforestation efforts • Widespread in Central America, also found in agricultural transition frontier zones in South America • May involve both indigenous and non-indigenous smallholders

The first type, low-intensity forestry intervention (LIFI), is generally found in more remote situations where community forests are large, up to several million hectares, and population density is low. LIFI is almost exclusively operated by IPs and Afro-descendant communities in their respective territories and dominates in South America. Activities at the LIFI end of the range include forest conservation, defense from invasion, controlled logging for timber under agreements, harvesting non-timber forest products (NTFPs) for sale and use, and rotational swidden-fallow agroforestry systems. LIFI is largely "discovered" or invisible to outsiders (self-organized but undiscovered). LIFI covers large blocks of forest that offer the highest value for REDD+ investment.

At mid-range, moderate-intensity forestry intervention (MIFI) occurs in less remote situations where communities have less arable land and typically enrich their natural forests with high-value trees, such as coffee, chocolate, tropical fruits, and *algarrobo* (native carob). If they have market access and commercially-valuable timber in their forests, communities may form logging enterprises and log their forests in accordance

with forest management plans, and may have received outside assistance or developed their own technical assistance units shared across several communities. Communities may also allow free-range cattle to forage from the trees (*ramonear*) in drier forests. If these communities join together or join with a protected area, they offer another good option for efficient delivery of REDD+ benefits (Porter-Bolland *et al.*. 2013).

The third type, high-intensity forestry intervention (HIFI), occurs in communities that live in higher population density areas (100+/km2) and maintain 10-25 percent of their collective and individual lands in enriched or managed forests. HIFI communities often cut trees for local use only, incorporate commercially oriented agroforestry systems, and participate in reforestation efforts. HIFI is dominant in Paraguay and Honduras – countries where land reform has not occurred and community rights are relatively weak – and in the Caribbean where population densities are high. It is typically found in areas where limited community forestry has been incorporated during spontaneous and/or programmed colonization. These are areas where "the degree of deforestation which accompanies land settlement is in a certain sense a measure of the failure of government programmes to adequately guarantee land title; farmers prefer to rely on usufruct rights rather than government programmes to protect their new farms" (Jones 1990). In other situations, however, HIFI management practices result from self-generated community forestry management choices by communities with limited land base and more external labor opportunities (Alcorn 1989). HIFI practices can be "designed" or "discovered," but "designed" community forestry most commonly is HIFI and includes afforestation efforts. These relatively small areas – of less value for REDD+ in terms of forest size and carbon sequestration – are easy REDD+ targets because NGOs are present to deliver assistance through projects.

External factors have influenced the evolution of community forestry regardless of its type. MIFI and HIFI dominate in Central America, although they are also found in agricultural transition frontiers in South America where indigenous communities with limited lands and non-indigenous "smallholders" (*sensu* de Jong *et al.* 2010) may practice MIFI and HIFI. Community forestry all along this range can benefit from REDD+ and contribute to REDD+ success if the lessons learned over decades are incorporated.

Box 3. One-size does not fit all

Community forestry lessons should be placed in the larger context of rural development. The first lesson is that one size does not fit all: local context defines options for successful activities, and blueprints and demand for large-scale solutions create barriers (Nagendra 2011). The second is that better participation and stakeholder engagement are necessary to incorporate the diverse interests and decisions of vulnerable populations and women (see for example the issues raised in CBD regional consultations, cited in Tyrrell and Alcorn 2012).

The full gamut of community forestry interventions from agroforestry and reforestation projects to Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) and community based conservation projects have been applied in Latin America. Arguably the most significant community forestry project interventions in Latin America have focused on policy reforms that strengthen rights and support decentralization to improve community forestry management and marketing of community forestry products. Such policy reforms can enhance the sustainability, benefit-sharing and carbon sequestration of discovered, self-generated community forestry.

The major threats to community forestry in Latin America today include broader governance issues associated with turbulence in "frontier" zones beyond state control (Tacconi 2008): illegal logging, mafia drug traffic, anti-drug activities, land-grabbing, armed rebellion, corruption and weak systems of justice – problems that are shared with many parts of Africa and Asia. An effort to measure and capture this dimension of risk is incorporated into the Forest Carbon Index[3] (proposed by Deveny *et al.* 2012). REDD+ is generally welcomed by civil society as bringing new funding for needed policy reforms during the REDD+ Readiness Preparation Phase. Yet vulnerable sectors view REDD+ with suspicion and fear it will reduce their forest rights (Phelps *et al.* 2010, Lovera 2012a).

[3] The Forest Carbon Index (FCI) presents global data on the biological, economic, governance, investment, and market readiness conditions for every forested country in the world, "revealing the best places and countries for climate-related forest investments."

Vulnerable sectors that will either benefit or suffer from REDD+ in Latin America include IPs and Afro-descendants (OAS 2011), nonindigenous communities with weak or no rights (*caboclos, campesinos, ribereños, criollos*) and recent immigrants brought in to colonize forests by *loteadores* who clear and sell plots of land illegally to these new frontier immigrants. Women also risk marginalization if they are not positioned to represent concerns affecting their livelihoods and well-being. These issues and challenges are fully documented in the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) compendium of cases and decisions related to IPs' and Afro-descendants' rights and natural resource conflicts in Latin America (OAS 2009).

Latin America leads the world in cases of community forestry taking advantage of new funding from PES and carbon sales, or REDD+ (Hall 2012). National programs are adopting "nested" approaches to provide flexibility to incorporate the diversity of community forestry types into REDD+ pilots. These are rich areas for documenting community forestry lessons learned for REDD+.

Community forestry is closely linked with biodiversity conservation in Latin America. Concerns have been raised that REDD+ is overlooking the biodiversity benefits and instead focusing on traditional production forestry via forest departments and private concessions. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has promoted the development of safeguards, indicators and guidelines to encourage REDD+ and other UNFCCC programs to protect biodiversity and indigenous and local communities (ILC) (c.f., Tyrrell and Alcorn 2012).

Forest Inventories. Community members measuring a tree for preparation of a forest management plan. Photo by Jorge Severiche, Yangareko.

3.0 KEY LESSONS FOR REDD+

3.1 COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

3.1.1 Community Tenure and Community Empowerment

Decades of research show that tenurial security is the major determinant for community forestry outcomes. Community collective tenure is a necessary but insufficient condition for community forestry success. In Latin America, communities legitimately manage 216 million hectares or one third of all forests. Approximately 25 percent of forestland is under community tenure and an additional seven percent is legally designated for communities' use (Lawry and McLain 2012). The formal recognition of community rights over the past century has been based on the legitimacy of claims relating to international norms, conflicting legal situations, and incongruities in formal forest management systems (Monterroso and Barry 2012).

Community tenure rights in Latin America are well documented.[4] The tenure rights of IPs are stronger in Latin America than in other regions of the world. The International Labour Organization Convention 169 (ILO 169), which supports indigenous and tribal peoples' rights, has been incorporated into most Latin American Constitutions (van Cott 2000). Yet in practice, tenurial rights are often weak due to: i) deep-seated structural and cultural racism against IPs, and ii) IPs' vulnerabilities from their weak understandings of national legal and administrative systems. International pressure resulted in recognition of IPs´ tenurial rights through some form of titling, though titling processes have not necessarily been completed or relevant laws may have been changed at periodic intervals so that IPs have been forced to continuously seek validation and conversion of titles from one form to another[5].

Box 4. Tenure is Key

Decades of research show that tenurial security is the major determinant for community forestry outcomes. If care is not taken to strengthen tenure as the key condition in every project and program (Sommerville 2011), the legitimacy of community forestry is at risk.

Large protection reserves are set aside for "uncontacted" IPs in forest areas in accord with United Nations guidance (UNHRC 2012), with tenurial rights to be recognized as part of a process established when they choose to end their isolation from larger society. Brazil has set aside 11.3 million hectares for uncontacted IPs. Peru and Ecuador have set aside similarly sizeable areas. Uncontacted IPs do not have representation and do not interact with outsiders, so their lands and forests are strictly-protected state reserves.

While the actual forms of community forest tenure vary across Latin America, the essential aspect for community forestry is that the tenure bundle (*sensu* Schlager and Ostrom 1992) includes rights to access, control access, establish and enforce rules, harvest and market products, and make management decisions. It is also vital that the tenure regime be flexible, able to actively adapt to a complex of evolving conditions. The potential threats to exercising community forestry tenure rights include new roads, colonization, drug cultivation, and armed conflict. REDD+ can threaten tenure or offer opportunities for strengthening community tenure (Springer and Larson 2012). In Mexico, community forestry benefits from a collective tenurial bundle that offers a vision of policy reform for REDD+ success elsewhere (Bray 2010).

[4] USAID Land Tenure and Property Rights and Resource Governance (PPRGP) projects have produced country profiles on tenure in Latin America; relevant briefs on tenure, including one focusing on IPs (Alcorn 2011), and one on REDD+ (Sommerville 2011); and an important two volume set on the evolution of forest rights and sustainable forest management (Lawry *et al.* 2012). The InterAmerican Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) has produced a compendium of cases supporting indigenous territorial rights including rights over natural resources and land (OAS 2009).

[5] In Bolivia, for example, Indigenous Peoples have had to re-apply for different forms of titles, the most recent being the TCOs authorized in the mid 1990s, which have subsequently been changed to TIOC without clarity regarding the impact.

Hall (2012) classes Costa Rica, Brazil and Mexico as REDD+ pioneers, Ecuador, Bolivia, Panama, Peru, Paraguay, Colombia and Guyana as latecomers to REDD+, and Argentina, Chile, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Suriname as REDD+ stragglers. Hall provides a useful summary of community forest tenurial rights and potential barriers for REDD+ in each Latin American country. REDD+ has the potential to undermine existing tenure systems and thus endanger REDD+ itself. Carbon tenure is an emerging concept (La Viña and Lynch 2011). The voluntary markets in Mexico and Brazil have legitimized carbon rights linked to community forestry without clear policy determinations (Avila 2010, Bray 2012a, Hall 2012). Mexico leads the way in developing a domestic carbon market, which is easier for community forests to engage than international carbon markets (Bray 2013). Annex 1 shows Latin American governments' engagement with the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), Voluntary Carbon Standard (VCS), United Nations REDD+ Programme (UN-REDD) and Forest Investment Program (FIP) as of late 2013.

3.1.2 Roles of the State in Community Forestry and Community Empowerment

There are four key roles played by the state. First, by recognizing community governance and rights of representation and designating fora and resources for this purpose, the state enables communities to engage directly as stakeholders rather than be represented by NGOs. In some countries, such as Mexico, all communities must conform to a standard form of local government; in others, such as Bolivia and Peru, indigenous communities are free to organize themselves according to their traditions and customs. In Bolivia, popular participation and decentralization reform laws reversed a situation where communities were not allowed to have representation. The 1990s reforms in Bolivia enabled every community to be immediately represented by a locally-elected grassroots organization (OTB) to participate in local government budget planning and oversight (Centella 2000, Centella 2007). In Nicaragua, the decentralized governance established for territories titled to IPs might seem ideal. But in practice, more powerful actors continue to dominate – a situation that could be overcome by fostering awareness raising, dialogue and debate (Larson and Lewis-Mendoza 2012).

To varying degrees, Latin American countries have undergone decentralization processes since the 1990s, making Latin America particularly amenable to nested REDD+.[6] However, decentralization is still in evolution. In Peru, for example, many responsibilities were devolved to regional governments, but without funding for carrying out their responsibilities. Peru also has a protected area category under nominal management by indigenous communities in the form of six communal reserves or eco-reserves (Ashaninka, Amarcy, Sira, Maeni, Purus and Amarakaeri), but the lack of institutional and enforcement support from the state has left these eco-reserves open to rampant illegal logging despite large amounts of international financing. The Amarakaeri Communal Reserve (ECO-RCA) was created in 2002 after the Harakumbut, Matsiguenga, and Yine communities protested the logging and mining activities in their forests. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) subsequently awarded $1 million for the ECO-RCA's implementation of activities, including ecotourism, brazil nut collection and other minor income-generating activities. The government, however, later awarded the Hunt Oil Company a concession over the area in 2008, creating conflicts that remain unresolved. In October 2012, the ECO-RCA leadership issued a declaration denouncing the failure of government protection and the corruption of NGOs that received funding to help protect these forests (ECO-RCA 2012).

The strong leadership position that IPs have won in community forestry and REDD+ in Latin America has been built on the respect for IPs' forest and territorial rights in international conventions and law. IPs' forest rights have been supported by the Inter-American Human Rights Court, which has awarded reparations to indigenous communities when IPs' forest rights were not upheld by governments (OAS 2009). The CBD likewise supports the rights of ILCs. IPs' delegations routinely attend the CBD Conference of the Parties and

[6] "Nested REDD+" refers to the approach of nesting local site (project) level REDD+ activities within sub-national and national REDD+ programs, and the links between local, sub-national, and national levels.

meetings of its Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice. The UNFCCC is wrestling with the issue of indigenous rights over carbon and forests.

Second, the state exerts controls over community forestry through licensing and monitoring. Accessing permits to cut trees for timber can take months in some Latin America countries where permits and approvals for forest management and annual operational plans are required. One study found that it took four months to get a permit in Honduras, 1.5 years in Costa Rica, and two years in Bolivia (Larson *et al.* 2008). The high costs, openings for corruption, and excessive time required for processing permits are disincentives that discourage all parties from complying with permitting regulations and laws. The state also affects community forestry through its taxing processes. Taxing systems in Latin America are weak, so there are few lessons about best practices and widespread acknowledgement of the need to discourage corruption and illegal activity.

Box 5. Effective Government

The state plays an essential role in community forestry by empowering community institutions, laws and policies, strategic plans and budgeting of resources. Regulations are most effective if they are responsive, transparent and accountable to the public, and do not require expensive and time-consuming paperwork. Key challenges to effective government performance are generated by illegal activities and macroeconomic policies.

Third, the state is responsible for honest enforcement of good policies to control illegal activities, and fourth, for defining macroeconomic policies that do not threaten forests. International and bilateral agreements can support community empowerment by focusing on these issues. Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT), an EU program designed to ensure that wood products imported into the EU are not illegally harvested, is not yet fully active in Latin America. There are no FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPAs), but Honduras and Guyana are in the process of negotiations (EUFELGT 2012). NGOs are promoting "FLEGTability" pre-negotiation phases in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru (Malessa and Mondragon 2011). The problems caused by illegal logging in Latin America are severe, and REDD+ donors are interested in ways to improve governance to control these situations (Garcia 2011).

The stories of various Goldman Environmental Prize winners who have risked their lives to protect forests, and even become refugees in fear of retribution, illustrate the core governance and human rights aspects of illegal logging. The Mexican situation described by Goldman Environmental Award winner Rodolfo Montiel, for example, worsened (c.f. Duran *et al.* 2010) since his award in 2001, when he described the rampant logging actively protected by the Mexican Army in Guerrero: "Citizens can't protect the forests in Mexico like they can in the U.S. ... If you do, you're accused of being a terrorist or narcotics trafficker. Soldiers and enforcers of the *caciques* (lords) are everywhere in Guerrero. It's very dangerous. I don't live there anymore – if I went back, I'd be killed" (Martin 2002). Rodolfo Montiel was given asylum in the U.S. In 2010, the IAHRC directed the Mexican government to investigate the torture of activists and address other issues arising from this community forestry defender case (EDLC 2012).

An estimated 20-80 percent of Amazonian timber is illegally harvested. In Colombia, an estimated 42 percent of the wood harvest is illegal. Illegal loggers particularly threaten indigenous territories, which include 50 percent of Colombia's forests (Malessa and Mondragon 2011). In response, Colombian regional governments want to create "Regional Legal Timber Pacts" to control illegal logging. A large percentage of timber from Brazil and Ecuador is traded with the US and Europe, so there are opportunities to exert market demand pressures, although Asian buyers have been increasingly importing timber from Latin America (Malessa and Mondragon 2011). The US government may include concerns about importation of illegally harvested timber in its bilateral trade agreements. These may require compliance with efforts to reduce illegal logging, as in the US-Peru Trade Promotion Agreement (EIA 2011, Pautrat 2007), and other free trade agreements (TLCs) as well as US laws prohibiting trade in illegal forest products (such as the Lacey Act). Trade and macroeconomic policies can empower or disempower community forestry directly and indirectly. For example, while policies that support oil and mineral extraction often have strong negative impacts at the local community forestry, they have secondary impacts at a broader level. Increased income to government results in increased

infrastructure construction, colonization and rural development projects that in turn negatively impact forests and community forestry well beyond sites where extraction occurs. Corruption can be nurtured or restricted through macroeconomic policies. Extra-sectoral policies that stimulate agricultural expansion, for example, can have more impact on community forestry than a new forest law or forest sector interventions, particularly where collective tenure is weak. Other illegal activities that challenge the state's role in effective forest governance include illicit trade in arms and drugs.

In some areas, policy dismantling strategies (Bauer *et al.* 2012) have undermined tenure reforms. For example, in Peru, it has been argued that a series of national government administrations have stalled full tenurial rights for titled indigenous communities (Baldovino 2009) by not authorizing disbursement of necessary documents that authorize indigenous use of forests called "*cesion en uso*" (Piu and Menton 2013) for over a decade. Additionally, in 2010, rural land titling power was moved by decree from national to regional governments without allowing regional governments to conduct soil classification studies required for land titling, thereby stymying the pending titling of 600 indigenous communities in 2013 (Dick Smith, IBC, personal communication). Peruvian indigenous community titles cover agricultural and residential areas only, and for indigenous communities to manage forests they also need the "*cesion en uso*" document. Lack of "*cession en uso*" weakens the community's tenurial bundle. Even in cases where tenure is not disputed, community forestry is threatened without strong local institutions and governance support even when titles exist (Larson and Lewis-Mendoza 2012).

Regional integrated infrastructure projects are rapidly changing rural landscapes, stimulating illegal deforestation, and challenging community forestry in South and Central America. Photo by Janis B. Alcorn.

3.1.3 Roles of Civil Society in Empowering Communities

Civil society plays an essential role in creating enabling conditions for community forestry in Latin America, both directly and indirectly, by developing the second key element for community forestry success – a strong community forestry organization that is respected by, and engages on equal terms with, external actors and markets.

International and national NGOs affect community forestry by incorporating new principles that further legitimize and empower community-controlled forestry in the eyes of civil society and the government, and by their broader work on policy analysis and promotion.[7] NGOs also play important roles in the development

[7] For example, Conservation Initiative on Human Rights, which includes the large international conservation organizations Flora and Fauna, Conservation International, World Wildlife Fund, The Nature Conservancy, Wildlife Conservation Society and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature; and World Wildlife Fund Statement of Principles in relation to engaging Indigenous Peoples with conservation (WWF 2008).

of national REDD+ plans and strategies that can strengthen communities and community forestry. For example, the national Amazonian indigenous federation in Peru (AIDESEP) successfully pressed Peru to strengthen recognition of indigenous rights and engagement of indigenous stakeholders in its REDD+ Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) (Espinoza Llanos and Feather 2011). The Peruvian government accepted the formation of an Indigenous REDD+ Roundtable, because there was broad agreement that indigenous perspectives were not being represented in the existing national REDD+ roundtable formed by large conservation NGOs to serve as the space for dialogue between civil society and government. REDD+ regional roundtables have likewise been criticized for representing conservation NGOs. In Cuzco, social NGOs were invited to participate to represent the interests of civil society in development, gender and livelihoods issues.

The most significant civil society role in empowering communities is the role of social movements in demanding governance reforms. The Mexican Revolution was a social movement that reacted to land grabbing by foreign investors and Mexican elites with armed revolt in the early 1900s. The Mexican Revolution delivered the agrarian reform and community tenure that is the basis of Mexican community forestry success (Sarukhan and Merino 2007). No other armed revolution has had this sort of impact on community forestry in Latin America.

Box 6. Effective Community Organizations

Another key element for community forestry is a strong community organization that is respected by, and engages on equal terms with, external actors and markets. The community Assembly formally defines a small organization of community members to do timber management and periodically report back to the Assembly to ensure transparency and accountability to all members.

Instead, peaceful social movements have brought incremental changes throughout Latin America in the past 40 years as dictatorships dissolve. The IPs' movement, with support from international groups and donors, made tremendous strides during the 1990s. Bottom-up community forestry movements are likewise credited with building "ecological democracy" (Mitchell 2006).

In the 1980s and 1990s, NGOs were viewed as the main grassroots allies for poverty reduction and improved livelihoods linked to environment, but in the past 15 years, rural people have become cynical about local, national and international NGOs, especially regarding their actual field presence and impact (Earl and Pratt 2009). As international and national NGOs are pressured to claim they have support from local actors in places where they work, they may exaggerate the extent of their work with indigenous federations and local communities. Also, international and national environmental NGOs tend to avoid working with peasant-indigenous movements and ally themselves with national elites. On the other hand, grassroots-driven environmental NGOs are active in social movements supporting community forestry in Mexico, Guatemala, Brazil and Honduras (Cronkleton *et al.* 2008). In the Amazon Basin of Brazil, international, national and local environmental NGOs actively joined and embraced social movements over the past 30 years. This collaboration yielded positive benefits for community forestry and built broad credibility for the environmental movement (Schwartzman *et al.* 2010). Rural women have not played a large public role in these social movements. Nonetheless, women have benefited from, and been empowered by, the protections to community forestry that these social movements have provided (Shanley *et al.* 2011).

Box 7. Empowerment by doing

While social movements create space for empowerment, real empowerment happens by "doing," taking action in the new space. It comes from the confidence gained by doing something – drafting a policy, participating in regional roundtables, or *ad hoc* roundtables where government and civil society sit together to resolve ¨hot¨ issues. Confidence is also gained by collaborating with other communities with the same problems. Dis-empowerment happens when communities are not included in actions and decision-making that affects them.

Capacity building is an important aspect of empowering or handing over power to local communities, and discussed in more detail below in section 3.4. NGOs and government ombudsman offices have played a key role in nurturing empowered actions by providing guiding principles for implementing policies and laws, monitoring situations where rights are being violated or in conflict, and assisting with legal aid (Pautrat 2007). International donors (e.g., Equator Initiative, Goldman Environmental Prize) have programs that recognize and empower by awarding communities prizes for their own initiatives.

3.2 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

3.2.1 Governance at the Community Level

The most effective institutions for governing local common property resources are self-organized, "discovered" institutions running on their own motors. They can be embedded in supportive polycentric frameworks or isolated in remote areas where external agents have little impact (Ostrom 1990, Ostrom 2010). Hence the right challenge for REDD+ is to refocus on "discovered" community forestry. Fennell (2011) argues that it is important to keep in mind Ostrom's key ideas on common property regimes. They can be summarized in a maxim that Fennell calls Ostrom's Law: "If it works in practice, it can work in theory." Elinor Ostrom cautioned against panaceas and uniform recipes for local institutions (Ostrom 2012). This element of self-organization creates an immense diversity of successful, self-governing local community forestry institutions even within the same ecological zones and forest sizes.

All communities have some form of community governance that affects community forestry outcomes. In the Latin America region, some communities have traditional authoritarian or inherited leadership, and others have elected officials according to government law and regulations. These two systems are often blended (Marfo *et al.* 2010). In many cases, communities have formal or informal rules about resource access and use. Informal rules are generally embedded in cultural norms and expectations.

Communities in Latin America generally govern themselves by means of a formal Assembly that is authorized by national and customary law and comprised of household heads or all community members above a certain age. The Assembly deliberates in relatively democratic ways, reaching decisions by consensus rather than formal vote. While their specific powers and structures vary (see Mitchel 2006 for Oaxaca, Mexico, for example), Assemblies are generally authorized to remove leaders and delegate key activities to committees, responsible for themes such as resolution of internal forests and land conflicts. Assemblies also appoint managers, manage representation to outside bodies, and review accountability for benefit distribution. In indigenous communities, an elders' advisory council is often consulted to guide deliberations and approve decisions. Indigenous communities also participate in multi-community governance bodies – such as those that govern territorial resources in multiple communities in Bolivia, Colombia, and Ecuador. These local aggregations in turn belong to regional and national federations.[8] All authority, however, is derived from authorization by the individual community Assemblies.

In some cases, communities have their own forms of customary justice or are authorized by state authorities to carry out certain law enforcement tasks, including provision of forest guards. They are rarely authorized to take direct action, although Peruvian communities are authorized to use armed force against outsiders (Peru Law 27908). Community forestry enterprises distribute paid employment opportunities through assembly-determined processes and assembly oversight and allocate jobs using

Box 8. Women's Roles in Community Forestry

As forest market value has increased, women have been marginalized from decisions about forest management. Nonetheless, women have played key roles in agroforestry and forest restoration.

[8] For example, FENEMAD is a federation of indigenous territories comprised of multiple communities in Madre de Dios region and in turn belongs to AIDESEP in Peru, and APG represents all Guarani communities in Bolivia and is one of the 27 Indigenous Peoples' federations that belong to national federation of CIDOB; Amazonian OPIAC in Colombia belongs to the National Indigenous Federation in Colombia (ONIC). ONIC, CIDOB, AIDESEP and six other national federations from the nine Amazonian countries belong to the COICA region-wide federation. All derive their legitimacy from the Assemblies of communities that form their base.

equity criteria as well as performance standards. Another key element of local community forestry governance is the cultural tradition of requiring that members of the community perform voluntary labor for community benefit (locally called *fainas, mingas, tequios, cargos*, etc.). This practice creates solidarity and encourages and enforces participation by all households in any community activity. Social values influence the legitimacy. Failure of outsiders to attend to local values and cultural differences can create confusion during engagement with communities (Larson *et al.* 2008, de Jong *et al.* 2010). Women participate in Assemblies and represent their communities in larger associations in some situations. Most commonly women´s concerns are indirectly integrated into community decision-making by male household heads taking up their issues (Mitchell 2006). Amazonian indigenous societies tend to be more egalitarian and contain cultural leadership roles for women. Men and women work together on a daily basis, sharing hunting and gardening tasks. This egalitarian relationship has eroded with increasing engagement with external markets, where men have assumed market relations. Interventions to encourage women´s participation are often ineffective unless built within local traditions.

As Shanley *et al.* (2011) notes:

> "Lessons from [Brazil] indicate that where community organization is lacking, where women have not been involved in decision making processes and where communities are uninformed about forest values and the threat of land use change, forests can be readily degraded through successive sales to loggers, ranchers or large-scale agriculture. Furthermore, gender-specific initiatives which are externally driven by donors and lacking in grass roots support are generally ineffectual. Lessons from grass roots initiatives within and outside of protected areas suggest that the underlying beliefs and actions of the Women's Secretariat of CNS are timely and relevant for the challenges facing Amazonia. After conducting approximately 100 workshops in forest communities inside and outside of Brazilian reserves over the course of the last ten years, educator Gloria Gaia states, 'In every community it is the men that sell the forest. But in some regions, the women restore it, they plant and bring back the medicine and fruit trees.'

Research on reforestation in El Salvador (Kelly 2009) found that women have played a key role through agroforestry, woodlot and garden activities, resulting in an increase in forest cover.

Where commercial exploitation occurs, transparent processes including accountability for management to the community can prevent damage to forests and the community. Mexican community forestry cases are beacons of hope for embattled communities facing forced exploitation of timber or valuable NTFPs, and in cases where illegal logging contracts allow loggers to enter forests with minimal or token payments. Despite enthusiasm to the contrary, both Bray (2012) and de Jong *et al.* (2010) caution against assuming that Mexican experiences with forestry enterprises can be repeated in South America, given the differences in cultural values and the current lawless frontier situations in most Amazonian forests.

Box 9. Community Forestry: Institutional Linkages and Using Proceeds for Community Enterprise Development

Strong institutional connections between the community´s collective timber enterprise, the Council of Elders and the community Assembly were key to success in San Juan Nuevo, Michoacan, Mexico. Over time, the community Assembly used capital generated by harvesting their pine forests to seed new community enterprises that generate more income than the forest, including bottling spring water for sale and offering telecommunications services (Alcorn 2005, Orozco-Quintero and Davidson-Hunt 2010). Individual households own different specific patches within the community´s forests that each household chooses to include or exclude in the annual timber harvest. Households receive payments based on the amount of timber harvested from their plot each year. The community enterprises employ community members, and decisions about employment are based on equity considerations as well as job performance.

3.2.2 Governance and Stakeholders at Supra-community Levels

In the context of global concerns, empowering local community forestry institutions for positive outcomes requires serious attention to the larger governance frameworks in which these local institutions are located by national law and custom (Nagendra and Ostrom 2012). Good policies and cross-scale governance provide essential support for community forestry holders of tenurial rights. Most Latin American countries have ratified ILO 169 and integrated it into national Constitutions (ILO 2009, Van Cott 2000). Community forestry can succeed despite weak sub-regional governance if there is strong national and local governance to balance it. In Mexico, for example, community forestry governance has been achieved in an armed conflict zone by bypassing the mid-level regional government (Bray 2012). This case can be understood in the reality of Mexico, characterized as a nation where "effective rules and incentives passed at regional and national levels are more the exception than the rule," and regional and national government agencies tend to either undermine local solutions or overlook local capacity to develop their own effective governance (Nagendra and Ostrom 2012). This illustrates how community forestry can overcome imperfect situations if communities negotiate and engage from a strong tenurial base.

Box 10. Title for Indigenous Territory

Title awarded to the 77,454 hectare Ayoreo indigenous territory of Santa Teresita by the government of Bolivia in 1999. The title has been framed to protect it from damage or loss. The Ayoreo are an Indigenous People who live in Paraguay, Brasil and Bolivia. They are an Endangered People, with fewer than 3,500 people left in the 3 countries total. Some uncontacted Ayoreo groups live in Kaa Iya National Park, which borders this territory, and in Paraguay. Not all Ayoreo have their titles to their territories.

Photo by Janis B. Alcorn.

In cases where communities have no clear tenure, as in Paraguay and Guatemala, there is no normative framework for common property and agrarian reform has not occurred. In such cases, community forestry is sustained by traditional use of state lands under threat of public pressure to dissolve those rights (Larson 2010). Indigenous communities in Guatemala have responded with creative strategies establishing a relationship with the state, which acknowledges their community forestry. For example, they have created community forestry enterprise offices to participate in government programs despite their lack of legal forest tenure or short-term leases. Proposals for laws recognizing communal property and the rights of Guatemala´s majority indigenous populations have languished, however, and community forestry continues in an uneasy limbo.

Good governance at supra-community levels depends on supportive policies and institutional relationships created by cross-sectoral harmonizing of agricultural development (FAO 2009), mineral and petroleum extraction (Dube and Smithusen 2007), and democratic governance to achieve respect for community's forestry rights and activities. Given that illegal logging is a major problem for community forestry in Latin America, transparency reforms and strengthened systems of justice can make a difference (Garcia 2011, Thorpe and Ogle 2011). Politicians rarely have the political will and backing to stop awarding mineral extraction, agro-industrial or lucrative forest concessions inside community forestry areas. Poor governance issues that undermine community forestry include: corruption and abuse of power by authorities; corruption and illegal behavior by private sector actors with logging or mineral permits; failure of the state to intervene on behalf of communities in conflicts and rights violations by outsiders; inequitable tax structures; and NGOs acting as representatives of communities rather than serving as honest intermediaries (WWF 2000).

In addition, national macroeconomic policies conflict with and threaten community forestry by incentivizing the expansion of agroindustry into community forestry areas, and building roads into community forests that

will bring colonization and deforestation and other forms of social disruption (Hall 2012). Recognizing infrastructure investments as a key pressure point for forests, the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) has funded the creation of a unit in the Peruvian and Guatemalan governments to address cross-sectoral interests in harmonizing development and climate change policies in all government budget allocations and investments. It is too early to see how such an institutional change might influence forest outcomes.

3.2.3 Effective Stakeholder Engagement Processes with Communities – Key Principles

Given the "discovered" and self-generated nature of most community forestry in Latin America, a guiding principle for "stakeholder engagement processes" is to respect local decisions without driving them. Newly promoted "rights-based approaches" (Campese *et al.* 2009, Fisher and Oviedo 2008, Shrumm 2010, Springer 2012) operationalize this principle by differentiating between stakeholders and rights holders, and attempting to level the playing field so that the most powerful stakeholder does not dominate the outcomes. Engagement offers an opportunity to incorporate local concerns and interests up front, building local representation if it is absent or weak, and opening spaces and the timeframes for building a way forward. A White Paper for the MacArthur Foundation summarizes the lessons learned and recommendations from an assessment of IPs' engagement with community forestry programs and projects (Alcorn 2010).

Other basic principles follow the guidance in the many international Human Rights and Civil Rights treaties and UNDRIP. Given that IPs' rights have only recently received strong legal support, engagement processes are still being revised to incorporate the recognition of these laws and rights. FPIC is one tool for engagement with communities (see FPIC section below). REDD+ stakeholder engagement processes have the opportunity to create new spaces for dialogue, reduce violent conflicts and exert pressure on government to listen and respond to feedback from civil society.

In their World Bank study, *Community-Based and -Driven Development: A Critical Review,* Mansuri and Rao (2004) reviewed the history of community-based development from Mahatma Gandhi´s initial proposals to the present including the participatory development literature. They then analyzed current guidance and project evaluation case documents in relation to key aspects including elite capture versus elite benevolence, and donor fads versus donor fade out. They concluded that long time horizons are essential and that rapid scaling-up, undermines success. They found that efforts to apply the lessons learned in the 1980s to improve rural development processes in the 1990s had mixed results due to continued top-down tendencies, the lack of systematic evaluation of adjustments, and the complexities of local situations (Mansuri and Rao 2004).

Box 11. Community Forestry Failures

Inattention to different cultural values is often the underlying cause of community forestry failures. Nurturing pluralistic community forestry civic science to incorporate local knowledge into environmental decision-making and research (Reed and McIlveen 2006) also empowers greater women´s participation.

WWF has systematically gathered lessons learned from community-based conservation (Brown and Wyckoff Baird 1992, Larson *et al.* 1997) and from collaboration with IPs (Weber *et al.* 2000). These lessons were summarized in a useful volume for improving "stakeholder collaboration" (WWF 2000). With USAID support, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) produced *Beyond Fences*, which contains lessons, resources and guides to deal with specific problems that arise in community forestry and conservation projects (Borrini-Feyerabend 1997). This guidance remains valid for REDD+. However, as Mansuri and Rao (2004) note, **it has proven difficult to integrate lessons into projects. As a result, the same lessons continue to be learned and the same failures are repeated.**

The larger challenge is to enable civil society engagement in community forestry processes, using good technical advice without relying on technocratic "solutions" that block participatory decision-making or the broader democratic political processes. Attempts to improve governance and reduce corruption by turning decisions over to technical people has had limited success. The control of decisions around valuable natural

resources is innately political; ignoring this fact has led to violent conflict in some rural areas in Latin America.

Engagement processes that can contribute to better REDD+ include:

- **Engage in mutual learning to incorporate local knowledge in action, rather than consultation workshops that effectively restrict participation** (Mansuri and Rao 2004). Cornejo (2010), cited in de Jong (2011), analyzed many community forestry initiatives from Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Colombia and found they were generally designed with early community involvement. They used appropriate workshop processes, and the project activities fit local economic strategies to introduce new organizations and management practices for conservation. Yet despite these careful investments in technical assistance and training, and the concern for "exit strategies" that supported sustainability of the new practices, few of the innovations continued after projects ended. Hence the engagement approaches recommended must bridge the cultural gap and engage in mutual learning. The participatory research process piloted by Global Diversity Foundation in Mexico, the Biocultural Community Protocols process (Bavikatte and Jonas 2009), is a useful example.

- **Avoid creating parallel processes**. Instead, rely on understanding and nurturing the emergent processes already in place ("discovered"). A project intervention is often simply seen as "a project," known only to those involved in it, while community resource management practices continue outside of the project context, often across much wider areas (Glaser *et al.* 2012).

- **Convene different stakeholders and facilitate regular and emergency dialogues around issues.** Colombia's regional *mesas de concertación* (consensus-building roundtables) – are examples of formalized, regular and *ad hoc* environments that create space for dialogue on community forestry invasions by outsiders, violence, and other issues of critical importance for communities. This practice is also used *ad hoc* in Peru where roundtables are convened to reduce conflict, because there is no other politically acceptable means to resolve conflicts given that the ombudsman agency tasked with the role of investigating and resolving conflicts is overwhelmed with natural resource-related cases and hobbled by bureaucracy.

- **Use FPIC**, a process that was created in the 1960s as colonial powers transitioned out of newly independent countries in Africa. It subsequently was expressed in international law in the International Labour Organization Convention No. 169 (ILO 169) as a fundamental right of Indigenous Peoples. The right to FPIC was also endorsed in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). The FPIC approach is being promoted to ensure self-determination for IPs. FPIC also gives non-indigenous communities a negotiating opening to gain more control over development and extractive projects in the lands where they live and use resources (OXFAM 2012). FPIC laws at national levels reflect their own historical and social contexts (Mahanty and McDermott 2013). For example, during Peruvian Congressional debates in August 2011 over the proposed Peruvian national FPIC law, civil society wanted consultations to be "binding" because they mistrusted government promises to deliver benefits to communities. The FPIC-relevant articles of the 1993 Colombian Law 70 were recently clarified by Presidential Decree 17 of November 17, 2013, which specifies the process to be used for FPIC in Colombia under particular conditions.[9]

- **Carry out surveys to characterize and count populations living in and using state forest reserves and fiscal lands to acknowledge the presence of vulnerable populations**, including those engaged in self-generated community forestry, rather than classing all people in the forest as invisible, illegal or predatory. With actual data, governments can reform laws and regulations to incorporate forest reserve

9 The U.S. Government generally interprets FPIC as Free, Prior and Informed Consultation (of all stakeholders) rather than Consent (of one group); however consent of IPs or other vulnerable stakeholders may be warranted depending on national policies and project contexts.

residents. This data is especially needed in countries where governments maintain the fiction of uninhabited state forest reserves. In Peru, for example, government agencies ignore community forestry practices by *ribereño* and migrants, because it can be more lucrative for government officials to grant forest concessions to firms and ignore the presence of tens of thousands of long-term forest residents. However, the San Martin regional government in Peru is surveying populations in forest reserves and considering options for recognizing the tenurial rights of longtime forest communities, as well as looking at options for converting recent migrant communities into forest concession operators.

- **Enable women´s participation** by means other than the ineffective, albeit common, practice of adding a few women to consultation workshops. Women may not be able to express their concerns in community Assemblies. In those cases, engagement with local grassroots organizations, such as school-parent associations and self-help groups where women play key roles, or with national women's organizations, offer an alternative venue to ensure that issues and opportunities for women's involvement are identified. Alternative groupings for gaining women's perspectives can be ascertained by consulting with women themselves (Arora-Jonsson 2012).

Box 12. Reforms depend on political processes

Efforts to reform tenure policy and forest management via technical bureaucracies can create new political power blocks and block innovations and progress in community forestry (Giri and Ojha 2011). In Bolivia, USAID BOLFOR projects unsuccessfully attempted to achieve forest management reform by creating a new technical forestry bureaucracy (*Superintendencia Forestal*) (Pellegrini 2009).

- **Engage federations and existing local multi-community organizations as representatives** of local perspectives, for both *campesino* and indigenous organizations. Do not assume that NGOs can represent community interests. In Peru, for example, AIDESEP and sub-regional indigenous federations are representing themselves in REDD+ negotiations, separately from NGOs. In this context, follow the Hundested Principles10 for donor best practice regarding Indigenous Peoples. Moreover, the Hundested Principles should be used for both indigenous and non-indigenous communities, because (a) IPs and non-IPs coexist, and their co-existence relationships are an important part of the real community forestry context, and (b) because both IP and non-IP communities are often vulnerable in forest situations. The nine Hundested Principles are:
    - Have a written IP policy. Enforce safeguards – do no harm.
    - Have direct contact and relationships with IP and their organizations.
    - Base relationships on respect, mutual learning, and reciprocal accountability.
    - Empower and effectively engage indigenous social and political structures.
    - Stay the course – long-term relationships are key to success.
    - Be transparent.
    - Support IPs in efforts to address core social issues that affect all citizens.
    - Raise the priority of indigenous rights and environmental concerns among other competing priorities during all multilateral and bilateral negotiations.
    - Value donor coordination and work together on these issues.

[10] In 2001, USAID sponsored a workshop on indigenous peoples and biodiversity conservation in Hundested, Denmark. It involved participation of all the major donors in the world including representatives of all the multilateral development banks, bilateral donor agencies concerned with human rights, and key private foundations with selected IPs´ federations and support organizations. The workshop agreed on key principles for donor best practice on these issues. For more information, see Alcorn (2001); http://www.cbd.int/doc/reports/fin-hundested-recomm-en.pdf.

Community-based mapping is essential for forest management planning. Community members use GPS units when collecting plant specimens for the University of San Francisco de Xavier and mapping the borders of their territory. These actions are preparations for management plans in the buffer zone of the Cordillera de los Milagros Reserve in Huacareta, Bolivia. Photo by Jorge Severiche, Yangareko.

- **Support the development and implementation of community-driven development plans** (known in Latin America as "*planes de vida*" and "*planes de gestión territorial*"). These planning processes strengthen organizations by producing a local development plan that is a touchstone for community forestry management and to which REDD+ can contribute. Such management is derived from a group assessing and reaching consensus on their own needs and hopes and on their options for natural resource use, including forests as the basis for their own sustainable development. These plans are more common in IPs' territories, but can be done with other communities to assist them with natural resource-based planning (Alcorn 2010). For example, the rubber tappers organizations in Brazil are now creating and implementing their own development plans (Shanley 2012). "Asset mapping"[11] can contribute to the development of plans for local, sub-regional and/or national government for REDD+ (Alcorn *et al.* 2006, Behrman *et al.* 2012).

- **Assist communities with land and resources mapping**. Mapping continues to be a useful tool that has been applied since the early 1990s. Existing guides include those by Chapin *et al.* (2005) and Alcorn (2000). Ideally mapping contributes to local development plans, as described above, and can be useful for REDD+ planning as well (Cronkleton *et al.* 2010).

- **Facilitate formal processes for developing supra-community organizations that can in turn assist communities** to develop and formalize their local statutes and regulations about forest use and management and/or provide technical assistance for community forestry (Alcorn *et al.* 2010).

- **Develop future scenarios and use them for developing community forestry and REDD+ plans** and for dealing with new opportunities and threats as a way for communities to reach consensus on strategies and troubleshoot immediate problems (Evans *et al.* 2008, Evans *et al.* 2010).

- **Be cautious about forming new groups**. While projects often demand the formation of a local group to interface and expedite projects, this can undermine long-term success (c.f., Larson *et al.* 2008). Any new group should be created cautiously, particularly when it involves linking upward to markets and seeking permits. Communities have benefited when existing community organizations are expanded to provide technical assistance on forestry. UZACHI (a technical assistance association serving multiple communities in Oaxaca, Mexico) has enabled communities to gain political strength by expanding communities' forestry experience so they bring concrete implementation issues into policy debates.

[11] Asset mapping is the hallmark tool of Assets-Based Community Development. Rather than focus on weaknesses, asset mapping focuses on strengthts in the community (del Campo and Wali 2007).

- **Educate and assist the private sector to be more respectful and responsive to community forestry**. The private sector is seeking ways to engage socially and economically at local levels. Communities are suspicious, because in the past deals were made to sell timber rights for a pittance or a short-term gain, such as a motorboat, with no concern for long-term impacts and fair benefit-sharing. In other cases, deals are made for renting land for commercial crops for a few years, and then the land is left barren and useless. An example is the case of the "*papayeros*" who make deals to deforest and plant short-lived papayas on indigenous territories around Pucallpa, Peru, for commercial production, and then abandon the area when land is exhausted. Bluntly put, the most important lesson is that the private sector must be controlled and oriented to take responsibility to reform itself.

- **Build broader civil society awareness of community forestry issues to create political will** in equitable and feasible ways. For example, the urban population of Lima, Peru, was awakened to the Amazonian half of the country during the Baguio violence around forest destruction in 2010 (R. Smith personal communication 2012). This growing civil society awareness has contributed to substantial advances with FPIC and other reforms, and is the basis of the *Territorios Seguros Para Las Comunidades Del Peru* (Secure Territories for Peruvian Communities) campaign launched in 2012.

- **Continue engagement and training with external specialists**. Forest Trends, CARE International and UN-REDD associates offer training packages based on lessons learned from community forestry. They can be contracted to provide external training while offering sounding boards for assessing how community forestry lessons are being applied as a project progresses. In some countries, local NGOs also have this capacity and can offer opportunities for long-term networking with community forestry communities within a given sub-region or country.

- **Success depends more on social and organizational aspects of community forestry than upon equipment or training**. As one evaluation notes, problems tend to arise when insufficient attention is paid to the social and cultural values that motivate community empowerment. One of the most common sources of community forestry project failure has been the the technology trap, i.e., the belief that "social, environmental and economic sustainability would arise from the simple fact of equipping the community forestry enterprise with machinery and equipment" (Martinez 2008, quoted in Larson 2008).

- **Beware of market monopolies that undermine prices and reduce the value of maintaining community forests.** This lesson is illustrated by the brazil nut monopoly. Ninety percent of brazil nuts are harvested in Pando, Bolivia, where communities have tenure but the market is controlled by a monopoly of a few families. A strong cooperative, COINACAPA, was formed to market the nuts in Europe to gain better prices, and the *campesino* federation won a change in Bolivian law allowing Brazil nut-gathering communities to receive collective community titles with 500 hectares per family (as opposed to the 50 hectares per family stipulated in the Agrarian Reform Law). Prior to this law, these individual families were semi-slaves on large estates run by these same few families that continue to hold the market monopoly on brazil nuts. Despite the tenure changes, the monopoly has kept prices low and *campesinos* are increasingly turning to logging and cattle raising as more valuable options. Rubber was once a viable product that contributed value to these forests, but there is no market, nor any subsidy for rubber tapping in Bolivia. This situation contrasts with that just across the river, where Brazil has extractive reserves for rubber tappers.

  This case is relevant for REDD+ in two ways. First, carbon price monopolies can arise in several ways, including tradable carbon certificates that do not allow communities to gain additional income when the market rises. Regulation of carbon markets will be necessary to reduce social risks and enhance benefits to communities (Smith and Scherr 2003). Second, carbon payments to incentivize communities to maintain forests will complement other existing forest values, some of which are market-based and

others subsistence-oriented. If the values of the other products are held artificially low by monopolies – as in the case of brazil nuts – or drop because new monopolies arise, the total value of the forest will drop and the additional benefit from REDD+ payments may no longer be sufficient to match opportunity costs of not deforesting for other land uses.

3.2.4 Implications for REDD+ Governance and Engagement

Key governance lessons for REDD+ can be summarized in one recommendation: **allow "discovered" community forestry practice to lead the way**, with a trend toward nested REDD+ fitting the diversity in each country, as the most viable way forward.

Regarding engagement at the international level, the GEF Principles and Guidelines for Engagement with Indigenous Peoples (GEF 2012) are of particular interest for community forestry and REDD+ in Latin America, given the large forests under indigenous control. However, indigenous organizations have observed that "the document does not meet current international standards on IPs and should form only a first step towards stronger and more effective protections to be developed in the future" (FPP 2012). It is unknown what impacts these new guidelines will have or how they might reform specific policies. The new Green Climate Fund[12] similarly opens new questions about governance and engagement in REDD+ decision-making (FPP 2012). Disconnected, loosely coordinated global climate governance efforts are fragmenting institutional responses with advantages and disadvantages that deserve further investigation (e.g., Peru case study, Zalli and van Asselt 2012). Crippa and Gordon (2012) have laid out the international law principles that should guide REDD+ with regard to IPs.

3.3 BENEFITS AND INCENTIVES THAT LEAD COMMUNITIES TO INVEST IN COMMUNITY FORESTRY

Contractual relationships, benefits, and benefit distribution systems are key to REDD+ efforts to incentivize community forestry. Specific benefits may or may not provide sufficient incentive to maintain forests, depending on opportunity costs or threats and conflicts, or whether desired benefits actually accrue to the local decision-makers who manage forests on the ground.

Economists' perspectives tend to frame costs and benefits without accounting for what they define as externalities – although communities may not define them as such – and otherwise not disaggregating the interests of, and threats to, local populations involved in community forestry. As one insightful analysis observes, payments such as PES are envisioned as a tool "that can be tailored for situations where ecosystems are mismanaged because benefits [which outsiders do not see as externalities] are externalities from the perspective of land managers" (Martin-Ortega *et al.* 2012).

Box 13. Community Valuation of Forests

Communities in relatively high population densities in Mexico continue to keep forests in their ecosystem for their multiple economic and noneconomic values, including existence value, insurance value, water protection value and local climate amelioration value (Alcorn 1989).

In "discovered" community forestry, forests are being maintained without external incentive payments but may be incentivized by benefits from forest products, including income from the sale of timber to logging companies for a good price, or income and security benefits from timber sold for a song to gain protection from threatening mafias.

In "designed" community forestry, projects often assume that particular benefits will similarly provide incentives once a community is trained or once given the means to implement activities or access to markets for tourism and forest-related products. Yet after the project ends, the

[12] The Copenhagen Accord (UNFCCC COP 15 in 2009) mentioned the Green Climate Fund. The Fund was established at the 2010 COP in Cancun, and had its governing instrument adopted in the COP in Durban in 2011. The Fund is still in search of long-term funding, which will be administered as a Trust Fund through the World Bank.

"designed" community forestry behavior also often ends, indicating that the benefits alone were not the incentive, or that the incentives were insufficiently grounded in local realities, constraints and opportunities (Cornejo 2010, de Jong *et al.* 2010).

Why and when do communities opt to continue forest management, agroforestry and reforestation practices after projects end, or implement activities without any project interventions? Ultimately a big part of the answer depends on household economics, yet few studies have looked in detail at the household economies of families in communities that include community forestry. In light of increasing seasonal migration for labor opportunities (Alvarez Echandi 2012, Campbell *et al.* 2005, Klooster 2013, PRISMA 2012), the household and collective community back-up insurance security benefits from forests are more highly valued than the higher immediate financial benefits from forest product sales (c.f., Scott 1977). These values influence community decisions when weighing maintaining forests against other land use options. Community and household security benefits are linked to maintaining collective land rights, reproducing the community, maintaining cultural survival, and survival insurance when household or community members cannot work. However, high value export crops can trump forest-linked household or community security values, especially when the export crops are linked to pressures by market intermediaries, such as mafias trading in avocados, timber, or coca. These stresses can be buffered where forests are valued, there is good community governance, and multi-community collaboration strengthens communities' stands against deforestation (Achtenberg 2012, Barsimantov and Navia Antezana 2012, Davalos *et al.* 2010).

Key questions regarding benefits include: What sorts of payments, promises of increased income or other benefits have been added to existing community forestry to reward and invest in forestry goods and services? Why do these payments or incentives work or fail? Is it possible to create long-term payments that will continue to serve as adequate incentives for maintaining forests in the future by both successfully anticipating downstream economic values and reducing the negative sociopolitical consequences of REDD+ such as exclusion of people from forests or criminalization of traditional rotational swidden-fallow systems that presently produce a series of valuable crops for both direct use and sale (Ghazoul *et al.* 2010)?

The **most common incentive is direct harvest of goods and services**, including food, medicine, and crops from forestry and agroforestry systems for household or collective use. Another common factor, that may or may not be an incentive for maintaining forests, depending on market access, licensing issues and opportunity costs, is the sale of high and medium value forest products from natural or enriched forests such as timber, chocolate, brazil nuts, *chicle*, and *xate*. Another factor that influences whether employment in a community forest or resource-linked enterprise is valued lies in the relative importance given to employment income and status over benefits accrued to the community as a whole. Valuation may also depend on the leadership and level of organization, and the ability to control illegal activities that threaten the forest, such as through the use of local bylaws[13] to control forest use. These costs and benefits are measured in local decisions.

Incentives have long been applied to encourage community forestry in Latin America. **REDD+ has been characterized as "the world's largest experiment in PES**" (Corbera 2012). PES programs have been tried incentive payments in two general approaches: i) payments for conservation; and ii) payments for environmental services. In addition to building on these two PES approaches, REDD+ can also learn from experiences in other incentive-based programs : iii) forest certification as a market-based incentive for community forestry; and iv) indirect benefit incentives mediated by NGOs. Lessons from these four incentive systems are discussed below.

The first, **payments for conservation** schemes, have had few successes. Despite earlier enthusiasm for the direct payments for conservation tool (Conrad and Ferraro 2002, Ferraro and Kiss 2002, Hansen *et al.* 2004), there are limited successful experiences in Latin America with conservation agreements that condition

[13] "Local by-laws" are laws and regulations established by community Assemblies to apply within their jurisdiction under national or customary law. They usually apply only to community members. Communities complain that their by-laws should apply to outsiders who come onto their lands or forests; in some countries these local rules do apply to anyone who enters an area under customary law, as backed by national law, e.g., in Bolivia and Peru.

assistance or payment on certain activities or condition of the forest. USAID Peru is supporting "blue agreements" (*acuerdos azules*) around Cordillera Azul National Park (Pequeño 2007). Communities signing the blue agreements agree not to produce coca and to maintain forests in return for: training workshops; assistance with proposal writing and accompaniment with bureaucratic processes to access existing government programs for education and health; and eligibility for a member of the community to gain employment as a park guard. In its early stages, the blue agreements were poorly known to community members and criticized for lack of clear commitments between parties (Rodriguez-Izquierdo 2009). This Cordillera Azul program is adjusting itself and will offer valuable lessons (Alcorn interview notes 2011).

In 2000, to gain communities´ agreement to expansion of Mexico's Monarch Reserve, a novel payment approach was used by WWF (WWF Mexico Program 2004). Twenty-eight communities effectively traded logging permits in exchange for annual payments from a $6.5 million trust fund. The agreement for funds transfer was described as "an acknowledgement of willingness to conserve the forest," rather than as payments for conservation. Much time and effort was dedicated to explaining the concept to communities and overcoming their distrust. Initially, communities were to have payments cut progressively if deforestation continued. However, communities noted that illegal logging was the key problem that they could not solve alone. They formed protection brigades that proved insufficient to stop illegal loggers. Payments were increased, but conflicts continued. In 2012, communities' requests for outside assistance were heeded, and the army removed illegal loggers from the forest (NYT 2012). The recommendations from the first five years of the Mexican Monarch Reserve experience (Missrie and Nelson 2005) echo the valid lessons for stakeholder engagement that WWF learned over decades (WWF 2000) and are of particular interest for NGOs and others who maintain a permanent presence in an area where payment for conservation agreements are signed. The desired characteristics include:

- Clear conservation goals and objectives
- Clear social goals and objectives
- High investment in design of institutional arrangements and monitoring
- Institutions that enable stakeholder participation, collaboration and conflict resolution
- Separate organizations for fund management and disbursement, and for monitoring
- Conservation outcomes and compliance
- Commitment to a long-term financial, monitoring and social involvement contract
- Strong field presence and communication with communities
- Clear, understandable and fair rules
- Low opportunity costs for beneficiaries to create attractive incentives
- Adequate political timing as political transitions may complicate implementation

In the past four years, three national governments, Mexico, Ecuador and Peru, have experimented with national payments for conservation. All three of these programs are in the process of transitioning to REDD+. In Mexico, the communities in La Chinantla region of Oaxaca state signed agreements designating their forests as "community conserved areas" in return for payments for conservation, in addition to the PES payments they were already receiving for hydrological watershed services via short-term agreements for some of the same forests. In Ecuador, the *SocioBosque* program includes payments to communities for maintaining forests, using a formula whereby smaller communities receive higher payments per hectare in an attempt to provide more equitable benefits to those with fewer resources (Costenbader, 2010). In Peru, under the ten-year program "*Programa Bosques*", which aimed to conserve forests and mitigate

Box 14. High Transaction Costs

A meta-analysis of 301 studies of forty PES schemes for watersheds in Latin America (Martin-Ortega *et al.* 2012) found a generally weak relationship between stakeholder input and the programs, and that the mean value of payments for sellers is 60 percent higher than the payment for buyers – i.e., PES is generally subsidized, supporting the contention that PES payments are not the outcomes of free market. This points to a potential REDD+ issue: the high transaction cost of promoting and administering payment schemes.

climate change, indigenous communities in the Central Selva region were receiving payments of $3 per hectare in 2011.

A second type of payment for performance experience of interest to REDD+ is PES. The most-cited definition of PES (Wunder 2005) is: "(a) a voluntary transaction where (b) a well-defined environmental service (or a land use likely to secure that service) (c) is being 'bought' by a (minimum one) service buyer (d) from a (minimum one) service provider (e) if and only if the service provider secures service provision (conditionality)...", with 'a' to 'e' being recognized as the five principles undergirding PES (Martin-Ortega *et al.* 2012). Costa Rica, Mexico and Ecuador have the most experience with PES in Latin America.

The 40 PES schemes reviewed by Martin-Ortega *et al.* (2008) tended to be developed by NGOs promoting PES in collaboration with local governments and did not fully meet the five principles. Often PES was added on top of existing NGO activities in the area. Only eight of the forty PES systems reviewed set the payment on the basis of "willingness to pay," there was no attention to opportunity costs, and technical studies prior to implementation were rare. Wunder (2005) argues that in contexts where high opportunity costs are associated with undesired resource management practices, PES payments will usually not be the answer. Instead, PES is most useful in the places with small opportunity costs, such as degraded pastures, marginal croplands, or forests in slow-moving agricultural frontiers. Ravnborg *et al.* (2007) found that less than 5 percent of the projects in the PES literature they reviewed included gender-specific aspects.

An assessment of the likely success of PES-like REDD+ payments in the Brazilian Amazon by Borner *et al.* (2010) concluded that while economic analysis suggests that such programs are feasible on economic grounds for half of Brazil's threatened forests, **PES-like REDD+ programs are "... not likely to be successful under current conditions of land grabbing, insecure land tenure, and lack of adequately good governance. PES cannot substitute for enforcement."**[14] Borner *et al.* (2011) note that PES, like payments for conservation, depend on strong tenurial rights and enforcement to secure rights of effective exclusion, which communities need to be reliable carbon sequestration service providers. On the more positive side, PES can further legitimize land and resource rights of those receiving payments and strengthen their ability to exclude outsiders if the opportunity costs of taking action are not too high. Costenbader (2010) cautioned that PES has not been able to provide social equity benefits.

A review of PES mechanisms in Mexico, Costa Rica and Ecuador by government agencies and the World Bank (FONAFIFO *et al.* 2012) highlights the potential of endowment funds to provide long-term financial sustainability to REDD+ PES-like payments. However, the review also questions whether, based on the high administrative and transaction costs and uneven performance of PES, such a program of payments is likely to have significant, positive impacts on forests and communities without incorporating expensive additional changes to meet safeguards and reach the diversity of communities managing forests in a given country. The review highlights the issues that can arise from building on existing programs and offers recommendations regarding: participation agreements; equity objectives; trade-offs and synergies between multiple benefits; measurement, reporting and verification; and sustainable financing for REDD+.

A third approach attempting to incentivize community forestry relies on the **certification of forest products** traded into international markets (e.g., **Forest Stewardship Council certification)**. Madrid and Chapela (2003) found the indirect benefits of community forestry certification include prestige and smoother community relations with external agencies. However, there is little domestic market for certified wood, and it is hard for communities to sell into the global market that is dominated by companies seeking high volumes, high quality and low prices (Klooster 2010). On the buyer side, Owari *et al.* (2006) found that companies like certification because it demonstrates their social responsibility, which helps keep their market share. Blackman and Rivera (2010) reviewed the evidence base for environmental and socioeconomic impacts of

[14] The term "land grabbing" describes forced removal of residents *(desalojamiento*) by legal means (e.g., titling of untitled lands to those with access to lawyers versus titling to those with customary rights who do not have lawyers). This often leads to armed confrontations between title-holders and customary dwellers without title.

certification, including 37 studies from different parts of Latin America, and found little evidence that certification induces change in producer behavior or the forest. A study by van Kuijk *et al.* (2009) found only minor evidence that biodiversity is improved in certified forests after their certification.

Certification is primarily sought by those who are already following environmentally sustainable practices in order to get a better price without investing in making any changes (de Lima *et al.* 2008, Klooster 2008). Producers often find, however, that the cost of maintaining certification (including the cost of external evaluations and changes in management that are required) is not offset by the slight value increase they get from certification. Estimates of these costs average about $7,200 per year for a community (independent of size) over a five-year cycle of evaluations and audits (Klooster 2006). If one adds the costs to address the most frequently cited problems needing correction, the total cost can average $12,000 per year per community (Alatorre-Guzmán 2005, Gerez Fernández, Madrid and Chapela 2003). Wood prices are not high enough to cover this cost, so community forestry certification depends on subsidies from government, donors and NGOs. This is probably not sustainable for the long-term.

A fourth approach, NGO-mediated indirect non-cash benefits, is presently being contemplated as the key means for rewarding communities that accept REDD+. Tens of thousands of NGOs – international NGOs, their national partners, and independent national and local NGOs – work on community forestry in Latin America, often overlapping over time at the same sites. Supported by external funding, NGOs share indirect benefits with communities, including training workshops, advocating and achieving community forestry policy changes, community forestry-related activities (such as providing seeds and nurseries for reforestation) and assistance with other development concerns, such as security, health and education.

Communities may opt for NGO-mediated projects, despite their inappropriate design or lack of actual implementation, because of "*proyectismo*" – the situation where unempowered communities highly value the benefits of having an outside patron linked to the community via a project. This patron is then available to help with other issues such as illegal incursions or disasters, or help the community leverage moribund government programs into providing services, such as law enforcement or health care. In these situations, communities do not question what NGOs do. It has been observed that some NGOs may recieve funding for REDD+ preparations and projects and carbon sales without telling the communities that the funds are for REDD+, but rather adding it to their regular program and budget, incorporating monitoring activities and policy advocacy. NGOs defend this by noting that tenurial rights are unclear or that people are illegally inside reserves and have no rights. Hence, there are no payments to community members in such REDD+ projects. Community forestry maintenance compliance relies on communities appreciating the non-cash benefits brought by NGOs, or on donors' assumptions that NGOs are necessary middlemen for reaching community levels over large areas, and thereby reducing donors' transaction costs. In these cases, the right to FPIC, or Free, Prior and Informed Consultation as defined in national laws in some countries such as Peru, is not being respected, because communities are unaware of the carbon financing and REDD+ sources of NGOs' programs.

Box 15. Direct Cash Payments to Communities

Three types of REDD+ benefit sharing measures have been identified: compensation, incentives, and interventions that will lead to policy changes. Yet studies of efficiency find that direct cash payment to communities is most effective (Hockley and Andriamorovololono 2007). More studies are needed for gaining lessons from communities that have developed their own successful processes for distributing job opportunities and income from community forestry enterprises and other direct payments.

There are few descriptions or analyses of actual community forestry or REDD+ benefit or payment distribution systems at local levels across the Latin American region, despite the arguments that equitable benefit sharing mechanisms are fundamental for REDD+ success (Gebara 2012).

Much has been written *ex-ante* in terms of recommendations, and NGOs tend to assert that noncash benefits are better than cash benefits, citing fears that communities will squander or distribute the funds in an inequitable fashion. In Latin America, distribution of community forestry income at the local level depends largely on decisions made by community Assemblies. Assemblies decide to use the community income for

public expenditures, such as education, buildings, vehicles or equipment for the community and/or distribution of income to households according to a formula that they determine.

Little is known about the actual payments received by communities under conditions where the payments are mediated by governments, community federations, or NGOs. Nor is much known about how even small payments may have great value in some situations, because they provide cash in subsistence economies where little cash is generated and cash is needed, e.g. for school supplies and fees. However, payments may be too small or in a form that has little value as an incentive. For example, when women receiving payments for protecting forest in the Brazilian Juma project were interviewed, they were unhappy with payment in the form of a debit card that they can use only in town, and because traveling to town is expensive. They are also unhappy because the debit card value pays for only part of the food they have to purchase because of project restrictions on farming (Gebara 2012, PBS 2011). Additionally, questions have been raised about the Brazilian Juma project, in which a private entity owns the carbon rights and sells them to Marriot International, while communities who live in and maintain the forest receive only minor payment for their "services" (Corbera *et al.* 2007, Gebara 2012).

3.4 CAPACITY BUILDING

3.4.1 Capacity Building at Different Levels

Direct capacity building that has proven effective at the community level includes training in specific skills: monitoring forest regeneration (Peters 1994); forest management plans in accordance with local values and concerns within communities´ own development plans; bookkeeping and business management; and community-based mapping. Capacity building is more effective if followed by actions that apply new skills in a longer-term effort. The application of these skills can impact good governance, planning and adaptive management. Mutual capacity building is best achieved by focusing on processes that build two-way communication (Alcorn *et al.* 2006). Asset mapping, for example, enables communities to communicate their own strengths to outsiders who tend to focus on communities' weaknesses. Asset mapping also builds outsiders' capacity to influence change because this method reveals key levers outside the community where outsiders can target their attention. A major new concern for community forestry capacity building in relation to REDD+ lies in the immediate perceived threat presented by carbon cowboys[15] that can take away a community's farming and forest rights (BioCarbon Fund 2012, Lang 2012). Communities need capacity building in negotiation skills and better information, i.e., to assess contract offers from the private sector, including a better understanding of carbon pricing and contract obligations, and recourse mechanisms.

Box 16. Supporting Forest Agencies' Reorientation

There is an increasing need for capacity building to re-orient the missions of forest departments and train staff to fulfill this new role, find ways not to exclude women, and provide synergies for community forestry management rather than restrictions. Since 1997, Mexico's PROCYMAF program, initially funded by World Bank, has enabled government forest agencies to transition from their earlier role as enforcers to a role of providing technical forestry assistance to communities in order to enhance the productivity and sustainability of community forestry.

[15] "Carbon cowboys" is a term used to refer to unscrupulous people or companies who go to rural communities and ask them to sign contracts for carbon rights in situations where the communities do not understand the contracts or carbon rights, may not have legally-defined representatives who can legally sign contracts under national law, and/or are offered questionable terms in the contract. The Colombian Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development presented its concerns about carbon cowboys in its presentation to the UN-REDD's seventh Policy Board meeting (PB7), in 2011. A key Colombian scandal occurred under the aegis of a company called C.I. Progress that "specializes in the generation of carbon offsets for the voluntary market generating social benefits, environmental and financial sustainability for all parties involved, especially for indigenous communities in the Amazon region of South America" (http://www.ciprogress.com/eng/about.php). Registration and screening of private contracts has been discussed as an option to control fraudulent contracts.

Forest departments have been moving from focusing on enforcement and authorization of concessions to being technical service providers nurturing community forestry (Arnold 2001). There is also a need for reorientation of misinformed government agencies and implementers who maintain old ideas.[16]

3.4.2 Successful Approaches to Capacity Building

Adults learn best by "experiential learning," particularly in rural settings in developing countries (Ernst van Aken and Romme 2013,Freire 2000, Mazurkewicz *et al.* 2012, Ndoye 2003, Smith *et al.* 2012,). This approach is not well researched in the area of community forestry but routinely reported in discussions of field experience. Activist NGOs in Southeast Asia and Brazil have long used Freire's experiential learning approach to teach critical thinking essential for forest governance.

Box 17. Learning by Doing

A good example of building women´s capacity for community forestry "by doing" can be found in the history of the National Council of Extractivist Populations (NCEP) founded in 1985. NCEP built women's leadership capacity by encouraging women to apply for citizenship registration and exercise their rights of citizenship. This is a good entry point because in South American forests, many people are not registered as citizens and have no identity cards. The lack of identification documents is a problem for men and women because it leaves them unable to exercise their civil rights. The "doing" activity of establishing citizenship and accessing services trained women to engage with external agencies and built their capacity to become engaged in community forestry issues (Shanley 2011).

While there are many approaches available for community forestry training, arguably **the best learning is done by structured cross-site exchanges with self-analysis among communities.** This process was followed in Oaxaca, Mexico as forestry began to gain ground there, and often effectively nurtured by the Ford Foundation over decades of supporting community forestry (Alcorn 2005, Bray and Merino 2002). Two-way learning is particularly important if project implementers and communities are to understand each other's concerns and information. An evaluation of *Socio-Bosque* – a community forestry program that is evolving into REDD+ in Ecuador – determined that training workshops were not achieving the desired ends. They are embarking on a two year intensive, continuous program of two-way communication between project and/or agency staff and community members, with a focus on engaging staff in listening.

Building capacity to communicate across cultures is extremely important, especially given the size of forests under IP control, the diversity of cultures and the gulf between global, national and local cultures. The new *Socio-Bosque* two-way communication initiative is being called a "translation" program, even as benefit payments are flowing and implementation is underway. Maintaining good communication requires dedication to maintain trust.

[16] USAID has offered decision-maker courses to reorient government staff and project implementers on land tenure issues, for example, but assessing the impacts of these courses is difficult. The indigenous university in Nicaragua URACCAN offers courses and curricula around community forestry and tenure. *The Facultad Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales* (FLACSO, the Latin American School for Social Sciences) has facilitated some regional interchanges around community forestry but is not currently offering them. Short courses are regularly offered via the *Centro Boliviano de Estudios Multidisciplinary Studies* (CEBEM, the Bolivian Center for Multidisciplinary Studies) and UN-REDD. The impacts of these courses are also unknown. USAID's ICAA program supports cross-site learning, which has the advantage of building learning networks that trigger further learning-by-doing.

Guarani women's basket weaving cooperative in Itika Guasu, Bolivia, sought to scale up forest management due to impacts of market expansion. Photo by Janis B. Alcorn

Biocultural community protocols (BCPs) (Swiderska *et al.*. 2012) can build capacity by creating conditions for "doing" and put communities in the driver's seat. Preliminary application of BCPs for joint research with communities in the Mexican region of La Chinantla is facilitating communication and empowering local understanding of community forestry as well as PES issues and opportunities. This work has enabled Chinantecos to plan their own development and learn from their own mistakes rather than reactively accepting a potpourri of short-term projects offered by NGOs (Ibarra *et al.* 2011). In Honduras, IPs in the Mosquitia region, the largest forest in Honduras, see their new Biocultural Protocol, created with assistance from GiZ and IUCN, as a way for positive engagement with REDD+ and other projects (MASTA 2012).

3.5 SCALING-UP COMMUNITY FORESTRY INITIATIVES

In general, the literature on community forestry offers limited lessons about scaling-up existing programs in Latin America. Effective scaling-up tends to be self-generated (Larson *et al.* 2010). The conditions and incentives for scaling-up depend on interactions with others in a given landscape, as in watershed basins that offer natural incentives for scaling-up while addressing poverty concerns (Alcorn *et al.* 2010). While conservation agencies have promoted scaling-up in terms of landscapes and eco-regions, the politics of wider-scale development have proven to be beyond NGO capacity. In the case of Latin America, community forestry in large collective territories is already "scaled-up" in relation to projects with small forests held by smallholders. As already mentioned, almost half of the Amazon forest, a key focus for REDD+, is under protected areas and indigenous territories. This pattern of self-generating, *de facto* up-scaling by IPs or non-IP communities that share cultural connections or organizations such as federations, such as the rubber tappers in Brazil, is worth further study for generating lessons on ways to support self-generated scaling-up. Scaling up of forest enterprises can also result in scaling up of community forestry (see Box 18).

Box 18. Scaling Up Forest Enterprises

A Guarani women's basket weaving cooperative, comprised of many communities within Itika Guasu territory, Bolivia, has received USAID support for marketing their products. This resulted in increased harvest pressure on local, endemic palms as the market demand for their baskets grew. The palm leaves are also harvested by outside venders who sell leaves to townspeople in the region for other purposes, and eaten by neighboring ranchers' goats. The women's cooperative sought technical assistance to collaborate with their communities to assess legal options for protecting the palms from outsiders, develop ways for women to systematically assess harvest impacts, and assess the regeneration support practices that were being piloted by individual women's own initiative. The women wanted to gain new skills and information to scale up management of the palms from which leaves are extracted in order to prevent these endemic palms' extinction.

The barriers to effective scaling-up of community forestry include:

- high costs for designed solutions to maintain a long-term presence required for sustainable scaling-up;
- lack of political will to recognize collective tenure as a basis for scaling-up;
- divisions wrought by illegal, black, or shadow markets;
- conflicts and lack of citizen security (war, military, rebels, refugees, etc.);
- handout programs that compete with alternative incomes from forests;

- costs and labor requirements of tree nurseries and effective reforestation;
- *proyectismo* (i.e., people have become accustomed to live from project assistance, and don't want to lose their own special relationship with an NGO or local elite patron);
- phantom projects by "briefcase" NGOs, selling themselves with tree nursery photos and self-promotional workshops;
- insufficient access to microfinance alternatives that are reliable, accessible and not corrupted;
- insufficient access to other investment options;
- poor leadership;
- lack of trust, due to historical negative experiences with change agents;
- donors and NGOs that do not assume human rights duty-bearer´s responsibilities;
- land-grabbing threats and/or incentives being offered to give up or sell lands; and
- climate events and other disasters that introduce new risks and alter forest value or health.

3.6 RISKS AND SUSTAINABILITY OF COMMUNITY FORESTRY

3.6.1 Environmental Sustainability

Millions of hectares of forests in Latin America are being managed sustainably with community forestry. The future environmental sustainability of community forestry depends on interrelated social, political and environmental factors. For example, climate change is predicted to increase the chance of fire in forests. However, the chance of fire is already greater in frontier areas where intact forests are riddled with gaps cleared for agriculture and pasture. Forests can regenerate after such disturbance if regeneration is not blocked. In this context, community forestry is sustainable if forests can be regenerated and/or established after fires, and communities have tenurial rights to exclude others and protect the burned areas and use assisted natural regeneration (ANR) and enrichment to renew their forests and reduce the number and size of forest gaps.

Box 19. Shifting Cultivation

Traditionally, rotational shifting cultivation systems (swidden), a form of slash and burn, were not a risk to forests but rather worked to integrate agriculture with integrated forest management. Traditional slash and burn agriculture systems maintain biodiversity and sustainability by producing small gaps in the forest and allowing natural forest regeneration to proceed. Those practicing shifting cultivation have thus incorporated agroforestry into their agricultural systems (Alcorn 1990, Padoch and Pinedo Vasquez 2010).

Risks inherent in community reforestation efforts are well known but not well documented. Many NGOs are organized around promoting reforestation but not held accountable for success or failure. **Successful reforestation of degraded areas depends on many factors,** including the size and scale of the area, the soils, the slope, the species chosen, the level of dedication of those caring for young trees, labor costs, competing land uses, the tenurial context (i.e., collective tenure, private tenure, no tenure, leasehold, etc.), and whether assisted natural regeneration (ANR) is being employed or is possible (Shono *et al.* 2007). Community forestry is most environmentally sustainable when applied in existing forests under community control and in situations where reforestation can be undertaken with less risk and high long-term commitment to tending the young trees. Assisted natural regeneration (ANR) via traditional rotational swidden systems blends cultural, social and environmental sustainability.

3.6.2 Financial Sustainability

Without knowing the particular details of a given site or community forestry system, it can be postulated that if community forestry is self-generated and self-sustaining, then it has achieved sufficient economic and financial sustainability under current conditions.

Financial sustainability should be assessed within communities' own economic value systems, and opportunity costs should be evaluated locally, rather than with external financial assessment alone. It has been

argued that **externally driven community forestry tends to fail in Latin America** (de Jong *et al.* 2010, Larson *et al.* 2008), due to factors ranging from disease in exotic plantations to external incentives that end when the project is finished, conflicts with other incentives, risks that were not foreseen, uncertainties that undermine motivation, lack of trust, failure to fit into local cultural needs, power issues and opportunity costs. As detailed above, **PES may not always be financially self-sustaining nor maintain significant forest cover, and may exacerbate equity issues** unless it is designed to complement other locally valued interests and objectives (Corbera 2012, van Hecken and Bastiaensen 2010a, 2010b, van Hecken *et al.* 2012).

3.6.3 Social Sustainability

Social sustainability depends on many factors, including the policy environment, enforcement against illegal logging, and community cohesion and commitment to community forestry in the face of external pressures such as threats and deals offered by powerful loggers and agroindustry (Alcorn *et al.* 2010). Social sustainability also depends on leadership and organizational ability to engage with external actors at all levels, and enlightened politicians and bureaucrats who understand community forestry issues and support community forestry over other short-term income or kickbacks. The literature on socio-ecological sustainability at regional levels suffers from the same issues identified in Mansuri and Rao (2004), described above in Section 3.2.3. The cause and effect relationship between regional management by government and a well-maintained forest may look good on paper. But those familiar with the on-the-ground situation and decision-making understand that regional scale management may be a fiction maintained by agencies in capital cities and the outcome visible as large blocks of forest in satellite imagery is in fact the result of the combination of lack of road penetration and local communities managing their forests without external assistance in that region.

3.7 IMPLICATIONS FOR REDD+

Lessons for REDD+ have been integrated into the preceding sections. In sum, the lessons from community forestry regarding sustainability and risks indicate that it is advantageous for REDD+ to build on existing self-generated community forestry, both in: (i) sites where external projects have created community engagement based on trust, and (ii) sites where there are no external projects but clear evidence that forest is standing in indigenous territories and in forest reserves where nonindigenous *ribereños, caboclos*, *criollos, campesinos*, and Afro-descendants are living in forests.

Community-based nurseries are well-adapted to propagation of seeds of diverse, locally adapted trees gathered from local forests. Thirty-seven *campesino* communities in the Upper Parapeti of Bolivia are using seedlings distributed from their federated Watershed Management Committee nursery in order to reforest degraded areas in their shared watershed. Photo by Alonzo Zarzycki, Yangareko.

4.0 EMERGING REDD+ AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY ISSUES

A key issue threatening REDD+ is the dominance of technical solutions, whereas civil society support and political decisions are more essential for REDD+ success. Technocratic solutions are unsustainable, can limit community forestry innovation into new products, and run the risk of displacing political conflicts into other arenas. Technocratic solutions typically involve rigid top-down templates or programs, which are often adopted at the national government level and may be in response to donor ideas, rather than flexible ones that recognize and support the diversity of community forestry and other community-based action. Technocratic processes to engage stakeholders, including holding a few regional workshops on a tight schedule, only appear to meet the need for civil society participation. Such technocratic approaches are likely to fail in building real momentum and consensus, because these processes are deeply political, and as such cannot be forced into project planning timetables. Technocratic demands for forest management plans that communities cannot afford, and convoluted permit application processes, increase opportunities for corruption while limiting communities' opportunities to derive benefits from managing their forests. Long-term REDD+ success depends on learning-while-doing and adjusting to findings and civil society concerns as implementation proceeds.

Community forestry continues to offer a solid basis for REDD+ if threats and opportunities are addressed. Yet, to be successful, REDD+ needs to regain its momentum after the initial rush to REDD+ has stalled. Analogies with the Gold Rush were used to describe a REDD+ Rush in field discussions until 2012. By 2013, the demand for quality carbon, however, has plummeted. [17]

Long-term private sector involvement in REDD+ creates new challenges to community forestry. A voluntary market is not bound by the REDD+ Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment, which is required by the FCPF. It appears that the private sector has taken the approval of a country's R-PP as a "seal of guarantee" indicating that country's government support for private investment. Private funds and investment bank loans dwarf the funding from the FCPF. Carbon cowboy deals with indigenous communities under contracts that weaken community tenure and violate national and international law became a scandal in Colombia, in one case covering some 40 million hectares of community forestry. The Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development presented its concerns about private carbon cowboys in its presentation to the UN-REDD seventh Policy Board meeting (PB7) in 2011. Rumors of early carbon deals have created conflicts between and within communities. "Solutions" such as registration of carbon contracts have not yet been acceptable to civil society or investors as the best means to control the contracts to protect

[17] If the future of community forestry becomes tied to REDD+, then a key issue identified by FCMC research in 2013, is very relevant:
" If the Parties [to UNFCCC] reach an ambitious agreement in 2015 that does not allow for a prompt start for a REDD+ mechanism, or reaches a modest agreement that does not have a meaningful role for REDD+, demand [for high quality carbon] will remain weak through 2020. A lack of strong demand until after 2020 could cause financial harm to governments, local communities, civil society and the private sector already engaging in REDD+ activities. It could also cause political fallout within countries engaged in REDD+ readiness activities and looking for signs that a REDD+ market is real. There are two ways to avoid this risk–develop new performance-based compensation vehicles for the 2013 –2020 period and increase bilateral funding, and/or ensure an ambitious UNFCCC agreement is reached that includes a prominent role for REDD+ markets with prompt start provisions. "(Nimitz *et al.*. 2013, p.54).

indigenous and community rights. National policy, law and regulatory frameworks will need adjustments to address these concerns.

Another key issue is that strong collective tenure reforms are needed for community forestry in other Latin American countries to reach the level of productivity and stability that is now seen in Mexican community forests where adding REDD+ to community forestry is working well (Bray 2010, 2012b). Harmonizing agriculture and forest-related policies on trade, taxation, infrastructure, migration, and land tenure are critically important for creating enabling conditions for REDD+ success (Pirard *et al.* 2010, Pirard 2011). **REDD+ and community forestry are now co-evolving in a world very different from the one which community forestry has evolved – there is now more population, increased land grabbing and the closing of the hinterlands.**

REDD+ and community forestry successes are not necessarily replicable. While some communities may achieve great success, they may be unique due to their histories and long-term relations with external actors who have invested significant resources over long periods of time (e.g., Surui case in Brazil [Forest Trends 2011] and ACOFOP support from an American wood company in Petén, Guatemala). While the future transition from community forestry to REDD+ community forestry may be possible, the strong tenure and community level institutions will be needed to negotiate the kinds of positive REDD+ outcomes seen with government and private sector in Oaxaca, Mexico.

To assess actual local situations, the lessons learned from thirty years of community forestry in Latin America can be used as a roadmap to ascertain the best path forward in particular places and contexts. New CIFOR research in Peru and Ecuador, under ICAA, offers a good pattern for assessing and monitoring REDD+ in community forestry (CIFOR 2012). It aims to:

- Define the mosaic of actors, formal and informal property rights regimes and forest management systems at the landscape scale in two research sites in each country;
- Examine the relations between observed mosaics of smallholder and community level forest management and drivers of land use change over time;
- Analyze the strategies used by smallholder and community forest managers to link to important forest commodity markets and the importance of forest products in household livelihoods; and
- Promote the design of appropriate models to support sustainable forest management and forest policies, laws and regulations, emphasizing endogenous forestry practices and self-governance institutions.

UN-REDD has incorporated community forestry and rural development lessons into new guidance on participation and stakeholder engagement. NGOs have prepared handbooks on community engagement for voluntary carbon market and national REDD+ programs (Richards and Panfil 2010, 2011).

REDD+ and community forestry can protect both wildlife and livelihoods from increasing threats. Wildlife, biodiversity and carbon sequestration opportunities are threatened by agroindustrial expansion into community forests. *Criollos* and wildlife such as these cats in Jujuy, Argentina, are being displaced by soy conversion of the highly biodiverse Gran Chaco forests where wildlife co-exists with *criollos* who have long depended on cattle raised in forests without the protection of formal titles (Alcorn et al. 2010). Photo Janis B. Alcorn.

Finally, forests ultimately depend on the state to control illegal activities and support community forestry. Yet, forests and protected areas cannot be protected by the state alone. The forests depend on decisions by people living in and near them, as well as the decisions of illegal actors (Jones 1990, Porter-Bolland 2011). New institutional relationships, based on learning from community forestry successes, offer promising alternatives to achieve forest protection under REDD+ (Cashore and Galloway 2010, Galloway *et al.* 2010).

5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

Latin America is arguably the world leader in community forestry and offers many lessons learned. Latin America is unique compared with Africa and Asia for several reasons. The Latin America region offers multiple advantages for REDD+. South America has 25 percent of the world´s forests and 40 percent of the world's biodiversity. Only 1.4 percent of Latin America's forests are plantations; 98.6 percent of Latin American forests are natural forests. Large areas of forest are under indigenous and community tenure – a key base for community forestry and REDD+ success. Rural population density is low. In Latin America, it is very feasible to build on and nurture existing community forestry to achieve REDD+ goals.

Latin American community forestry is extremely diverse. To clarify that diversity, community forestry can be typified as "discovered" (self-generated) and "designed" (responding to project interventions). To further understand and respect diversity according to the level of integration with natural forest and opportunities for REDD+, the author of this report proposes that community forestry be typified along a continuum or range across three "ideal types" according to the level of intervention: Low Intensity Forestry Interventions, Medium Intensity Forestry Interventions, and High Intensity Forestry Interventions (see box in Chapter 2). Community Forestry experience demonstrates that one size does not fit all; and REDD+ programs need to take this lesson to heart and adapt to local conditions.

The most significant community forestry project interventions in Latin America have focused on policy reforms to strengthen rights and decentralization that support community forestry management and marketing of community forestry products. The hard policy issues that threaten community forestry in Latin America include illegal logging, mafia-drug traffic, anti-drug activities, land-grabbing and armed conflicts as well as the larger challenges of corruption and weak systems of justice.[18] Civil society has welcomed REDD+ where it has been seen as a new effort to support the long-needed policy reforms prioritized under REDD+ Readiness and early implementation.

Rural vulnerable populations generally benefit from self-generated community forestry, and are potentially threatened by new REDD+ investments. These vulnerable populations include women, Afro-descendents, IP and mixed ethnicities with their own cultural traditions in different rural regions (*caboclos, ribereños, criollos*, and *campesinos)*. In addition, frontier migrants living in forests seldom have rights beyond those they exercise *de facto* by their activities in the forest.

Lessons learned from rural development in the 1980s-2000 are still valid today for REDD+. Key lessons include the importance of: the lynchpin roles of true participation; bottom-up planning; stakeholder and rights-holder engagement; cross-cultural communication; and trust. The same challenges for supporting women's roles in rural development now challenge REDD+.

Each country in Latin America brings its own unique policy and historical contexts to REDD+ as well as its own community forestry experiences from which country-specific lessons can be learned and shared. Mexico leads in community forestry timber enterprise development while Amazonian community forestry patterns tend to emphasize cultural and subsistence values at their core.

[18] WRI has proposed a "carbon index" to incorporate this dimension of risk.

Latin America leads the world in transitioning community forestry to PES and carbon sales. Assessments of community forestry PES experiences, however, find surprisingly little sustainability and hence offer lessons for avoiding repetition of failures. These experiences have involved high transaction costs, with little money reaching communities, and failure to provide social equity benefits.

The state plays many essential roles in community forestry empowerment, including: institutions, laws and policies; strategic plans; and budgeting of resources that embrace and empower community forestry. By recognizing community governance and rights of representation, and designating forums and resources for this purpose, the state provides an opportunity for communities and their organizations to engage directly as stakeholders rather than be represented by NGOs.

Civil society has played an essential role in empowering community forestry in Latin America, both directly and indirectly in developing the second key element for community forestry success – strong community forestry organizations that are respected by, and engage on equal terms with, external actors and markets.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Support Community Forest Tenure**. Build on a firm understanding of existing practices, rights, institutions, threats and opportunities in any given country – particularly as REDD+ goals relate to tenure policies and ongoing tenure reform efforts in a country. The UN-backed Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure (FAO 2012b) offer a respected framework for action.
- **Support Diversity and Build on Existing Community Forestry**. Rather than aiming for standardization and homogeneity, seek to build frameworks that nurture community forestry at national and sub-regional levels, as in nested REDD+. The right challenge for REDD+ is to refocus on existing "discovered" community forestry, taking Ostrom's Law as a guide – if it works in practice, it can work in theory and policy. Support long-term research for monitoring and confirming lessons learned. Support the creation and implementation of locally generated development plans (*planes de vida*, *planes de gestión territorial*) that include community forestry and REDD+. Community-based mapping offers an excellent entry point for assisting communities to assess their forests and plan their use for enhancing their livelihoods. Scenario construction and analysis can be useful for communities to determine whether to incorporate REDD+ into their development plans.
- **Support Sectoral Policy Reforms**. REDD+ and community forestry require supportive agricultural and other sectorial policies, as well as appropriate macroeconomic policies, particularly in countries where deforestation rates are linked to expansion of agriculture and infrastructure in frontier hinterlands.
- **Convene Stakeholders and Promote Two Way Communication**. Strong community forestry and REDD+ depend on collaboration with civil society movements that actively bring together citizens groups, universities, indigenous organizations and grassroots associations. Convening the range of stakeholders in appropriate "safe" fora, using existing processes such as *mesas* (roundtables) where they are customary, and otherwise promoting two-way communication on demand from community forestry constituents, can reduce conflicts and open new ways forward. Strengthen the position and capacity of community forest leaders to participate in public fora regarding REDD+ as informed participants, and support the genesis of culturally appropriate accountability for REDD+ even when the cultural logic may not be understood.
- **Build Capacity**. Build capacity for REDD+ by experiential learning and cross-site visits with local community forestry community groups, not just formal trainings. Build cross-cultural communication and diversity appreciation within government agencies. Strengthen community forestry leaders' participation in public fora regarding REDD+. Support the genesis of culturally appropriate accountability for REDD+ even when the cultural logic may not be understood by outsiders. Develop capacity of community members, government, and other partners in a mix of

technical skills (forest management, utilization and planning), enterprise development skills (financial management and book-keeping) and governance capacities (accountability, communications and enforcement of rules governing access and use), to increase the likelihood of community forestry success.

- **Avoid Creating Parallel Processes and Organizations**. Rely on understanding and nurturing emergent processes and existing organizations, unless requested by grassroots. Facilitate formal processes for locally driven up-scaling of higher level organizations if they do not exist.

- **Stabilize Frontier Populations**. Stabilize the populations in forests by implementing population surveys and maps showing communities in areas that are formally designated as state forest reserves. Knowing the characteristics, distribution and size of those "invisible" populations – including people currently invisible to the state because they are undocumented or because their communities are found in areas formally designated as state forests – provides essential, real information for introduction of community forestry and REDD+ options, including long-term forest leasing or tenure recognition as opposed to introducing logging concessions that disrupt existing forest populations and trigger new migrations into forest.
- **Build Public Awareness**. Build broader, urban public awareness of community forestry issues in order to build political will to address issues in REDD+ preparations and implementation.
- **Use Rights-Based Approaches**. Support development of rights-based approaches and recourse mechanisms that help community forestry rights-holders maintain their forests, defend them against threats, and achieve the objectives of REDD+. Use FPIC as appropriate and consider embedding FPIC in Biocultural protocol processes and local action research for long-term monitoring, feedback and conflict prevention to integrate community forestry into REDD+.
- **Stop Illegal Activities**. Support the social sustainability of REDD+ by improving enforcement against illegal logging in community forests and IP areas, and preventing land-grabbing and illegal activities that threaten community security.
- **Protect and Engage Indigenous Peoples, Women, and Other Vulnerable Groups**. Make a sustained effort to ensure that women and other vulnerable populations participate in debates on community forestry and REDD+ issues at local and national levels, building culturally appropriate openings for these key forest stewards. Women's rights, like human rights, depend on duty-bearers to create conditions where rights can be exercised. Donors are duty-bearers with an obligation to build REDD+ in ways that support women's rights, indigenous rights, and human rights. When women´s roles in their local communities are constrained, or vulnerable communities are marginalized, then these groups – which have action-related responsibilities under REDD+ – will not be engaged effectively and the risks of REDD+ failure will rise. National and sub-regional organizations that promote the perspectives of vulnerable groups should engage and listen to these sectors to position themselves to voice accurately REDD+ and community forestry concerns.

ANNEX 1. REDD+ SUPPORT IN LATIN AMERICA

Table 2. Selected Support for REDD+ in Latin American Countries, as of 2013.

Country	FCPF Partner Country	VCS projects registered & proposed	UN-REDD National Programme	UN-REDD Partner Country	FIP Country
Argentina	X			X	
Belize		X			
Bolivia	X	X	X		
Brazil					X
Chile	X			X	
Colombia	X	X		X	
Costa Rica	X			X	
Ecuador			X		
El Salvador	X				
Guatemala	X	X		X	
Guyana	X			X	
Honduras	X			X	
Mexico	X	X		X	X
Nicaragua	X				
Panama	X		X		
Paraguay	X		X		
Peru	X	X		X	X
Suriname	X			X	
Uruguay					
Venezuela					

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