



‘Fostering Community Forest Policy and Practice in the Mountain Regions of the Caucasus’ Project

Third assessment report on awareness and capacities in forest management



Baku - 2012

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Background

'Fostering Community Forestry Policy and Practice' Project is focused on development of new institutional, legal and technical set-up for community forest management and in particular aiming to support securing land tenure and forest rights of local communities, implementation of institutional arrangements and land use policies for forest conservation and sustainable use.

Project also provides awareness raising among local communities and local authorities on sustainable forest management its relation and impact on other fields such as climate change, poverty reduction, sustainable development etc. On the other hand, the Project aims to promote the adoption of policies considering community involvement in forest management, to elaborate the legal framework necessary for implementing community forestry, and to provide recommendations and consultancy on technical aspects of implementing community forestry management mechanisms.

As one of the main objectives of the project is to increase the level of awareness and capacities of local communities in forest management and community forest issues, a number of capacity building activities have been conducted during project implementation period. Prior to start of capacity building activities, it was provided first assessment of level of awareness and capacities of local community in forest management and community forest issues. Plan of capacity building activities was based on the assessment results. During the project implementation period, it was conducted the second awareness assessment in order to access improvement in the level of capacities and identify new needs.

Based on the results of above-mentioned assessment reports, new training programmes on sustainable forest management, community forest management planning and on-job trainings have been developed. At current phase of the project it is organized a number of training sessions on above-mentioned topics in target community – Shahriyar community.

Current assessment report is the Third assessment report. The main purpose of the assessment is to access improvement in the level awareness and capacities of local community and identifies new emerging needs. Prior to conduction of the assessment it was prepared semi-structural interview form in order to organize interview among respondents in local community.

I. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

Third Assessment Report is the final stage of assessments provided for identification of level of awareness of local communities and local authorities on sustainable forest management and community forest management. Public awareness expert has provided close collaboration with Project experts and conducted several field meetings and discussion with local community residents and representatives of local authorities of Shahriyar community. Prior to assessment process, it was developed specific semi-structural interview form in order to use during field meetings and interviews.

1.1. Preparation phase

Prior to start of assessment report, Public awareness expert has provided initial preparation activities described below:

- Desk study and analyzes of previous project documents, especially reports on first and second assessment;
- Preparation of draft semi-structural interview form;
- Initial field visit to pilot community after approval of semi-structural interview form by Azerbaijan Branch office of REC Caucasus in order to provide pilot testings of interviews;
- Revision of semi-structural interview form and final submission.

1.2. Applied methodology

The following methodology was applied during provision of assessment using participatory approach as a basic:

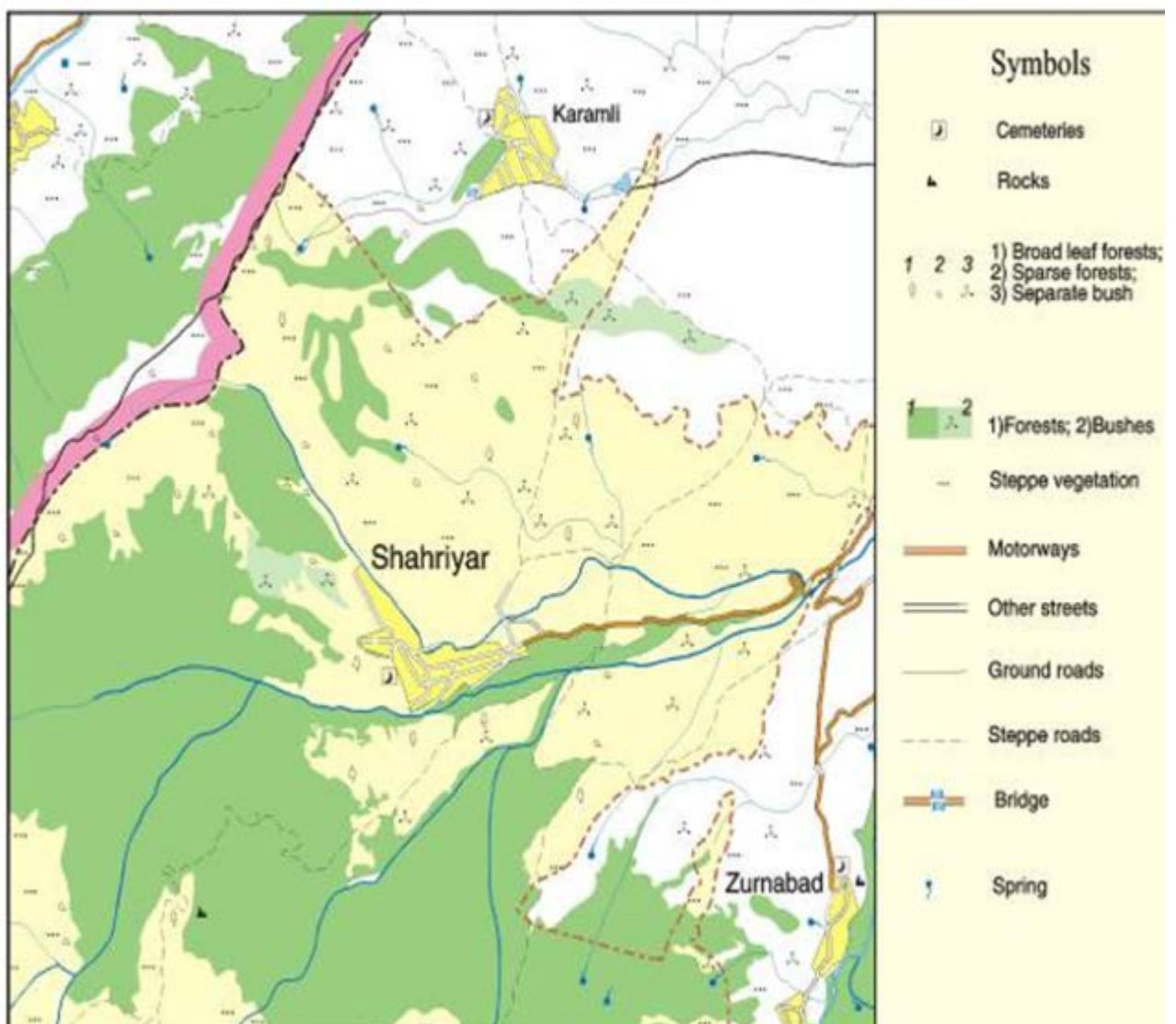
- Study of regional and international experience on conduction of assessments of awareness in local communities;
- Analyzes on previous project documents and assessment reports. Analyzes on previous project documents and assessment reports;
- Desk study, field observation and discussions with local authorities in order to assess socio-economic and geographical situation of the region;
- Organization of field meetings and active discussions with target community residents and representatives of local authorities to identify the level of their awareness on sustainable forest management and community forest management issues.

II. General description of Shahriyar community

Goygol district is situated in the west of Azerbaijan, in the south of Ganca city, in foothills area at the bottom of Lesser Caucasus Mountains. Gamishdag is the top mountain of Murovdag maintains chain. Goygol was formed as a district in 1930. Till 1938, the district was named as Narimanov district. From 1938 till 2008 it was named as Xanlar. Since April 2008 the name was changed as Goygol with the law of Milli Medjlis. There is 1 city, 4 settlements and 43 villages under administration of Goygol district. The distance between Baku is 324 km.

Shahriyar municipality covers Shahriyar and Keremly villages of Goygol district. Shahriyar community is situated in south-west of Goygol district. The distance to the Shahriyar village from district center is 13 km and to Keremly village is 12 km. The distance between Keremly and Shahriyar villages is 4 km. Total population of Shahriyar municipality is 1633 and 258 of them are Displaced People.

Figure 1: Geographical map of Shahriyar community



Total population of Shahriyar community is 1436 and number of households is 404. Distribution of population of the community by age and sex, as well changes in number during 2006-2011 is provided in below table:

Table 1: Demographic indicators

Total population	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total	1408	1431	1400	1403	1405	1436
And also						
Males	748	761	732	742	745	759
<i>0-13 age</i>	210	212	205	207	203	213
<i>14-18 age</i>	73	74	69	70	73	74
<i>19- 50 age</i>	242	250	243	246	247	248
<i>51-63 age</i>	110	111	107	108	110	111
<i>63+ age</i>	113	114	108	111	112	113
Females	653	670	668	661	662	669
<i>0-13 age</i>	183	188	186	184	180	184
<i>14-18 age</i>	86	82	90	88	86	87
<i>19- 50 age</i>	178	184	180	180	182	183
<i>51-63 age</i>	118	122	121	119	121	122
<i>63+ age</i>	88	94	91	90	93	94
Number of population constantly living in the village	1408	1431	1400	1403	1405	1436
Number of families	391	393	395	400	400	404

1.1. Past experience in forest management

In Former Soviet times all forest in the territory of Shahriyar village and its surroundings were under State ownership and some part of them governed by 'kolkhoz' institution. Management of forests was directly provided by the Forest Administration of Goygol district and kolkhoz after name by Ordjanakidza. There were many foresters specialized in forest management working at 'kolkhoz'. All activities in forest areas provided without permission of 'kolkhoz' were forbidden. Forests under ownership of 'kolkhoz' were considered as part of village economy and served for improvement of welfare of local population. 'Kolkhoz' was providing protection and regeneration of forests. All these

factors prove that local population of Shahriyar community has enough experience in forest management and they have sense of ownership of their own forests.

First experience of the community on Community Forest methodology was launched in 2010 when pilot initiative on planting of community forest took place. Frequent field visits and regular capacity building activities provided to local community, Community Committee members and local authorities have supported them during implementation of community forest activities.

1.2. Description of forest area

Total area of forest lands of State Forest Fund is 1120 ha of which 1059 ha or 94,5 % are areas covered with forests, 40,1 ha or 3,5 % areas not covered with forests non-forest lands, and 21,5 ha or 2,0 % are non-forest areas. 1,1% of areas covered with forest are forest plantings and 0,2% are forest plantings with not joined sunshades. Areas not covered with forests are mainly consisting of glades and open areas (37,6 ha- 3,3 %). Forests are covering 98,8% of area covered with forest and mainly consist of hornbeam, oak, beech, birch-tree and nut trees. Other tree species existing in the forests are ash-tree, pine-tree and currant that provides only 1,2% of total forests.

1.3. Social-economical situation in Shahriyar community

Along with environmental impact of new Community Forest in Shahriyar community, it will play an important role in increase of socio-economical indicators of local residents. Local residents benefiting from Community Forest will improve income sources and create alternative ones. It is very important to know current socio-economical situation of target community in order to provide comparative analyzes during project implementation period. Socio-economical indicators of Shahriyar community of Goygol district is provided in following sections:

1.3.1. General data (local infrastructure)

Total area of Shahriyar village is 19.79 km² of which 1767 ha of land is suitable for agricultural activities. Total length of village internal roads is 21.3 km, of which 1 km is asphalt coated roads, 11 km are country roads and others are ground roads. The access to markets of local population is on average level. Main markets for sale are markets of Goygol and Ganca districts.

Table 2: Main economic indicators

Main indicators	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Agricultural production, in thousand AZN					
- Crop production	369 500	379 346	385 380	401 350	402 370
- Cattle breeding	235 240	240 350	250 500	278 500	276 300
Number of land users	1015	1031	1009	1012	1018
Retail trade turnover, in thousand AZN	229.3	231	235.7	242.5	253.4
Incomes of municipal budget, in thousand AZN	5.6	20.7	10.3	3.3	3.3

1.3.2. Socio-economical indicators

Socio-economical indicators of Shahriyar community are provided in below tables:

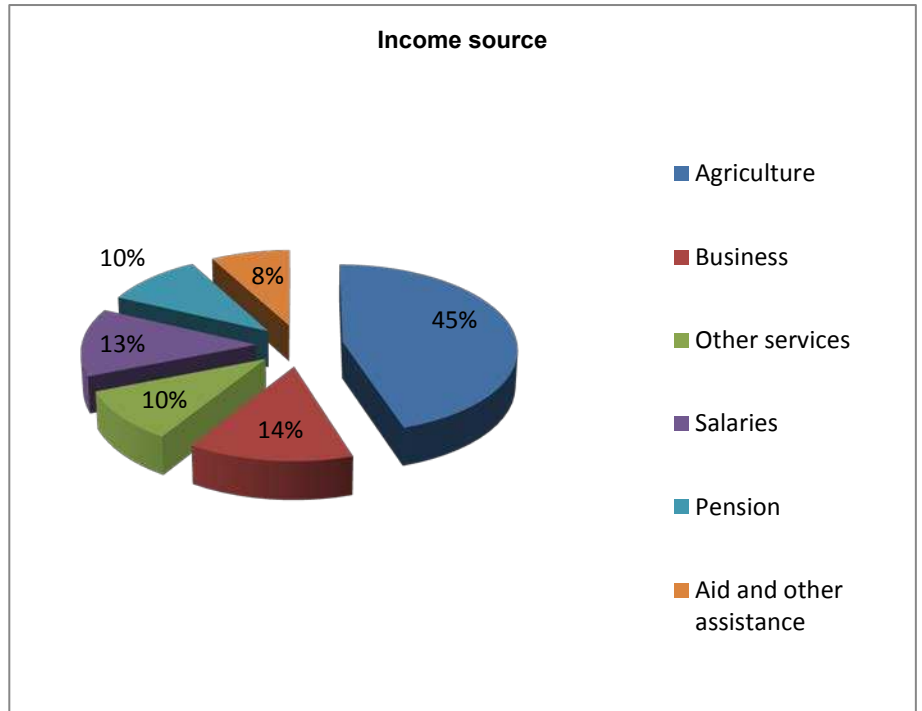
Table 3: Socio-economical indicators of the community

Employment		
Category	2005	2010
State institutions	120	125
Local municipality	6	6
Private sector	2	2
Agriculture	9	12
Private entrepreneurs	3	8
Family households	250	265
Education and health		
Name	2005	2010
Number of pre-school educational unit	1	1
Number of secondary schools	3	3
Number of population with high education	85	91
Number of population with secondary education	1000	1082
Medical points	1	1
Number of doctors	1	1
Number of medical nurses	3	3

Agricultural activities are the basic of local economy of Shahriyar community. There are not any industrial entities in village area. Local population is mainly deal with livestock activities, crop production, vegetable production and fruit-growing activities. Data of last years on crop production and livestock activities are provided in below tables:

Figure 2: Income source of local population

Average annual income of community residents is about 3000-4000 AZN (250-350 Azn monthly) Main income source of local population is agricultural activities. Other income sources are salaries, pensions and other allowances, aids and other donations, business activities, trade and other services such as barbers, drivers and so on. Formation of income of local population could be described as in related diagram.



III. Level of awareness and capacities

In order to identify the level of awareness and capacities of local communities and local authorities in was conducted 2 types of interviews:

- Semi-structural interviews
- Focus group discussion (mainly with representatives of local authorities and active community leaders)

Total number of interviewed respondents was 30. The number of participants at focus group discussion was 14.

3.1. Results of focus group discussions

Focus group discussion was organized at municipality building of Shahriyar community. Totally, 14 participants (representatives of local authorities and active community leaders) have attended the discussions. Main topics of discussions were the followings:

- Sustainable forest management in Shahriyar community
- Benefits of community forest
- Attitude towards the community forests and level of awareness of local authorities and communities on sustainable forest management and community forests issues



During the discussions, representatives of local authorities and community leaders have provided active participation and their views and opinions on sustainable forest management and community forest issues. The followings could be listed as main feedback of focus group discussion:

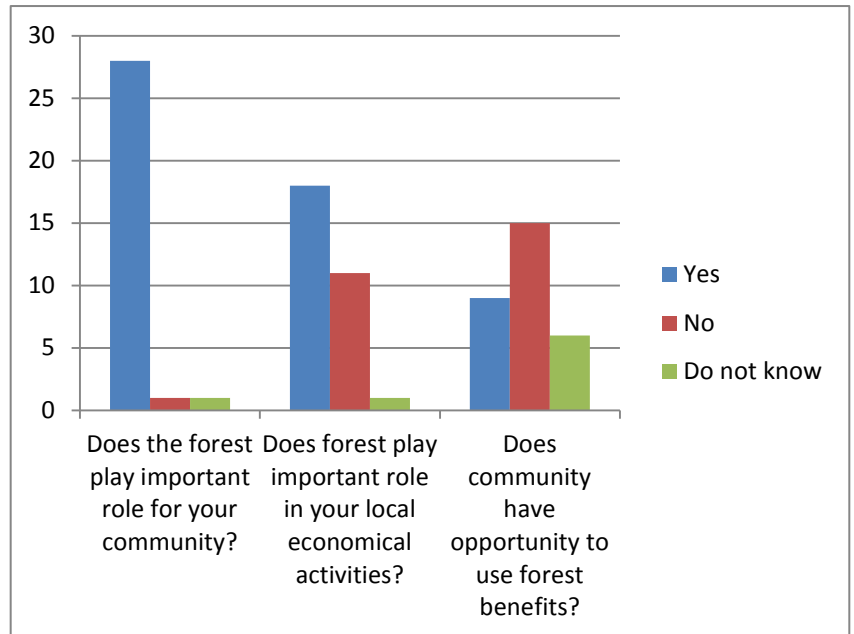
- All representatives of local authorities have good understanding and knowledge on community forest management issues;
- Local authorities fully support community forest initiatives and understand its benefits for local community;
- It was stated the importance of continuation of training programmes on sustainable forest management and community forest management issues in order to increase;
- It is observed increase in knowledge and capacity of local authorities related to sustainable forest management and community forest management issues.

3.2. Results of semi-structural interviews

As it was mentioned above, the semi-structural interviews were conducted among 30 respondents (15 male, 15 female) representing different social status.

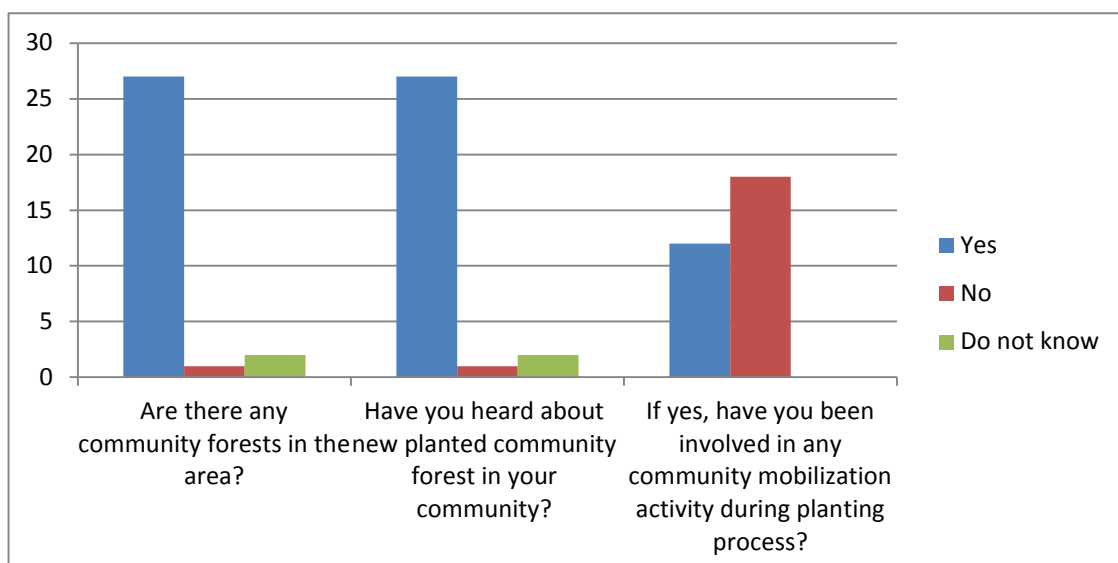
Figure 3: Importance of forests and its benefits

Almost all community residents have indicated the importance of forests for their community. Majority of respondents were able to list main forest benefits for local population. 60% of respondents have indicated importance of forest in their economic activities. Due to results, only 30% of community residents are currently benefiting from the forests. Without having gas supply, most respondent indicate the usage of forest materials as a fuel in winter season.



Regards the community forest area planted in Shahriyar community, 95% of respondents have heard about this initiative. Only 40% of respondents have indicated that they have participated during activities related to planting of community forests. This result is understandable, as mostly (even only) males participate at such community mobilisation activities as they consider planting of trees as hard field work.

Figure 4: Information on community forest

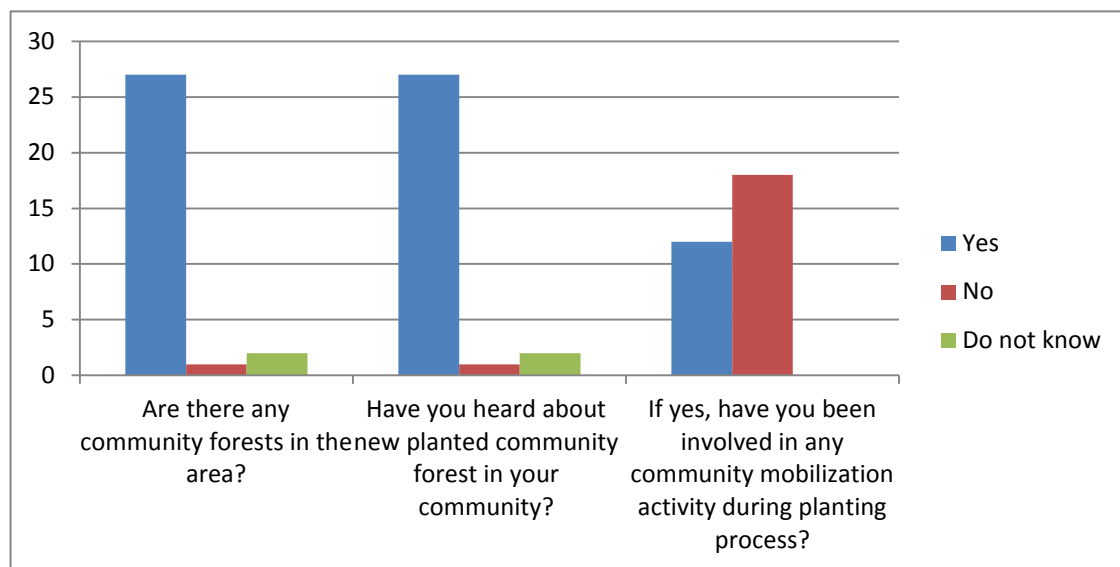


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Figure 5: Information on sustainable and community forest management

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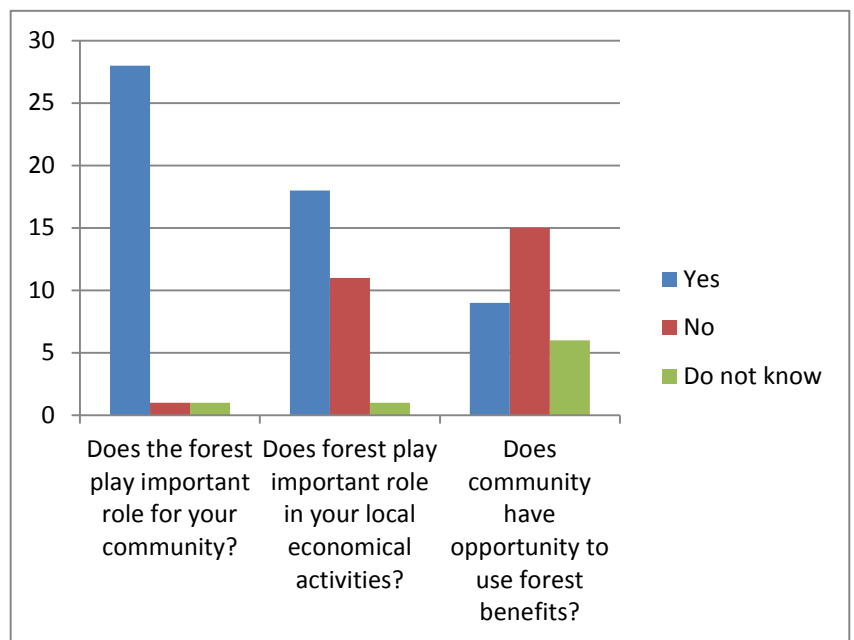
Figure 6: Information on community forest



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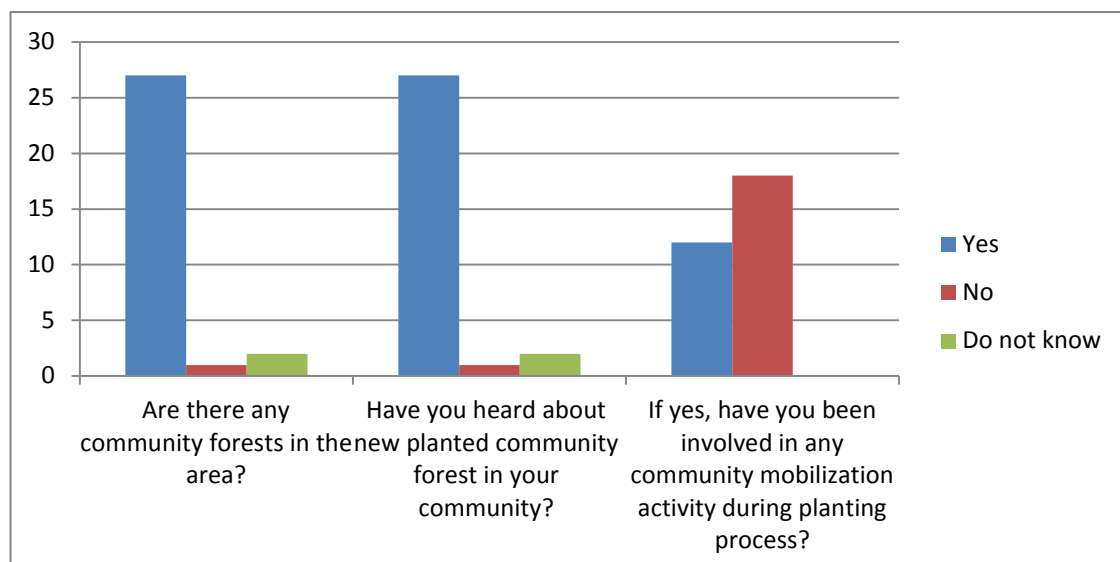
Figure 7: Importance of forests and its benefits

Almost all community residents have indicated the importance of forests for their community. Majority of respondents were able to list main forest benefits for local population. 60% of respondents have indicated importance of forest in their economic activities. Due to results, only 30% of community residents are currently benefiting from the forests. Without having gas supply, most respondent indicate the usage of forest materials as a fuel in winter season.



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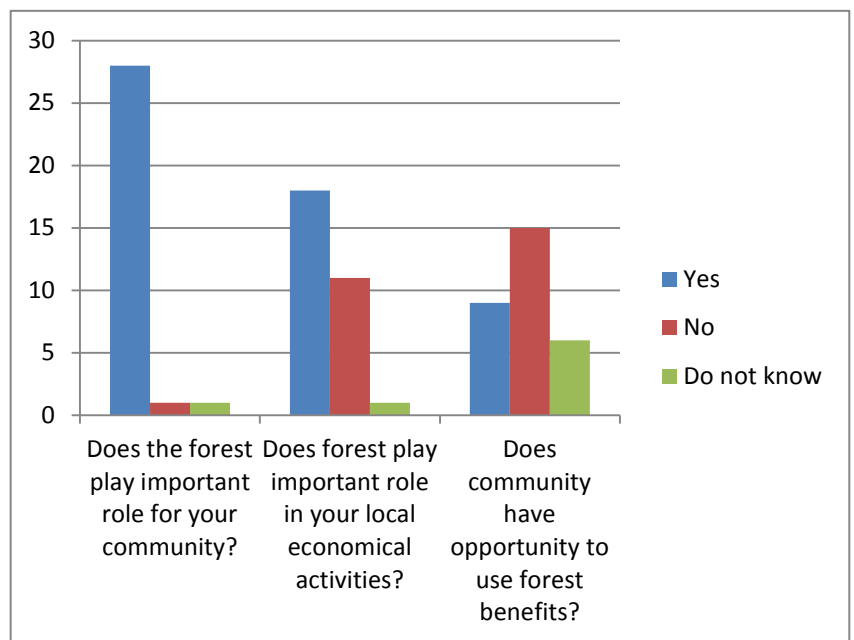
Figure 8: Information on community forest



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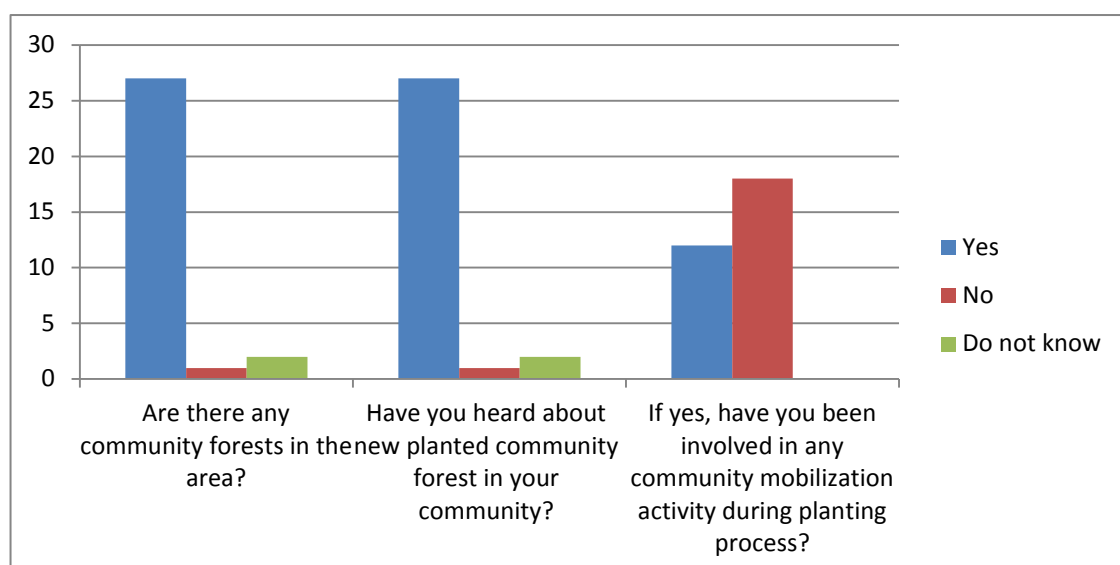
Figure 9: Importance of forests and its benefits

Almost all community residents have indicated the importance of forests for their community. Majority of respondents were able to list main forest benefits for local population. 60% of respondents have indicated importance of forest in their economic activities. Due to results, only 30% of community residents are currently benefiting from the forests. Without having gas supply, most respondent indicate the usage of forest materials as a fuel in winter season.



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Figure 10: Information on community forest



IV. Conclusion

Third Assessment Report is the final stage of assessments provided for identification of level of awareness of local communities and local authorities on sustainable forest management and community forest management. As a result of provided discussions during several field meetings and discussion with local community residents and representatives of local authorities of Shahriyar community and analyses of interview results the following could be mentioned as main conclusion:

- Local authorities are aware of importance of community forests for their community and likely to cooperate with project in future;
- Local community residents understand the benefits of community forests;
- It has been observed increase in knowledge and capacity of both local authorities and community residents on sustainable forest management;
- It has been observed increase in knowledge and capacity of both local authorities and community residents on community forest management;
- 30% of community residents are currently benefiting from community forests;
- 30% of community residents have increased their capacity on sustainable forest and community forest management issues;
- 90% of community residents and representatives of local authorities are supporting current initiative related to community forest and are interested in participation in similar activities in future;
- Local authorities provide initiative in community forest management and it makes for sustainability of community forest in pilot area.

Annex: Semi-structural interview form

Project name: “Fostering Community Forest Policy and Practice in Mountain Regions of the Caucasus” project

SEMI-STRUCTURAL INTERVIEW

for assessment of knowledge and attitude on sustainable forest management

Enumerator Number _____
Date of Interview ____/____/2012
Village Name: _____
Name of interviewed person: _____

A. General information		
1	Sex of interviewed person (<i>circle one</i>)	1 = male 2 = female
2	Civil status of interviewed person (<i>circle one</i>)	1 = married 2 = single 3 = divorced 4 = widow
3	Age of interviewed person	_ _ Years old
4	Main type of economical activity	1=Agriculture 2=Other business 3=Service 4=Civil worker 5=Other (specify) _____
5	Role of forest in formation of family income?	1 = high 2 = medium 3 = negligible 4 = none

B. Attitudes and practices		
5	Does the forest play important role for your community?	1 = yes 2 = no 3 = don't know
6	If yes, what benefits from forest you can list?	1= esthetic view 2= better environment 3= provide wood 4= providing other secondary benefits 5= attracting tourists 6= prevents degradation and erosion 7= other (please specify)

7	Does community have opportunity to use forest benefits?	1 = yes 2 = no 3 = don't know
8	Is there any request for special allowance to use forest resource or it is totally forbidden?	1=you need special allowance 2=restricted use 3=totally forbidden
9	Does forest play important role in your local economical activities?	1 = yes 2 = no 3 = don't know
10	If yes, how?	_____
11	Does the area of forest has been reduced or increased during past years?	1 = Reduced 2 = Increased 3= Don't know
12	If reduced, could you list at least 3 reasons of deforestation?	1 = _____ 2 = _____ 3 = _____
13	Are there any community forests in the area?	1 = yes 2 = no 3 = don't know
14	Have you heard about new planted community forest in your community?	1 = yes 2 = no 3 = don't know
15	If yes, have you been involved in any community mobilization activity during planting process?	1 = yes 2 = no 3 = don't know

C. Knowledge and capacity

16	Do you have any information on sustainable forest management?	1 = yes 2 = no
17	If, yes where did you get such information (specify)	_____
18	Do you have any information on community forest management?	1 = yes 2 = no
19	If, yes where did you get such information (specify)	_____
20	Have you heard about "Fostering Community Forest Policy and Practice in Mountain Regions of the Caucasus" project implemented in your community?	1 = yes 2 = no 3 = don't know
21	If yes, what are the main important features of the project for development of your community? (please list)	1 = _____ 2 = _____ 3 = _____

22	Have you participated at any capacity building activities related to sustainable forest management and community forest management?	1 = yes 2 = no
23	If yes, what knowledge did you get at such trainings? (specify)	_____
24	Have your heard about Community Forest Management Plan developed for your community?	1 = yes 2 = no
25	If yes, what is the main purpose of that plan?	1=Development of community forests 2=I don't know
26	Have you been involved to community consultation process during preparation of Community Forest Management Plan?	1 = yes 2 = no
27	If yes, in what manner?	_____
28	Are you beneficiary of planted Community Forest in your community?	1 = yes 2 = no
29	If no, why?	_____
30	If yes, in what manner?	1=vegetable production 2=use as hayfield 3=collecting secondary forest products 4=collecting forest fruits 5=other _____
31	Do you think that Community forest are well-protected and cared after by local municipality and Community Committee?	1 = yes 2 = no 3 = don't know
32	Have you participated at any community mobilization activity related to forest protection or restoration?	1 = yes 2 = no
33	Do you think that you have enough information on sustainable forest management and community forest management?	1 = yes 2 = no 3 = don't know
34	What other skills and knowledge you need to develop your capacity on sustainable forest management and community forest management?	1 ----- 2 ----- 3 -----

35	Do think that it is necessary to expand community forest in the area?	1 = yes 2 = no 3 = don't know
36	If answer positive, please explain the reasons	1 ----- 2 ----- 3 -----

Thank you for participation!