

From voice to choice: lessons from a regional capacity development initiative to strengthen social and gender analysis in participatory natural resource management research

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Abstract

Doing practical biodiversity and natural resources management research that is socially and gender sensitive remains a challenge. Most of the relevant literature is primarily at the conceptual level. There are few learning programmes that focus on systematic capacity development for gender and social analysis in applied research in this field. Efforts that systematically document and analyse this kind of capacity development process are also hard to find. This paper summarizes the main research and capacity development achievements and challenges of a novel, Asian-regional initiative that aimed to address these gaps. It is suggested that the success of capacity-building strategies for the integration of social and gender analysis can be enhanced by combining a mix of elements, including a 'learning by doing' approach, participatory (action) research methodologies, a diverse group of participants, regular peer review, flexible networking and strong personal and organizational commitment. These kinds of strategies will require a long(er) time horizon and sufficient resources.

Keywords: Asia, capacity development, gender analysis, participatory learning, social analysis