

Raising Forest Voices: A Cross-Country Comparative Study of Indigenous Peoples' Engagement with Grassroots Climate Change Mitigation Projects in the Initial Pilot Phase of Community-Based Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation

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Abstract : The United Nations' Community-based REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation) (CBR+) is a programme that directly finances grassroots climate change mitigation strategies that uplift Indigenous Peoples (IPs) and other marginalised groups. A pilot for it in six countries was developed in response to criticism of the REDD+ programme for excluding IPs from dialogues about climate change mitigation strategies affecting their lands and livelihoods. Despite the pilot's conclusion in 2017, no complete report has yet been produced on the results of CBR+. To fill this gap, this study investigated the experiences with involving IPs in the CBR+ programmes and local projects across all six pilot countries. A literature review of official UN reports and academic articles identified challenges and successes with IP participation in REDD+ which became the basis for a framework guiding data collection. A mixed methods approach was used to collect and analyse qualitative and quantitative data from CBR+ documents and written interviews with CBR+ National Coordinators in each country for a cross-country comparative analysis. The study found that the most frequent challenges were lack of organisational capacity, illegal forest activities, and historically-based contentious relationships in IP and forest-dependent communities. Successful programmes included IPs and incorporated respect and recognition of IPs as major stakeholders in managing sustainable forests. Findings are summarized and shared with a set of recommendations for improvement of future projects.

Keywords : climate change, forests, indigenous peoples, REDD+

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