



Landscape Restoration in Kenya

Addressing gender equality



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Unlocking the potential of forest landscape restoration (FLR) to achieve both social and environmental outcomes rests critically on the support, contributions and cooperation of a wide range of stakeholders at all levels, including women and men. In Kenya, the government has committed to restoring 5.1 million hectares of land by 2030. At the same time, Kenya's commitment to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment is enshrined in its Constitution, various national laws and policies as well as international conventions, including the Sustainable Development Goal framework. The purpose of this study was to provide empirically grounded lessons on opportunities and challenges for addressing gender in landscape restoration in Kenya, as well as to share recommendations for making sure Kenya's ambitious restoration efforts do not repeat the mistakes of past gender-blind restoration initiatives, but make sure both women and men are able to enjoy the opportunities and benefits generated through landscape restoration.

Our study departs from a theoretical framework on gender and restoration prepared by the CGIAR research program on Forests, Trees and Agroforestry (Sijapati Basnett et al 2017), that broadly outlines three types of decisions central gender-equitable and socially inclusive engagement in FLR, these are: land use and control; FLR priorities and approaches; and the distribution of costs and benefits (see Figure 1.).

To guide our analysis, the following research questions were developed:

- 1) How and to what extent are women and men participating in and benefiting from FLR initiatives?
- 2) How do different types of FLR initiatives across different landscapes (forests, rangelands, croplands) impact women and men's rights and wellbeing?
- 3) What are some of the key mechanisms and underlying factors causing differentiated and/or unequal participation, benefits and impacts between and among women and men?

Our study methodology was influenced by IUCN's gender-responsive restoration guidelines (IUCN 2017) as well as CIFOR's Global Comparative Study on REDD+ (e.g. Larson et al 2018). As part of the study, we did the following: 1) conducted a literature review; 2) compiled and analyzed policies and legislation relevant for FLR initiatives to understand how and to what extent gender equality is addressed, and; 3) collected and analyzed qualitative, sex-disaggregated data on participation, costs and benefits and well-being impacts in 4 restoration sites. The sites were chosen in collaboration with Kenya Forest Service (KFS), making sure each priority restoration landscape identified by the Technical Working Group on Forest Landscape Restoration (forest, rangeland, cropland) was represented. In each site, we conducted key informant interviews with a project staff and a community leader as well as one male and one female focus group discussion. The following sites were chosen for the study:

Some key findings

Our findings demonstrate that there are clear gender differences and inequalities with respect to control over land and productive resources, decision-making power, resource use and farm/off-farm labor. While landowners possessed formal title deeds to varying extents, men were reported to make up a significant majority of landowners in each of the four sites. Our findings also point to some discrepancies between formal legislation and customary practice. In Naibunga, for instance, women lost their rights to inherit ancestral land upon marriage, while in Lari and Mwala, women and girls could only inherit family land in instances where there were no boys or men in the family. In Mwala, parents were hesitant towards transferring land titles to youth, worrying that land might be lost if used as collateral for loans they were unable to repay. This has implications for restoration, as insecure tenure rights can limit the perceived security of access to future benefits and hence dis-incentivize e.g. tree planting (see e.g. Quisumbing and Kumar 2014 for Ethiopia).

In all agricultural sites, women reported men as the key decision-makers on private farms, despite women being perceived as equally (Nyandarua) or significantly more (Mwala, Lari) engaged in farming labor than men in all farming sites. We also found that men clearly outnumbered women in local decision-making bodies in Naibunga and Lari. In both sites, male dominance in decision-making was attributed by women and men respondents to cultural factors. In Mwala, however, women's active participation in project meetings was attributed both to a general male disinterest in agriculture as well as women's conscious mobilization efforts through their self-help groups. In Nyandarua, women's relatively strong participation in the Community Forest Association (CFA) was attributed to both the implementation of the constitutional 1/3 gender balance in all local decision-making bodies as well as the construction of the CFA management committee around forest user groups (1 representative per user group). As women in the area were active in a greater number of forest uses, they were able to have more female representatives in the management committee.

Location	Landscape	Implementing agency	Approach and activities
Naibunga Conservancy, Laikipia county	Rangeland	Community and Northern Rangelands Trust	Improved livestock management; natural regeneration; grass reseeding and removal of invasive species
Mwala, Machakos county	Cropland	WorldVision Australia (part of Drylands Development Program)	Promotion of various improved varieties and farming practices, incl. agroforestry; value chain development
Geta forest, Nyandarua county	Forest	Kenya Forest Service (KFS)	Plantation Establishment and Livelihood Improvement Scheme (PELIS): communities allowed to farm on public land in exchange for planting trees
Kikuyu escarpment forest, Lari county	Forest	KFS and Kijabe Environment Volunteers (KENVO)	PELIS; forest conservation and small-scale livelihood projects

The study also found that across all sites, women were participating in and contributing more labor to restoration activities than their male counterparts. This can be attributed to some extent by explicit efforts to involve women in project activities. For instance, in Naibunga, women and poor community members were prioritized for grant-funded casual restoration tasks (e.g. removing invasive species or grass reseeding), in order to dis-incentivize them from continuing their engagement in charcoal burning – a livelihood lost as trees became protected. In Nyandarua, women and landless community members were prioritized in PELIS plot allocation, while a women's self-help group was specifically selected as an implementing partner in Mwala. At the same time, there was often also a disinterest among men towards participating in many project activities, including planting or weeding, as they were seen as more suitable for women.

Despite reported gender inequalities in landownership, decision-making and labor, it is critical to note that in each of the sites, women reported increased incomes due to their participation in restoration initiatives. However, in Naibunga, the share of income generated from restoration vis-à-vis beadworks (the main income source for most women) was limited. Respondents in both PELIS sites noted that female beneficiaries were earning and retaining more income than previously, both due to crop sales as well as reduced expenditure on food. In Mwala, increased incomes were attributed to increased crop yields and more effective marketing. A particularly critical factor was women's collaboration in the self-help group (SHG). In the absence of male labor, women used the self-help group to pool labor, allowing them to overcome some of the initial labor requirements associated with certain farming practices. As a group, they were also able to access loans and aggregate their produce to receive better prices on the market. At the same time, however, women in Lari noted that while they had planted trees on the private farms, harvesting (for timber) was reserved for the husband. Male control over timber mirrors earlier findings from Kenya and East Africa (e.g. KWAP 1996, Tyndall and Franzel 1998).

Overall, women and men in all sites were positive about the environmental and livelihood impacts of the restoration initiatives. Direct economic benefits emerged as the most important factor for both male and female respondents, and should indeed be considered a critical aspect for both enhancing wellbeing and incentivizing participation in restoration activities. However, improved soils, reduced human-wildlife conflict and increased availability of firewood and other non-timber forest products, were also reported as important by participants. Labor-saving technologies and shorter distances to water and firewood were emphasized particularly by female groups.

In all sites, women's involvement in decision-making was reported to have increased over the past decades. In all sites except Mwala – where education and awareness-raising were emphasized as the most important causal factors – the women's FGDs attributed their increased decision-making power to

their ability to earn independent incomes. It is indeed critical to note that in all sites, women's participation in restoration initiatives generated independent income to women. While the extent to which women controlled this income varied between households, women in all sites reported some influence over the income they received through participating in various restoration activities. Importantly, we found that women tended to report more influence over income accessed directly on individual basis or through women's groups. In Lari and Naibunga, where some benefits were distributed through mixed-gender groups, men tended to control access to benefits. In Lari and Nyandarua, women felt that earning income through PELIS had allowed them more leverage in decisions over household expenditures, while in Naibunga women had become more involved in community decision-making. The relationship between women's abilities to earn independent incomes and their enhanced autonomy and bargaining power is supported by research in various value chains and contexts (Barrientos 2001, Rubin and Manfre 2014). In terms of income expenditure, all respondents emphasized spending income on food and school fees. For the former, all sites except Naibunga reported an increase of available food and less food insecurity due to increased agricultural production. Food security was attributed to enhanced production and incomes, as well as better tree cover (perceived to have reduced frost in Nyandarua). Particularly women (and some men) noted an overall increase in the availability of firewood due to tree planting and conservation, reporting spending less time on firewood collection. However, in Lari and Nyandarua, firewood availability was temporarily negatively impacted due to the ongoing logging ban, affecting predominantly women who were responsible for firewood collection. In terms of education, all sites reported an increase over the past decades in school enrollment overall, and girls' enrollment in particular, which can in turn help enhance gender equality over time. For instance, in Naibunga, where women complained men only focused on educating the boy child, women used their independent income to specifically fund girls' education. However, income generated from restoration initiatives was also invested in boosting or diversifying livelihood activities. Women in Mwala reported purchasing agricultural inputs directly from agro dealers, thus reducing their dependence on government provision. Interestingly, investments in buying additional land were reported mainly by men, while women - especially in PELIS sites - opted for investing in off-farm businesses.

Recommendations

We find that restoration initiatives impact women and men's rights and wellbeing as well as relations between men and women in different ways. It is therefore critical that all restoration initiatives **seek the consent of both men and women when implementing activities on their lands**. Similarly, initiatives need to **solicit the inputs from both women and men** in order to **ensure the restoration initiatives are aligned with community members' development priorities and enhance their wellbeing**.

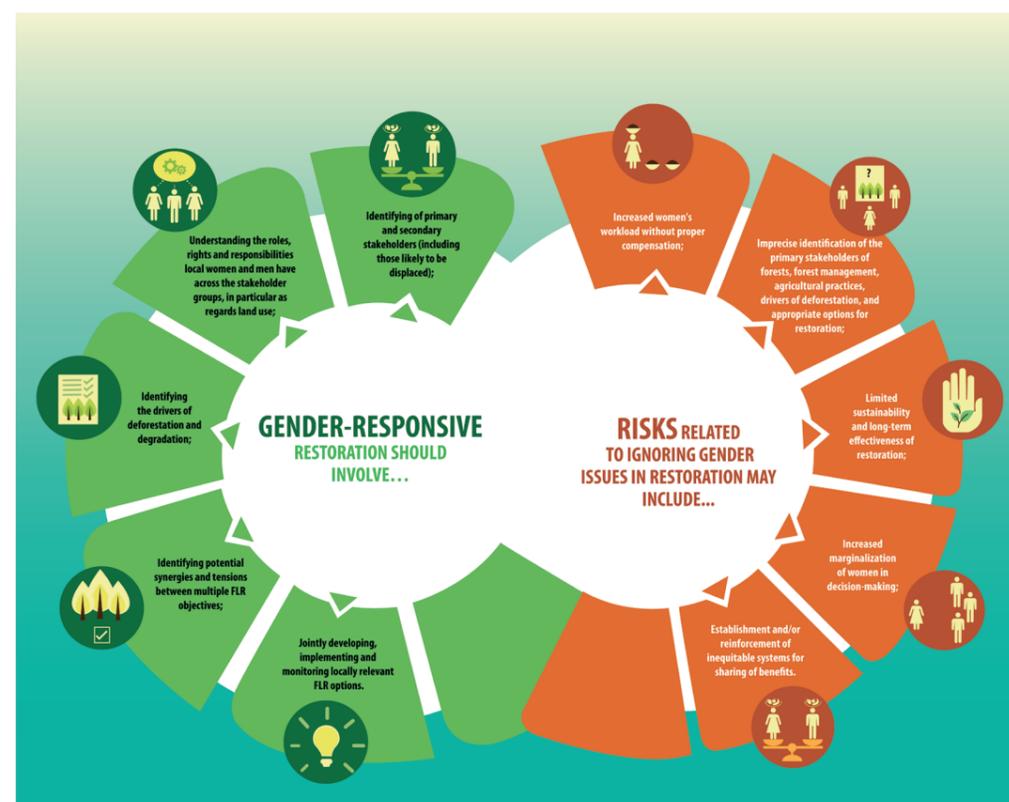


Figure 1: Framework for gender-responsive restoration (Sijapati Basnett et al 2017, 9)

Due to gender inequalities in control over resources as well as gendered division of labor, **costs and benefits can differ significantly between different groups of women and men, including youth.** The distribution of costs and benefits can therefore not be assumed uniform within communities nor households. Importantly, **the distribution of costs and benefits depends on a number of factors, including the socioeconomic and cultural context, the planned restoration option as well as programmatic approaches.** It is critical that each planned restoration initiative conducts a **context-specific gender analysis, which is informed by sex-disaggregated, intra-household level data.** This analysis should **provide baseline information** on a broad range of aspects, including: women and men's land and resource rights, access and use; decision-making power on household and community level, and; division of productive and reproductive labor, including income-generating activities.

Importantly, we find that restoration initiatives can impact power relations between men and women in multiple ways and directions. Therefore, this analysis needs to address **formal and informal norms and institutions that contribute to maintaining inequalities** (e.g. customary inheritance rights, decision-making bodies, harvesting rights etc.). It should also aim to **identify and support processes and spaces where such inequalities are being challenged.**

Ensuring restoration activities generate financial benefits to community members is critical for incentivizing continued participation. As financial benefits from certain restoration options can take a long time to materialize, **providing alternative livelihood options or income sources** is critical for allowing community members to absorb financial and/or labor costs incurred by restoration, as well as incentivizing long-term participation. In order to ensure financial benefits reach women, our findings suggest **exploring opportunities to distribute benefits individually or through women's groups.** When benefits are distributed through groups, inclusivity and transparency should be enforced. Further, restoration initiative should **adopt innovative approaches to foster joint decision-making** between women and men.

Our findings indicate that young men and women in some areas also lack harvesting rights to trees. Insofar as underlying inequalities regarding land and property rights remain unchanged, it is **important that restoration initiatives (particularly on croplands) do not focus solely on fast-growing timber, but explore options that can generate a mix of short- and long-term benefits accessible to both women and men** (e.g. agroforestry options with timber, fuelwood and fruit species). Further, **various means – including awareness-raising campaigns and affirmative action in land titling** – could be considered by the Government for addressing gender inequalities in land ownership, in order to implement constitutional promises to eliminate gender discrimination in

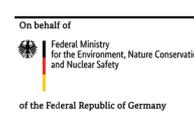
relation to property. **Provisions for gender equality and equal treatment of women and men inscribed in the Constitution as well as the Land Act (2012) and Community Land Act (2016) should be leveraged** for enhancing women's land rights and participation in decision-making on customary lands.

To overcome gender inequalities in decision-making, implementing agencies can leverage the Constitutional mandate to enforce affirmative action. We also recommend engaging women's groups and other forms of women's local organizations in the design and implementation of initiatives. In addition, financial and labor constraints can limit uptake of restoration practices. Women may often face additional constraints, such as limited decision-making power and limited access to credit. Our findings suggest that **women's self-help groups can allow women to pool labor, better access credit and develop joint marketing strategies for overcoming potential financial and labor hurdles associated with restoration.** **NGOs, financial institutions and extension workers can play critical roles** in ensuring financial services are made available to both women and men, conducting market analyses and providing trainings.

Based on a gender analysis, restoration initiatives should set specific objectives and time-bound targets relating to various aspects of gender equality, including access and control over land and other resources; decision-making; labor and time-use, and; income. Each objective and target should have both process- and progress-oriented indicators and be monitored systematically to assess progress and allow for adaptive learning. We recommend integrating these targets and indicators into a national monitoring framework, which can be disseminated to implementing agencies. To enhance coherence between various national commitments, we recommend these targets and indicators be influenced by those developed for the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as national legislation, policies and political ambitions aimed at strengthening gender-equitable land and property rights, tenure security, political participation etc. However, the general indicators should also be adapted to the local context in collaboration with women and men in affected communities.

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