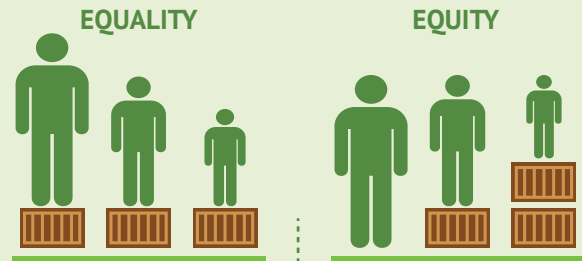


# EQUITY

## and its importance for forest communities

### What is equity?

Equity is fairness or justice in the way people are treated.



We are all different. Each individual, each group has its own needs and interests. If we treat everyone the same way, we fail to address these differences and can never produce true equity.

*The equity approach targets these different needs by identifying unfair conditions and making adjustments*



### Why is equity important in forest communities?



The fundamental rationale for improving equity in forestry is to ensure a fair share of responsibilities, costs and benefits for everyone dependent on and involved in managing forests; this will deliver a sustained supply of resources and services, and thus a more secure livelihood.

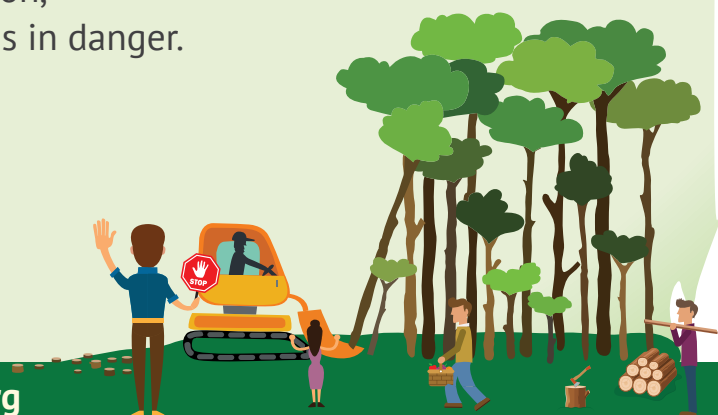
Deforestation threatens the Lower Mekong region, putting forest communities and their livelihoods in danger.

#### Deforestation in the region

**2.2M ha**  
Community forestry  
2010-2013

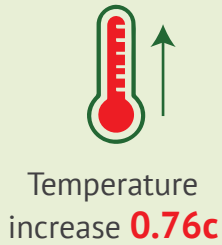


**13.3M ha**  
Deforestation  
2010-2013

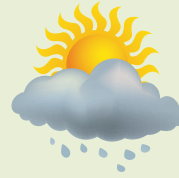




Reduction of deforestation can also relieve poverty in forest dependent communities. Likewise, poverty relief activities in forest dependent communities has shown to be one of the most efficient steps in reduction of deforestation.



CO<sub>2</sub> accumulation from the loss of forests threatens the whole planet



Hot weather, irregular rainfall



## What does addressing equity allow us to do?

Through the equity approach, we are able to address and make visible the needs, interests and rights of marginalized groups in major issues affecting forest communities.



Livelihoods



Governance and regulations



Participation and decision making



Tenure and resource rights



Access to information



Gender



Benefit sharing



Grievance mechanism

For more information, please visit [www.recoftc.org](http://www.recoftc.org)

This infographic was developed by RECOFTC - The Center for People and Forests, with support from the USAID-funded Grassroots Equity and Enhanced Networks in the Mekong Region Program (USAID GREEN Mekong). The three-year project, which began in 2012, aims to improve capacities of policymakers and grassroots stakeholders in the Lower Mekong region to promote equity in forest-based climate change mitigation policy and practice.

# Making equity happen in forest communities

## WHAT DO WE NEED TO PROMOTE EQUITY?



At the community forest level, a grassroots facilitator with a strong foundation is needed. **Three main qualities make up this foundation:**

### 1 ATTITUDES A facilitator needs a specific attitude



Empathy with group members



Unconditional positive regard for stakeholders



Real interest and commitment



Belief in participatory values and process

### 2 ROLES A facilitator needs to wear many hats:



#### COMMUNITY ORGANIZER

able to assist community preparedness, including facilitating the agenda setting of under-represented groups.



#### PROCESS DESIGNER & GUIDE

able to design short-term and long-term vibrant and effective engagement processes that set objectives & lead to consensus and agreement.



#### HONEST BROKER

able to link communities and product supplies to fair and transparent markets.



#### CONFIDENCE BUILDER

able to assist less powerful stakeholders to have confidence in expressing their opinions on issues they think are important.



#### CONNECTOR OR NETWORKER

able to sense patterns and connections between groups & issues and confident to reach out for help when needed.

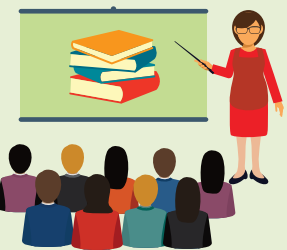


#### INFORMATION PROVIDER OR EXPLAINER

being up-to-date with the most recent developments, standards & information on REDD+ & able to explain simply without influencing.



### 3 SKILLS A facilitator needs to develop specific skills



Basic communication



Participatory group management and planning

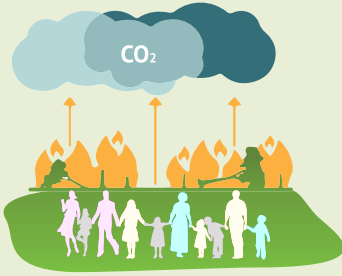


Process design



Creative information packaging

# HOW CAN WE APPLY EQUITY IN PRACTICE?



Global incentives put in place to reduce deforestation and mitigate climate change often do not fit in the local context, ignoring the communities closest to the forest, most able to help and contribute.

But with **this foundation**, we can target the various obstacles to personal fulfillment.



## WHAT IS THE GOAL?

We can assess equity by making sure 3 conditions are met:



### Clear and effective resource rights

Making sure that clear and effective rights are in place



### Good governance

Making sure that the community is both informed, and has some say in the decisions that affect them



### Fair share of benefits

Making sure that financial benefits available to the community are distributed fairly to promote progress

## ASSESSMENT BASICS

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Pre-engagement preparation/ stakeholder analysis	What are the equity issues, incentives and barriers?
Communication tools & effective engagement process design	What tools are relevant to engage? What opportunities exist for all to participate?
Grievance mechanism and conflict management	What grievance mechanism is in place? Are groups aware of it?
Transparency and access to information	Is information accessible for all? Are there clear parameters?
Inclusion and representation	Are all groups/subgroups are represented at different levels?
Records, reports and process documentation	Are there reports of attendance and views, including documentation of perspectives?
Contextual and distributional equity outcomes	Are equity issues and changes tracked over time? Do we have stories of change?

- RESOURCES:**
- Improving grassroots equity in forests and climate change context: a training manual URL. [www.bit.ly/GM-manual](http://www.bit.ly/GM-manual)
  - A Fair Climate: Gender Equity in Forestry and REDD+ Discussion Guide URL. [www.bit.ly/GM-guide](http://www.bit.ly/GM-guide)
  - Equity in climate change and REDD+: A handbook for grassroots facilitators URL. [www.bit.ly/GM-equity](http://www.bit.ly/GM-equity)
  - A Fair Climate: Gender Equity in Forestry and REDD+ Video URL. [www.bit.ly/gender-VDO](http://www.bit.ly/gender-VDO)
  - The Equity Effect video URL. [www.bit.ly/equity-VDO](http://www.bit.ly/equity-VDO)

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