Introducing Community Forestry

ANNOTATED LISTING OF TOPICS AND READINGS

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Forests, trees and people. These basic elements of successful community forestry symbolize an unprecedented programme inaugurated in 1988 by the Food and Agriculture Organization and the Swedish Development Authority. During the period leading up to the inception of this initiative, called The Forests, Trees and People Programme (FIPP), rural development professionals believed that community forestry could be successful. This opinion was based on the positive results of numerous activities and projects worldwide in the previous decade’s Forestry for Local Community Development (FLCD) Programme. However, many questions regarding the development and adaptation of community forestry methods to different scenarios remained.

This is where the FTP Programme comes in. It is designed to diffuse information and knowledge about and ensure increased application of community forestry, dedicating special attention to the unique social, political and economic characteristics of individual communities. Moreover, it requires active participation of local people, with the ultimate goal of empowering them to reap greater benefits from their surrounding trees and forests.

Community forestry has been and continues to be the main way to emphasize the social dimension of forestry and its contribution to the sustainable livelihood of rural people. The subject of community forestry has thus become an important element in core forestry training, since experience shows that forestry without the involvement of the community is unlikely to lead to sustainable development. The inclusion of community forestry topics in forestry training courses serves to enrich the understanding of people-related issues in forestry activities. In working with training institutions, it became apparent to community forestry professionals that these institutions in many countries had difficulties finding reading and reference materials on community forestry. They underlined the need for a reference manual for use in planning and organizing community and other forestry courses, a manual designed specifically to support forestry professionals and instructors at forestry universities and training centres. It should also be useful for governmental forestry departments, non-governmental organizations and project managers in their in-service training.

An integral component of the FTP Programme is the Community Forestry Notes series — an initiative which addresses the problem of informing rural development professionals globally. This note, "Introducing Community Forestry", constitutes the reference manual which is needed. It proposes a course outline that can be adapted for a variety of audiences ranging from university students (academic courses) to administrators (familiarization courses) to field personnel (familiarization courses and implementation courses). The outline presents eight main topics on subjects such as land and resource tenure which are relevant to all forestry programmes. The publication also contains an extensive listing of useful and informative readings — a valuable reference for forestry instructors. It is hoped that future editions can be developed for Latin America, West Africa and other regions, which will include more local and hence more relevant readings.

Because of their extensive experience in transmitting community forestry techniques to rural development professionals, Louise Fortmann, Nancy Lee Peluso and Matt Turner were commissioned to write this document. Funding for the publication was provided by the multidonor Forests, Trees and People Trust Fund. Within FAO,
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This volume can be used by instructors at universities and forestry training centres throughout the world for the preparation of introductory courses on community forestry. It can also be used by researchers and students carrying out research assignments on topics related to community forestry.

The subject of community forestry is a very important complement to core forestry training, since three decades of experience have shown that forestry planning without the involvement of the communities living in the forest areas is unlikely to lead to successful and sustainable development. The direct involvement of local populations and a thorough appreciation of their skills and capacities have proven to be key elements of successful strategies for the development utilization and conservation of tree and forest resources.

In some cases, this approach is referred to as "social forestry". In others, the two terms, "community forestry" and "social forestry", indicate different approaches. In the last thirty years there has been quite some debate over the use of these terms, and not all authors are in agreement. We refer the reader to J. E. M. Arnold’s Community Forestry: Ten Years in Review (Bibliographical citation 9), for a discussion of the matter. In the bibliographical citations of the present publication, the original author’s preference has been respected.

This book is divided into three parts. Part 1, "Outline of Topics for Introductory Courses on Community Forestry", contains a proposed course outline that can be adapted for a variety of audiences ranging from university students (academic courses) to administrators (familiarization courses) to field personnel (familiarization courses and implementation courses). The outline presents eight main topics, each containing: a definition of the general intent; the main points to be covered; and indications for classroom elaboration according to type of audience. Topics and sub-topics are explained, and accompanied by bibliographic references for readings on the subject. These references are intended to provide the instructor with guidance in finding lecture materials and suggestions for reading. For each reference, there are indications regarding regional focus and the intended audience.

Part 2, "Annotated Bibliography", presents the complete bibliographical citations of the readings on community forestry indicated in Part 1. These readings are suitable as course material, both for the teacher in planning presentations and for the student as part of a course reading list. The full citation for each work is accompanied by a summary description of the content. Details have been preserved where useful to illustrate or exemplify a specific issue (regarding e.g. case studies, reports on experiences, evaluations of projects). The texts are arranged alphabetically by authors’ names; in the case of more than one work by the same author, these are presented chronologically; works by an author jointly with other authors are listed after works he/she wrote separately. Articles written by more than one author are listed under the name that appears first.

The Subject Index offers a further tool for instructors and researchers in the field of community forestry. It offers an alphabetical subject guide to instructors (both in academic settings and in training centres) to facilitate planning course and lesson content, and in selecting readings for students. It can also serve as a bibliographical “data bank” for researchers and course participants with research assignments in those parts of the world where computerized and printed bibliographical aids are not readily available. Through the Subject Index, users can have access, not only to the annotations presented in Part 2 of this publication, but also to the articles themselves, where more extensive treatment of the topics can be found.