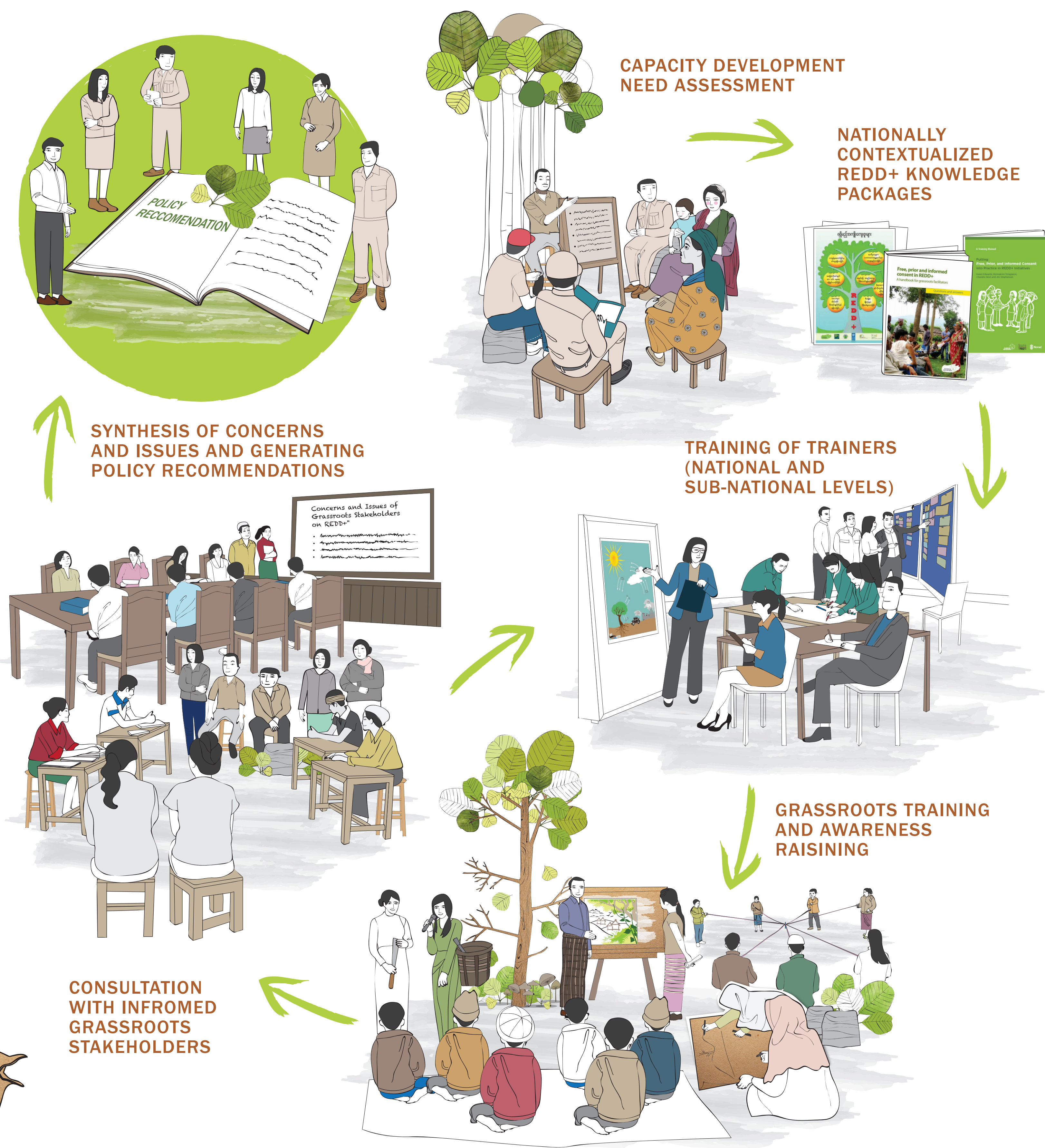


Concerns and Aspirations of Grassroots Stakeholders for REDD+

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SCOPE AND OBJECTIVE

The global discourse of climate change and REDD+ has progressed rapidly over the last few years. However, not all of this discourse has been synthesized and shared with grassroots stakeholders, giving them an opportunity to voice concerns for REDD+. Recognizing this gap, RECOFTC - The Center for People and Forests has been implementing Grassroots Capacity Building for REDD+ in Asia project, funded by NORAD, in five countries - Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal and Vietnam, from November 2009 until June 2016. The project develops capacity of the grassroots stakeholders to effectively contribute in the ongoing REDD+ processes and raise their concerns and aspirations to policy level.

APPROACH

“Cascade approach”, a key modality to build capacity of grassroots stakeholders, starts with capacity development needs assessment to find out capacity and knowledge gaps, followed by development of simplified training materials and delivery of participatory trainings programs to fulfill those gaps. This approach has proved effective in bridging the flow of REDD+ knowledge down and bringing up grassroots voices. Through this approach, the project has created a cadre of hundreds of trainers and local facilitators and raised awareness among thousands of grassroots stakeholders in the project countries, from national down to the grassroots level (40% are female stakeholders). The informed grassroots stakeholders are then consulted through community consultations and policy dialogues to learn about their concerns and issues for REDD+ and communicate them through policy papers, national level dialogues and sharing workshops.

RESULTS

Concerns and aspirations of grassroots stakeholders for REDD+ :

- **Complexity of REDD+ language:** The concept of REDD+ still remains an abstract for grassroots communities due to its complex and technical language. Unclear and conflicting messages of REDD+ can raise expectations or exacerbate misunderstandings among the stakeholders.
- **Respect for local knowledge:** Due to the fact that REDD+ knowledge is still limited to a few select experts, grassroots stakeholders raised the concerns that adequate efforts have not been directed towards recognizing and using traditional knowledge in REDD+ design and policy processes.
- **Unclear land tenure and rights:** Concerns abound that REDD+ will serve as a catalyst for the escalation of conflicts, especially between communities and government, if the land-use rights of local communities are not safeguarded.
- **Transparency in REDD+ benefit sharing:** Another challenge raised by grassroots stakeholders is about lack of understanding on benefit sharing from REDD+, arising from poor information sharing processes among local groups and a lack of clear tenure rights.
- **Alternative livelihoods:** Concerns are also raised that REDD+ may come along with a series of restrictions for forest user groups in order to secure and enhance forest carbon stocks. REDD+ planning therefore needs to put in place alternative livelihoods mechanisms to compensate for potential loss of forest based livelihoods.
- **Sustainability of REDD+:** Apprehensions about the sustainability of REDD+ have been raised, mainly due to the fact that many consider this as a mechanism that is top down and ‘imported’. Secondly, due to the complexity of REDD+, it is always challenging to get a buy-in from grassroots stakeholders, who are expected to drive the mechanism at local level.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Improve communication and outreach strategies:** Accessibility of information on REDD+ needs to be improved by developing materials in simple language and communicating them effectively to grassroots people. In order to increase the outreach of REDD+ capacity development in a cost effective manner, a cadre of grassroots facilitators must be built who serve as key agents to communicate REDD+ updates to grassroots people.
- **Safeguarding livelihoods interests of grassroots people:** Local livelihoods, attached to forests are crucial for grassroots people. Therefore REDD+ design and preparedness should ensure that it will bring both carbon and non-carbon benefits to local stakeholders. This should further be supported by appropriate safeguards systems in place to avoid any undue harm to grassroots people from REDD+.
- **Participation of grassroots people in REDD+ policy process:** Inclusive and participatory approaches need to be inbuilt in REDD+ design and implementation processes. Special attention is needed to ensure active participation of women and marginalized groups – empowering them with knowledge, integrating their voices into policy processes, obtaining their consent prior to REDD+ implementation and using Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) approach.