Money does not grow on trees, but can trees help the poor grow out of poverty?

Poverty Environment Network
A comprehensive global analysis of tropical forests and poverty

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Background

Just how much do forests help alleviate poverty? Currently we lack the data to answer this question; most forest income in developing countries comes from a myriad of non-marketed and thus unaccounted sources.

The Poverty Environment Network (PEN) of CIFOR aims to fill this gap through a tropics-wide collection of uniform socio-economic and environmental data at household and village levels. PEN aims to be the most comprehensive, comparative, quantitative analysis of the role of tropical forests in poverty alleviation.

What is PEN?

1 international project with subprojects in …
3 continents
4 quarterly income surveys
7 year project from 2004 to 2011
26 countries
38 PEN case studies
240 households in the average study
360 villages or communities surveyed
2 300+ variables in the average study
9 000+ households surveyed
40 000+ household visits by PEN enumerators
300 000+ questionnaire pages filled out and input
500 000+ data points in the average study
18 000 000+ data points in the PEN global data base…
… and counting

The PEN Method

Thorough: Surveys that carefully record all forest, environmental and other income sources through four quarterly surveys to shorten recall periods and increase accuracy

Comprehensive: Balance of data from 26 countries in three continents

Unique: A coordinated effort by a network of doctoral students using a set of common protocols (questionnaire, definitions, methods) to ensure comparability

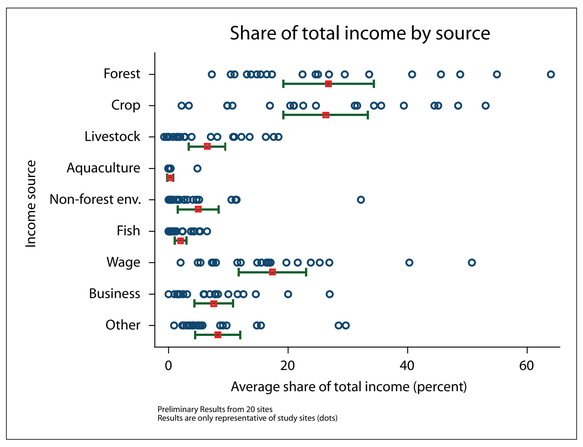
Global data set: A global data set organised to permit a wide range of analyses

Status

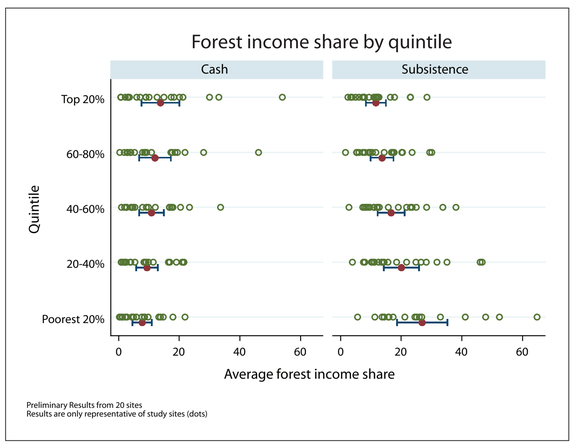
- All primary data collection has been completed
- More than 75 percent of the datasets have been entered and are undergoing comprehensive checking and cleaning
- Half of the datasets have been checked and are ready for analysis
- Preliminary results, mainly of individual studies, have been presented at a number of conferences

Results

Preliminary results from half of the datasets, 20 in all



- Large variation across sites
- On average, 1/4 of household income is from forests



- Poor households depend relatively more on subsistence forest products
- Better-off households have higher relative and absolute cash income from forest products

What's Next

- Complete data checking
- Generate a global dataset
- Analyse forest–poverty interactions using the global dataset
- Publish results in a special journal issue
- Produce a PEN methods book
- Hold final conference, May 2011





