

# **Some issues in forestry education in Africa**

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***Trends and priorities in forest education***

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# Previous/Current situation

## *Previous/part current emphasis on forest education:*

- Natural forest management (including forest protection/preservation)
- Forest plantation establishment and management
- Harvesting and processing of industrial roundwood
- Marketing and trade in timber and non-timber forest products

→ Asset management- less on delivery of ecosystem and related services

## *Justification:*

- Abundance of natural forests
- Small, inadequately developed and dispersed local markets
- Low population
- Relatively good provision of environmental services

# What has since changed/what should be addressed

- **Rapid loss of forest cover:- deforestation and forest degradation**
- Increasing recognition of forests as a supply of critical environment services for sustainable survival of human, animal and plant life
- The increasing recognition of forests in availability of quality water
- The unavailability of affordable and sufficient supplies of substitutes for woodfuel
- Increasing demands of forest products and services, largely due to increasing economic development and rapid urbanisation

# What has since changed/what should be addressed

- The potential for forests and trees in eliminating poverty
- The potential for forests and trees to substitute fossil fuels
- The emergence of new development concepts like green economy
- The potential of forests and trees in adaptation to and mitigating adverse effects of climate change
- The changing African landscape into a mosaic of patches of forests, crop farms and open spaces.
- Emergence of strong international, regional and sub-regional efforts to better manage and use forest resources
- Emergence of many stakeholders in forest and tree resources

## What has since changed/what should be addressed

- Increasing relevance of *agroforestry and farmer managed natural regeneration*
- Economic reforms that put emphasis on *market led economies and private sector in production, marketing and trade*; with governments getting out of business and therefore not major employers of forestry graduates.
- Political reforms that increase participation of all relevant *stakeholders in decision making and management of forests resources*; and especially local communities.
- *National mainstreaming/implementation of MEAs and related global initiatives*

# Emerging scenario

**A lot of institutions are now dealing with trees and forests and with very divergent objectives**

**Considerable confusion on what the forestry profession is and what should be the forestry education to support it**

**The leading global institutions on forestry appear to have failed to take the lead in addressing this issue**

**Traditional national forestry institutions have attempted to arrest this situation by accommodating some of the new developments**

**In trying to accommodate these changes, forestry now gradually mimics rural development**

# Future of forestry education

- **Forestry education is no longer just about forests and trees**
- It should cover trees in all land use systems, local livelihoods, environment and broader socio-economic development.
- **No particular individual can master the required skills to deliver on all these demands.**
- There could be two kinds of forestry related training in future:
  - One that can deliver on *managing the forest assets*- a forester
  - Another that has to ensure *delivery on the functions* supported by these assets- *a hybrid of a forester with some other specialization.*

## Future of forestry education

- Each of the two will have a little of what the other has, but more of that which is in his/her domain, that is assets or functions.
- To produce the two will take much more than the change of current curricula in relevant institutions.
- Current educators are more asset management oriented, and in-service training and patching the current curricula would not be sufficient to take up the new demands on the sector.
- New learning resources (literature, equipment etc) are needed and broadening of education programmes is a must.



# Future of forestry education

- Proximate disciplines such as agriculture, horticulture, hydrology, land management, wildlife and meteorology must contribute more in shaping the *future forestry education* and foresters, as they will do in *education and training in other land-based disciplines*.
- Considerable investment is needed especially at the technical level training to help transform land use practices in all sectors.
- Continued dialogue between *land based sectors* is needed in order to effectively take up new and emerging areas in their educational and training programmes, as well as dialoguing with *employers* on their specific needs.

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