Supporting Livelihoods:

Nature conservation with a human face, experiences from Tukombo-Kande socio-economic production landscape/seascape in Northern Malawi

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Supporting Sustainable Livelihoods

Presentation Outline

1. Landscape/seascape characteristics
2. Landscape/seascape threats & vulnerability context
3. Strategies for enhancing SEPLS resilience
4. Main activities undertaken
5. Key results achieved
6. Impacts: social, economic, environmental, etc
7. Lessons learnt
8. Challenges

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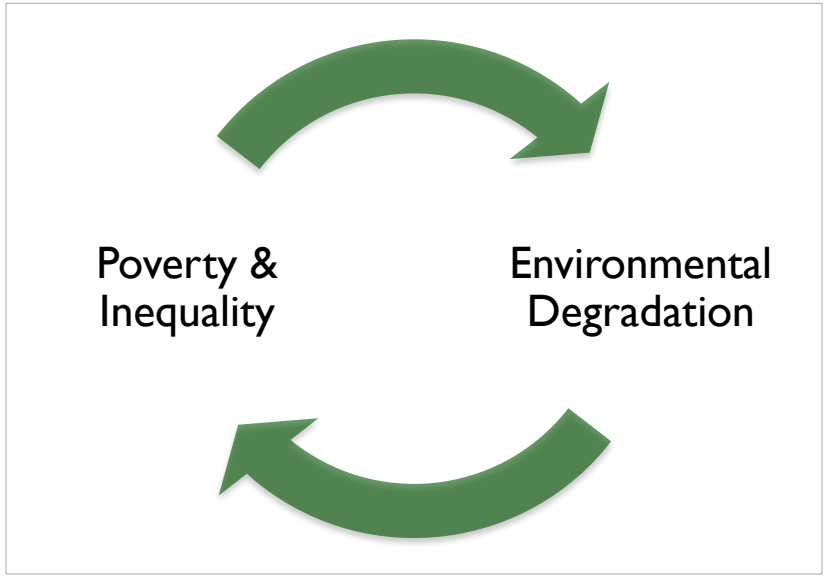
1. Introduction

Why the sustainable livelihoods route?



- Success of env. policies, programmes, legal and institutional provisions depend on poverty alleviation framework and vice versa
- COMDEKS niche in holistic approach, integrating nature conservation with improvements in people's livelihoods, as inspired by the SI's vision of "societies in harmony with nature"

2. SEPLS Description & Characteristics

- SEPL is in northern Malawi, in area still endowed with indigenous forest cover and corresponding diverse biodiversity
- Diversity in landforms, landuse, management practice and livelihood activities.
  - Mountains, flatland, wetland & the lake
  - Protected area (forest reserve), customary land and forests, farmland, settlements, trading centre, floodplain, fishing grounds, etc




3. Landscape Threats

- High deforestation due to agric expansion, including shifting cultivation for millet production

Newly planted cassava field from regenerated land

Landscape Threats cont'd

- Unsustainable farming practices
- Weak governance structures for the mgt of the environment & natural resources
- Over-fishing of shallow water fish stocks
- Poor infrastructure for water and sanitation
- Inadequate livelihoods support systems

4. Landscape Vulnerability Context

Factors increasing vulnerability

- High dependence on rain-fed agriculture (96% in some cases)
- Low levels of resilience to social, economic & environ. shocks
- Little or no access to social development services
- Inadequate skills for meaningful competition for resources
  - Educational, social, economic, governance

5. Strategies & Approaches

- ✓ Identifying target communities
  - Engage with the communities for a clear understanding of their challenges and development aspirations
  - Begin with an appreciative inquiry – What works? What improvements can be made? What do the people have?
  - Work with communities that are ready for change

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…. Strategies & Approaches

- ✓ Incentivize nature conservation work for the willing – address both environment and livelihoods needs




…. Strategies & Approaches

- ✓ Build capacity of vulnerable communities – it's well worth it!

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….. Strategies & Approaches

- ✓ Build capacity of project partners – it's well worth it!

After orientation on reporting for results and impact

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6. Activities addressing both Environment & Livelihoods

Promotion of small-scale livestock production, e.g. goats, poultry (local chicken better than exotic breeds), guinea fowl & rabbits

Goat farming through an innovative "pass-on" scheme

… Activities addressing both Environment & Livelihhods

Agricultural production and market linkages

….. Activities addressing both Environment & Livelihhods

Promotion of financial empowerment of women and youth

….. Activities addressing both Environment & Livelihhods

Promotion of financial empowerment of women and youth

7. Key Results & Impact

Environment

- Increased areas under proper land-use, and enhanced sense of community ownership of natural resources

Edible wild fruits and rare caterpillars from a conserved forest

…. Results & Impact

- ✓ Increased community awareness and knowledge on sustainable use of natural resources

New fish drying racks (right) reduce deforestation

…. Results & Impact

- ✓ Increased access to social services
  - decent housing, education and medical due to enhanced purchasing power

Increased economic activity and incomes due to financial inclusion of vulnerable women and youth

…. Results & Impact

- ✓ Increased capacity to claim rights to communal resources
- ✓ Increased food and nutrition security
- ✓ Improved community wellbeing
- ✓ Enhanced social cohesion among communities due to increased interaction
- ✓ Reduced gender based violence as women gain a competitive position in providing for the home

8. Lessons Learned

- ✓ Tangible Benefits
  - Need to integrate interventions that bring benefits *early in the project cycle* to keep partners and local people interested, motivated and engaged
  - Cross cutting issues (gender, HIV and AIDS etc.) should be integrated
- ✓ Private sector involvement
  - is important in community based conservation enterprises
- ✓ Work within government policy, legal and institutional framework to enhance sustainability of interventions
- ✓ Invest in conserving indigenous knowledge
- ✓ Investing in community capacity pays dividends
  - A dollar weighs more in remote and vulnerable communities than in other communities (higher value for money)
- ✓ Resource mobilization is competitive, requires strategy

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9. Challenges

- High levels of poverty
  - Priority for communities is on meeting food needs before participating in the projects
- Limited operational budget that effected regular monitoring of the projects.
- Lack of capacity
  - Communities can be high-risk due to inadequate project management skills.
  - Need for more investment in M&E.

THANK YOU