Informal Work in a New Book on Work in Tropical Forests

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People in Forest Work
13.2 Mio formal jobs in the forest sector are exceeded by far by the 41 Mio of informally employed (FAO, 2014). 3.5 Mio are formally employed in forestry, 5.4 Mio in enterprises producing solid wood products, and 4.3 Mio in pulp and paper production. 2.5 Mio are formally employed in forestry in Africa, Asia and Oceania, Latin America and the Caribbean together. The data are of different quality.

Subsistence Employment
The people living from the forests were hunting and gathering or doing shifting cultivation, in agroforestry. They used Non Wood Forest Products (NWFP) as well as wood, primarily as fuel wood and construction material. This was done – and to some degree still is – in a subsistence economy (Fig. 4).

Challenges, Responsibility
The future of forests worldwide and especially of tropical forests and the fate of the respective societies living in and from the forests, and of the global society, are dependent on the forests and at stake today. This future is strongly connected with the work of many living in the forests, which should be decent work. Here lies the challenge and responsibility of foresters and forest scientists, in particular of the human oriented forest work scientists.

References

All photos taken by the author.

Fig. 1: Manual Log Transport (Oregon)

Fig. 2: Manual Plank Sawing (Indonesia)

Fig. 3: Women Bundling Harvesting Residuals (Oregon)

Fig. 4: Subsistence and Self-employed Activities (Lewark, 2019)

Fig. 5: Charcoal Kiln (Crete)