

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

Background

Forests and other natural resources are crucial to the livelihoods of millions of poor people worldwide.

But just how important are forests for poverty alleviation? Surprisingly, there is a lack of data to answer this and other related questions.

PEN, a tropics-wide collection of high-quality household and village level data has been designed to fill this gap.

Aim: to be the most comprehensive, comparative, quantitative review of the role of tropical forests in poverty alleviation.

What is PEN?

- 1 overall project composed of distinct sub-projects
- 3 continents, with a reasonable balance between the three
- 4 quarterly income surveys; shorter recall = greater accuracy
- 7 year project (2004-2011)
- 26 countries
- 38 PEN case-studies
- 239 households in the average study
- 364 villages or communities surveyed
- 2 313 Variables in the average study
- 9 000 + households surveyed
- 40 950 household visits by PEN enumerators
- 456 546 data cells (observations) in the average study
- 294 150 questionnaire pages filled out and entered
- 17 348 734 data cells in the PEN global data base!



The PEN Method

Unique: A coordinated effort by a network of PhD students

Comprehensive: 26 countries, 3 continents

Ground-breaking: Largest effort to collect household level data of forests and poverty

Thorough: Detailed and rigorous multi-scale data collection

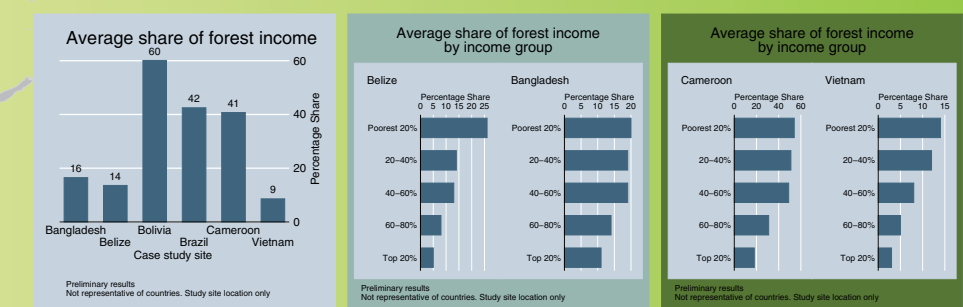


Status

- * Fieldwork, data collection guidelines & questionnaires developed, tested & now implemented.
- * 90% field work completed, 40% data entered.
- * Data cleaning & management ongoing, preliminary analysis underway

Preliminary results; a taste of what's to come:

- Forests are an important source of income but
- How important varies across the different study sites
 - The poor appear to be more dependent on them



Outlook

- * Analysis: Global and local analysis will continue
- * International workshops & conferences: planned for 2009 & 2010
- * Publications: A book on the PEN 'experience' is being written. Special editions of leading journals are planned
- * Panel data: Follow up studies are planned for some study sites.

Acknowledgements

PEN partners and associates



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IFS

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PEN: Putting forestry issues onto the poverty agenda since 2004

