

Linking Gender, Adaptation, Climate Change and Forestry/ Resource Management

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Gender and Forestry (<http://www.iufro.org/science/divisions/division-6/60000/60800/>)

The international forum on “Linking Gender, Adaptation, Climate Change and Forestry/Resource Management” was an invitation-only event held at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, Canada May 27-29, 2014 and organized in cooperation with IUFRO Working Group 6.08.00 Gender and Forestry. We are grateful for funding received from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and from the following institutions at the University of Saskatchewan - the International Centre for Northern Governance and Development, the School of Environment and Sustainability, and the Office of the Vice-President Research.

Planners and decision-makers at national, provincial and local levels are just beginning to systematically plan, manage, and adapt community practices to climate change affecting forestry communities. These efforts have yet to consider how differential capabilities within forest-based communities and landscapes based on social dynamics (such as gender, culture, and age) may affect the planning process and the adaptive capacity within communities.

We brought 18 academics and practitioners together from Canada and Sweden to share usable knowledge about how gender and adaptive capacity of forest-based communities and land users are related. All who participated were familiar with some, but not all, aspects of the workshop agenda. Some were experienced living and working in rural communities affected by climate change, others had conducted research about climate change adaptation or about gender. None was an expert in all fields.

Hence, our objectives were to pool our knowledge, identify key questions about how gender affects the capacity of forest-based communities to adapt to climate and other changes, suggest modifications to a guidebook designed to help communities plan for adaptation, and identify additional outlets for the results of our discussion and consider future collaborative research opportunities.

Key findings and recommendations from the forum include:

Forest-based communities share circumstances in common with other rural communities that rely on renewable resources for livelihoods. Lessons across communities and resource-types should be shared.

“Gender” differences in Canada may be difficult to explain or to justify where climate change and social planning concerns ‘compete’ with other, seemingly more pressing or more



Discussions during the forum (Photo by Alyssa Scott)

concrete challenges such as maintaining infrastructure in the face of dwindling financial and even human resources. Improved understanding of gender might arise if it is considered within broader concerns for diversity and inclusion. Addressing diversity and inclusion in planning processes may also broaden the agenda from its current focus on infrastructure planning to other social effects of climate change that will affect rural communities (e.g., effects on aging populations, socio-psychological effects that affect the well-being of residents, considerations for insurance and planning within and beyond households, raising awareness).

“Who” is included through all phases of planning for climate change adaptation will be important for determining “what” is included. Hence, attention at the earliest phases should be given to widening the list of interested or affected participants and stakeholders.

Follow-up

A specific publication from participants’ presentations will be developed in 2014-15, either as a special issue journal or an edited book. A new module for the Indigenous Land Management Program at the University of Saskatchewan will be developed in 2014-15 to help Indigenous land managers identify appropriate procedures for climate change adaptation planning. New research collaborations with Model Forests in Sweden and Canada will be explored.

(Report abridged by the editor; find the full report under Past Activities at <http://www.iufro.org/science/divisions/division-6/60000/60800/activities/>)