Restoration Cases Flagship Collection

Case #10: Forest and Landscape Restoration in Fandriana-Marolambo, Madagascar

Forest and Landscape Restoration requires mobilization of all community members: school children, youth, and adults are involved. Photo credit: A. Razafimahatratra

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In brief

Overview

Madagascar's forests are unique, highly threatened, and extensively cleared. In 2005, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) launched a program in the biodiverse Fandriana-Marolambo (F-M) region to demonstrate how restoring Madagascar's forests could also benefit local people. In F-M, most smallholder farmers were below the poverty line and dependent on forests. Forest and Landscape Restoration (FLR) seemed a good fit—the approach addresses social and ecological challenges using a mosaic of distinct but synergistic interventions across a landscape. In F-M, practitioners used active and passive forest restoration alongside improved agricultural techniques and capacity building in business and marketing. The project unfolded in four phases with complementary goals, including creating a strong foundation for work to continue after WWF support ceased. Over 13 years, the project received 1.6 million Euros of donor support, and designated 51,000 ha of land for community-based management, with 7,000 ha slated for forest restoration. Since WWF support ceased in 2017, some participants have reverted to previous practices, but many communities—especially those that were deeply engaged in decision-making from the beginning—still adhere to community contract commitments to restore forests.

Exemplary practices

WWF used traditional decision-making processes, including oral contracts. Interventions relied on designating land to community management via "community contracts," which secured land tenure and engaged communities. Their phased approach was flexible and allowed them to adapt to changing needs. WWF also planned an exit strategy well in advance and empowered and trained local organizations to take ownership. Engaging and training local organizations, providing viable alternative livelihood options, and training people to grow, plant, and sell native trees helped to keep forests standing and communities engaged.

Key lessons learned

◊ *Recognize that FLR takes time and plan accordingly. Set expectations and develop an exit strategy early in the project.*

◊ *Design restoration to enhance and support conservation, and address forest cover loss.*

◊ *Provide 'proof of concept' to engage communities and landholders in new practices.*

◊ *Recognize that co-creation can mean compromise, but is essential to success.*

◊ *Adopt and strengthen local governance processes, and work with governments at multiple scales.*

◊ *Adapt to local needs, work towards landscape goals.*