

Toward sustainable forest conservation <Part 2>

Study and planning for forest conservation

It is required to manage forest resources by keeping a balance between utilization and conservation for sustainable management. This issue introduces preliminary studies about forest management project implemented in Malawi and Burkina Faso, mainly focusing on the case of Malawi. The outline of each study is shown in the table below.

In both countries, it was necessary to implement appropriate forest management in order to suppress decline of forest resources due to pressure on the forest by local residents, such as clearing for cultivation, cutting fuel wood, and overgrazing. However, the administrative side in charge of forest management also had problems such as a shortage of human resources and funds, therefore understanding and participation of local residents were essential for proper forest management.

First of all, the study team decided to examine "how to encourage participation and concern of local residents?" As an approach to encourage willingness to participate on the part of the residents, it was proposed that observing similar successful projects and publishing their success stories would be helpful. In the case of Malawi, we proposed a village promotion activity using a virtual character as an encouraging method of residents participation. The character was "Uncle Mishirere" derived from Middle Shire Rehabilitation. He could distribute seeds and seedlings to the residents, instruct construction of nurseries at schools, and train food processing at the women's association. If local specialty products can be produced, marketing of the products shall be considered as the Mishirere brand. This approach would be useful not only to enhance awareness of residents participation, but also to advertise their activities widely in public. Furthermore, we proposed training of extension workers and forestry officers, collaboration with

other organizations, activities involving school teachers and students, in terms of "capacity building". Regarding "ensuring sustainability", we emphasized the importance that residents will be able to realize benefits from income generation activities in both study cases.

In the preliminary study, it was required to propose potential activities to meet the needs and interests of local residents, which were obtained based on information gathered through a relatively short period of investigation. Therefore, it is often likely to suggest as many alternatives as possible, without studying details of implementation methodology of the proposed contents. Regarding the "Uncle Mishirere" mentioned above, it was discussed with the staff of counterpart organizations in the preliminary study, however it was not implemented as actual activities in the pilot project. What is the point to be considered carefully during the preliminary study, in order to propose feasible forest conservation activities as much as possible?

In general, priority needs and interests of residents are "utilization" of forests, and "conservation" is priority for the management side. So, even if a plan for forest conservation is formulated, realizing the plan is difficult without "benefits" for local people generated through implementation. Consequently, it is considered to be important to develop environment so that residents can have access to benefits. In the case of Malawi, the pilot project later pointed out that inadequate knowledge on forestation, ambiguous land ownership, insufficient ability to deal with various needs of residents were the major reasons why the progress of afforestation activities was retarded. As it was mentioned earlier, it is necessary to consider the balance between needs/interests of residents and forest conservation. In addition, it is also important to understand precisely during the preliminary study, whether residents can surely participate in project activities, so as to propose and implement a sustainable forest conservation project.

Title of the Study	Study on Community Revitalization and Afforestation in Middle Shire, Malawi	Study on Management of Forest Reserves in the Province of Comoe, Burkina Faso
Background and Objectives of the Study	The target area was located in the north of Blantyre City, the country's largest, with high population density. Due to the supply of fuel wood to the cities and expansion of cultivated land, they faced the decrease in forest area, farmland soil erosion and productivity decline. A preliminary study was conducted for pilot project implementation including technical support to residents to realize a village natural resource management plan formulated as part of countermeasures.	In the target area, forest was the important resource for residents as a source of fuel wood and non-timber forest products, however, degradation and reduction of forest resources became a problem due to shifting cultivation, overgrazing and field fires. A precious ecosystem was left in the province of Comoe, so a preliminary study was conducted to formulate a practical forest management plan to conserve and utilize the reserved forest in a sustainable manner.
Expected Major Activities of the Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction of various agroforestry technologies - Social Forestry/Afforestation (Fuel wood, Fruit trees, Fodder trees etc.) - Livelihood improvement activities (beekeeping, agricultural processing, and poultry) - Social infrastructure improvement (irrigation facilities such as irrigation ponds) - Organizing residents utilizing existing organizations - Capacity building (cooperation with other organizations, training of extension workers) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthening functions of the Forest Department for forest management and training for forest officers - Implementation of income generation activities to promote residents' participation accompanied by conducting technical training - Strengthening existing residents' organizations and collaborating with other NPOs - Activities involving school teachers and children