

FUTURES Project Theory of Change

Overview

The FUTURES project, situated in the Yayu Biosphere Reserve of Southwest Ethiopia, aims to achieve sustainable forest biodiversity and improved reproductive health (RH) and livelihoods of women and young people in the region. The project is funded by the Packard Foundation and is implemented by CARE Ethiopia and its three local partners: Oromia Development Association (ODA), Environment and Coffee Forest Forum (ECFF), and Kulich Youth Reproductive Health and Development Organization (KYRDA).¹ The Data for Impact (D4I) project, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), is collaborating with the FUTURES project to develop and implement a rigorous monitoring and evaluation system to generate evidence for integrated programming. As a first step in this work, the partners worked together to articulate and design a Theory of Change (TOC).

The TOC is a graphic representation of how the project will work to achieve its goal through gender transformative interventions across RH, livelihood, and ecological activities. The TOC depicts the context in which the project operates and illustrates pathways in which the project expects to accomplish its outcomes and goal.

Context

The FUTURES project provides unique opportunities for multisectoral collaboration between people, especially women and youth, and the agricultural industry. The region faces challenges in low productivity of crop farming and a history of forest management practices that have fostered degradation and deforestation. Women and youth have historically been less involved in the economic and livelihood-generating opportunities offered by the agriculturally rich region, which is partially driven by high rates of child marriage and teen pregnancy, limited access to RH services, and gender barriers to participation. The limited capacity of government and civil society organizations has constrained the extent to which multisectoral collaboration has occurred and to which existing barriers to sustainable agriculture practices, income generation, and access to RH care have been reduced.

Project Goal and Outcomes

The FUTURES project aims to achieve sustainable forest biodiversity and improved RH and livelihoods of women and young people in the Yayu Biosphere Reserve. The project outcomes needed to achieve this longer-term goal include:

1. Increased use of RH care by women and youth
2. Improved livelihood opportunities for women and youth
3. Improved forest conservation practices
4. Effective multi-stakeholder partnerships

The project's "3 Cs" approach of coordination, collaboration, and communication across outcomes will serve to achieve the multisectoral nature of the goal. The intermediate outcomes describe the conditions that must first be reached to achieve the four project outcomes. In turn, the intermediate outcomes will be achieved through interventions across multiple sectors, which are color-coded in the TOC graphic to demonstrate the pathways through which these different sectors intersect to achieve the project outcomes and goal.

¹ The FUTURES project, launched in 2020, is anticipated to continue through 2023.



Gender Transformative Interventions

The activities through which the FUTURES project will achieve its goal are mutually reinforcing activities in the sectors of RH, livelihood generation, ecological conservation, and institutional capacity strengthening.² Interventions will work to remove barriers in each of these sectors from women—especially young women—to achieve increased reproductive agency and increased participation in income generation, agriculture, and forest management.

Reproductive Health

By working to remove barriers to and improving the quality of RH care, especially youth-friendly family planning services, and strategically enhancing economic and business opportunities, more women—especially young women—will experience enhanced reproductive agency, allowing increased participation in the agricultural sector and income generation activities. The project will achieve this through provider training and facility improvement for family planning services, improved referral linkages, and household and community education targeted at reducing stigma to accessing such health services. Interventions designed to target households, communities, and institutions will ultimately result in increased use of RH care for women and youth.

Livelihood Generation

Along with increased reproductive agency, the creation of women- and youth-friendly value chain and enterprises will result in the removal of barriers to women's participation in economic development and farming practice. This will be accomplished through implementation of youth savings and loan programs, diversified livelihood schemes, and climate-smart agriculture (CSA)³ approaches such as the introduction of non-timber forest products. Improved livelihood for women will reinforce their agency and ability to access and use RH services.

Ecological Conservation

Increased participation of women and youth in economic development and farming programs offers an opportunity to simultaneously promote CSA and sustainable forest management, improve forest management, and ultimately improve forest conservation practices that contribute to new opportunities for livelihood generation, including the introduction of non-timber forest products.

Institutional Capacity Strengthening

The formation of multisectoral steering committees as well as the increased mechanisms for knowledge sharing and generation both among and within sectors will lead to improved programming and increased government capacity to support both multisectoral programs and specific outcomes within the sectors of economy, agriculture, forest management, and RH. The “3 Cs” approach will guide the organization of development actors, activities, and resources so that they are used in the most efficient, effective, economic, and equitable way (“coordination”); involve the setup of steering committees, partnerships, and networks that are the basis of interorganizational cooperation (“collaboration”); and share and receive information to learn and contribute to a better understanding of development issues and topics (“communication”).

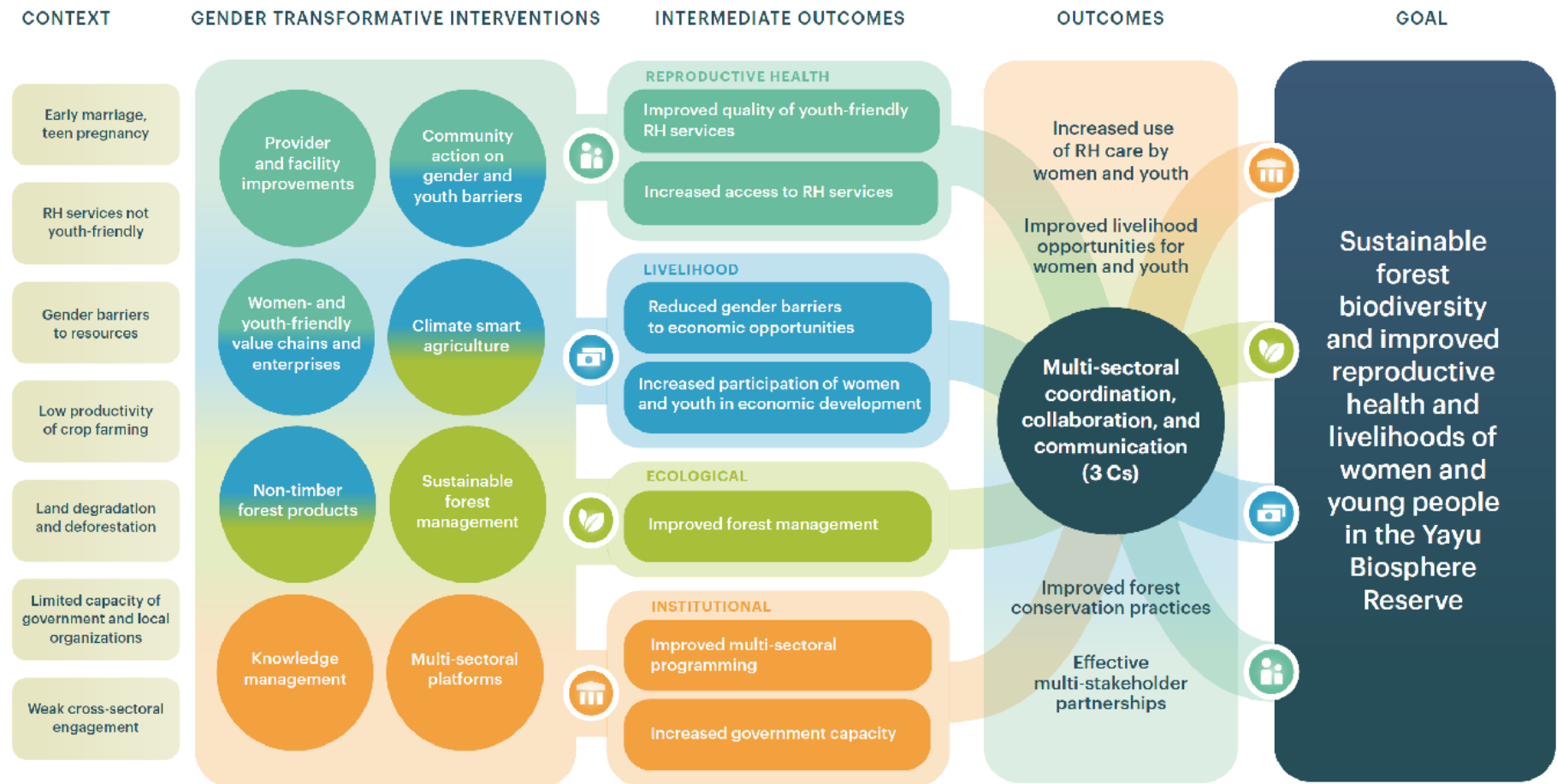
The unique nature of the FUTURES project will leverage existing mechanisms for collaboration, build new partnerships, and increase capacity to achieve sustainable forest biodiversity and improved RH and livelihoods of women and young people in the Yaya Biosphere Reserve.

² Institutional capacity strengthening activities describe how the project will coordinate across government, non-government, and civil society entities

³ Climate-smart agriculture (CSA) is an approach that helps to guide actions needed to transform and reorient agricultural systems to effectively support development and ensure food security in a changing climate. CSA aims to tackle three main objectives: sustainably increasing agricultural productivity and incomes; adapting and building resilience to climate change; and reducing and/or removing greenhouse gas emissions, where possible. Source: <http://www.fao.org/climate-smart-agriculture/en/>



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For more information

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