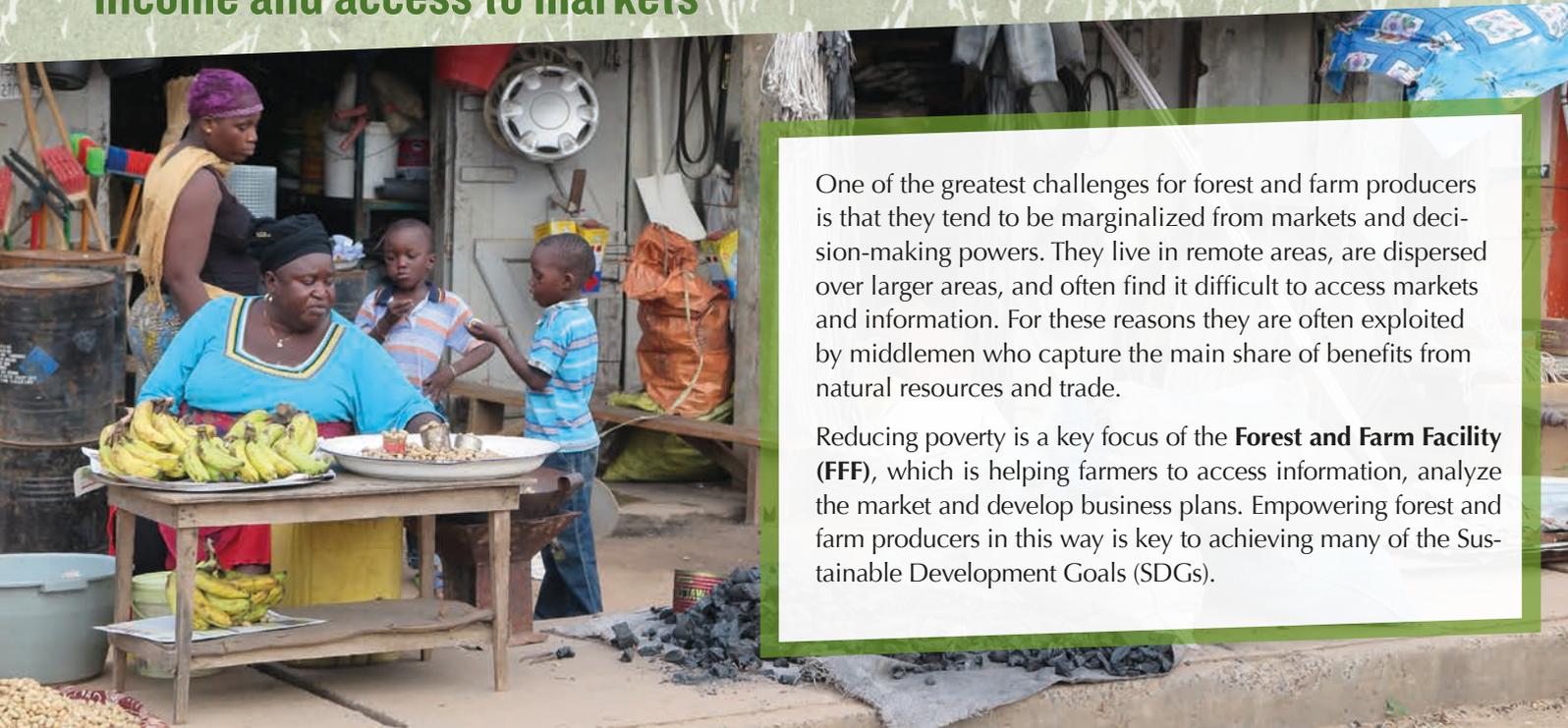




FOREST AND FARM FACILITY

Forest and farm producer organizations improve
income and access to markets



One of the greatest challenges for forest and farm producers is that they tend to be marginalized from markets and decision-making powers. They live in remote areas, are dispersed over larger areas, and often find it difficult to access markets and information. For these reasons they are often exploited by middlemen who capture the main share of benefits from natural resources and trade.

Reducing poverty is a key focus of the **Forest and Farm Facility (FFF)**, which is helping farmers to access information, analyze the market and develop business plans. Empowering forest and farm producers in this way is key to achieving many of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Organizing for market information

Without access to market information, individual forest and farm producers tend to sell their products to whoever will buy them. Forest and farm producer organizations therefore play a critical role in facilitating knowledge exchange and market intelligence among producers, who can work towards getting a better price for their products and identifying potential business partners that can help them access new markets.

In Guatemala, the FFF is supporting Utz Che, a member of the National Alliance of Community Forest Organizations, to establish a business information system for a group of 63 small and medium agroforestry enterprises. The system is helping develop the enterprises and improve products and value. Similarly in the Gambia, the FFF is supporting the National Farmers' Platform to strengthen a system where market information is collected from remote rural areas and crosschecked with market data from across the regions and central level. Information is then fed back to producers via text message, radio, telephone calls and meetings. This system is helping farmers become more aware of market trends and to be better organised in their negotiation with buyers.

Negotiating better prices

The FFF has supported the organization of 18 regional farmers associations into an apex Gambian cashew federation with 15,000 members.

In the Gambia, cashew nuts have taken over as a main cash crop from the traditional groundnut. This is mainly due to farmers becoming more aware of market values. For many years, cashew farmers were competing with each other and supplying a small number of exporters who captured the main share of a very profitable export market. This is now changing.

As a result of improved coordination among farmers, cashew prices have increased fivefold in just two years – from 13 GMD (US\$ 0.3) per kg in 2013 to 65 GMD (US\$ 1.7) per kg in 2015 – with significant impact on the living standards of thousands of cashew farmers and their families.

In Kenya, county-level forest and farm producer organizations are now being established for members of the Farm Forestry Smallholders Producer Association of Kenya in Nakuru and Laikipia counties for nursery owners, beekeepers and poultry producers to aggregate supply and ensure bulk orders.

Empowering women's enterprises

In Nepal, the FFF has provided entrepreneurship and skills development training for Babiyo rope making, Bel squash production, poultry farming and vegetable farming, which has enabled a women's group to increase the sustainability of their business. In Nawalparasi district, 35 women are engaged in Babiyo grass collection and 15 women in rope production. Women who once used their hands to make rope are now using a rope-making machine, which enables them to weave 120 kilos per woman per day. Yet they were unable to find the markets to sell their products. With FFF support, the women were trained in business and marketing skills to connect with service providers and sell their product at Rs55 (US\$ 0.5) per kg, significantly improving their monthly income.

Indigenous Mayangna women producer groups in the Bosawás Biosphere Reserve of Nicaragua have improved the quality and designs of their sustainable tree bark cloth products through capacity-building which promoted the adoption of low-cost added value practices related to their

products. The products have a steady demand in domestic markets.

Mary Wageci Kimotho, 52, has been engaged in local poultry production for the last five years in Laikipia county, Kenya. Her 120 chickens and their eggs have improved her family's nutrition and income, and she is able to pay school fees for her four teenage children. Mary is a member of the Marura Environmental Conservation Community Based Organization, one of the groups in Kenya supported by a partnership between the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the FFF, the Kenya Forest Service, We Effect and the Farm Forestry Smallholder Producers Association of Kenya.

Mary has received many benefits from being a member of the group where she is the chairperson.

“ With FFF support, we will increase our number to form a bigger poultry association that will help us to reach other markets locally and beyond, and increase our income. ”



Reducing rural poverty

Improved market access and better prices for forest and farm producers has a direct impact on poverty reduction and employment in rural areas. The FFF is the only global programme of its kind to work directly with more than 500 forest and farm producer organizations, who can help achieve these changes at scale. The global, regional and national organizations supported by the FFF represent approximately 40 million people, or 10 percent of smallholder farmers worldwide. In 2015, the FFF supported the development of over 100 business plans in 10 countries, with more in the making. The majority of producers report finding it easier to access finance and technical assistance as a direct result of having a bankable plan for their business.

Forest and farm producer organizations play a vital role in creating income and job opportunities in rural areas where poverty is most concentrated and where youth migration is rife. In doing so, they can help achieve many of the SDGs, including reducing hunger (SDG 2) and poverty (SDG 1), sustainably managing natural resources (SDG 15), reducing inequality within and among countries (SDG 10), and fostering decent work opportunities and economic growth (SDG 8). This is where the FFF can help in providing the support and capacity building needed for producer organizations to reach their potential and become the world's most important actors in achieving the transformative change required by the SDGs.

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The FFF is a partnership between:



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