



GUIDANCE ON MAINSTREAMING GENDER UNDER THE RAMSAR CONVENTION ON WETLANDS



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The Convention on Wetlands

The Convention on Wetlands is a global inter-governmental treaty that provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. It is the only global treaty to focus on one single ecosystem.



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Convention
on Wetlands

GUIDANCE ON MAINSTREAMING GENDER UNDER THE RAMSAR CONVENTION ON WETLANDS

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ACRONYMS

ASOPECUPACHI	Association of Handline Fishers of Palito
ASOMM	Mixed Association of Fishers of Montero
BANCA	Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Association
BLG	Biodiversity Liaison Group
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
ccGAP	Climate Change Gender Action Plan
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEMAVE	Bird Research Centres Brazil
CEPA	Conventions Programme on Communication, Capacity building, Education, Participation, and Awareness
CITES	Convention on Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CIWP	Conservation of the Iranian Wetlands Project
CMS	Conservation of Migratory Species and Wild Animals
CNPT	Socio-biodiversity Centres Brazil
CEPSUL	Fisheries Resources Centres Brazil
CODDEFFAGOLF	Committee for the Defence of the Flora and Fauna of the Gulf of Fonseca
COGCOT	Coordination of Conflicts in Territorial Interfaces
COOPERACHIRA	Cooperative of Female Mollusc-Extractors of Isla Chira
COP	Conference of the Parties
CU	Conservation Unit
EPS	Extra-cellular polymeric substances
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GFP	Gender Focal Point
GPNP	Gunung Palung National Park
GWO	Global Wetland Outlook
HIH	Health In Harmony
HRBA	Human Rights-based Approach
ICMBio	Mendes Institute for the Conservation of Biodiversity
INFOP	Instituto Nacional de Formación Profesional
IPPC	International Plant Protection Convention
ITPGRFA	International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
LCG	Local Conservation Group
LU	Lake Urmia
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEAs	Multilateral Environmental Agreements
MINAE	Ministry of Energy and Environment of Costa Rica
MoJA	Jihad Agriculture Ministry of Iran
MWWS	Moeyungyi Wetland Wildlife Sanctuary
NBSAPs	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NDCs	National Determined Contributions
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NP	National Park
NRF	National Report Format
PNLP	Lagoa do Peixe National Park
REDD+	Reducing Emissions for Deforestation and Forest Degradation

UC	Conservation Unit
UN	United Nations
ULRP	Urmia Lake Restoration Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UN-SWAP	United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UMA	Unidad Municipal Ambiental
SC	Standing Committee
SENASA	Servicio Nacional de Sanidad e Inocuidad Agroalimentaria
SEMARNAT	Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales
SC57	Standing Committee at its 57th meeting
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SHG	Self-help Group
SINAC	National System of Protected Areas of Costa Rica
STRP	Scientific and Technical Review Panel
TC	Term of Commitment
ToT	Training of Trainer
WEE	Women's economic empowerment
WENG	Care International's Women's Empowerment in Natural Resource Governance
WHC	Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage
WHSRN	Site of the Hemispheric Network of Shorebird Reserves
WWD	World Wetlands Day
MWWS	Moeyungyi Wetland Wildlife Sanctuary

Foreword



The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes that women play a vital role as agents of development. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5: ‘Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls’ acknowledges that realizing gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls is crucial to making progress to achieve all the SDGs and their targets.

We have long known that women play a crucial role in the provision, management and safeguarding of wetland resources, especially water, as well as in conserving the culture, folklore, music, mythology, oral traditions, customs, and traditional knowledge around wetlands.

The mission of the Convention on Wetlands is to conserve wetlands and promote the wise use of wetlands throughout the world. The Convention’s Strategic Plan (2016-2024) indicates the direct relevance of these ecosystems to the achievement of the SDGs, including Goal 5 on gender equality and Goal 6 on clean water and sanitation. Importantly, at the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties held in Dubai in 2018, the Parties approved Resolution XIII.18 on *Gender and Wetlands*. This Resolution encourages Contracting Parties to mainstream a gender perspective in their implementation of the Convention, considering the crucial role of women in the provision, management and safeguarding of wetlands, and paying special attention to their specific needs. It also requested the development of guidance on how to integrate gender issues in the implementation of the Convention.

This *Guidance on Mainstreaming Gender under the Ramsar Convention* responds to this request. It aims to enhance the understanding of the Contracting Parties, the Secretariat of the Convention, and partner organizations on why gender matters and on how to mainstream gender aspects in the implementation of the Convention. It includes key operational and practical entry points and addresses four priority areas: national level actions, governance, knowledge management and synergies. And, finally, it includes case studies provided by Contracting Parties and partners to illustrate how the guidance is implemented in concrete terms.

I would like to thank the Governments of Norway and Finland for their generous support to develop this guidance. I hope that it will assist Contracting Parties and our partners to mainstream a gender-responsive approach in the implementation of the Convention, to accelerate the conservation and wise use of wetlands, and to contribute to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls across the world.

Martha Rojas Urrego
Secretary General of the Convention on Wetlands

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Gender continues to be “one of the world’s strongest markers for disadvantage”, which is why reducing inequality is fundamental to achieving the SDGs and other internationally agreed-upon goals. Regrettably, many efforts to mainstream gender equality have too often been confined to simplistic, ad-hoc, and short-term technical interventions that failed in their implementation to challenge inequitable power structures. Gender disparities remain among the most pervasive of all inequalities, hindering the best of development efforts.

There is increasing recognition that the wise use and management of wetlands requires a more thorough understanding of human rights and gender-equality considerations. Numerous studies and experiences worldwide have confirmed that gender inequalities must be addressed as part of the conservation of biodiversity, landscape restoration, adaptation and mitigation to climate change, and efforts to transition to an inclusive and regenerative green economy - especially after the pandemic.

Bearing that in mind, the 13th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands in 2018 approved Resolution XIII.18 on *Gender and Wetlands*. Article 15 of this resolution tasked the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) with exploring “the benefits to wetland management and wise use that derive from taking a gender perspective and developing guidance on how to integrate gender issues in the implementation of the Convention...”.

In response to this mandate, the present document “*Guidance on Mainstreaming Gender Under the Ramsar Convention*” has been elaborated to provide the Contracting Parties, Secretariat, and pertinent organizations with a series of key operational and practical entry points to enhance the mainstreaming of gender equality in the Convention. The paper is divided into three main sections:

Why gender matters: benefits of mainstreaming a gender-responsive approach in the wise use and management of wetlands. This segment introduces the

linkages between gender and wetlands and addresses the consequences and benefits of (not)acknowledging gender considerations in wetland management.

Key operational and practical entry points to ensure that gender equality and women’s empowerment are upheld within the context of wetland management and the implementation of the Convention and its Strategic Plan. The key operational and practical entry points are divided into four priority areas: national, governance, knowledge management and enhanced competencies, and synergies. Each of the priority area contains detailed guidance with concrete entry points, recommendations, and actions address to Contracting Parties, the Secretariat and Observer Organizations. For example, the national priority area introduces “eight golden rules” to facilitate gender equality in all aspects of planning and decision-making, access to capital and financial assistance, and project development.

The suggestions presented throughout this part of the article could serve as the basis for the Standing Committee of the Convention for developing a gender action plan (GAP) for the Convention.

Case studies that showcase the value of embracing a gender approach for the wise use and management of wetlands. Drawing from the extensive expertise of Contracting Parties and international, civil society, and indigenous peoples’ organizations, this section presents 15 case studies from around the world. These initiatives provide information on the connection between gender equality, women’s empowerment, and the wise use, management, and conservation of wetlands. The outcomes of these efforts illustrate that gender mainstreaming are not only possible but necessary for maximum efficiency.

Additionally, Annex 2 presents a set of resources to enhance the mainstreaming of gender equality and women’s empowerment in the wise use, management, and conservation of wetlands, applied by other United Nations Agencies, development agencies, and Multilateral Environmental Agreements.

CONTEXT

The 13th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands in 2018 approved Resolution XIII.18 on *Gender and Wetlands*. Article 15 of this resolution tasked the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) with exploring “the benefits to wetland management and wise use that derive from taking a gender perspective and developing guidance on how to integrate gender issues in the implementation of the Convention...”.

In response to this mandate, this Guidance document has been elaborated to provide the Contracting Parties, Secretariat, and pertinent organizations with a series of key operational and practical entry points to enhance the mainstreaming of gender equality in the Convention. This Guidance document forms part of the overall STRP work plan to be delivered for the 2019-2021 triennium.

This Guidance document is divided into three main sections:

- I.** Why gender matters: benefits of mainstreaming a gender-responsive approach in the wise use and management of wetlands.
- II.** Key operational and practical entry points to ensure that gender equality and women’s empowerment are upheld within the context of wetland management and the implementation of the Convention and its Strategic Plan.
- III.** Case studies that showcase the value of embracing a gender approach for the wise use and management of wetlands.

I. WHY GENDER MATTERS: BENEFITS OF MAINSTREAMING A GENDER-RESPONSIVE APPROACH IN THE WISE USE AND MANAGEMENT OF WETLANDS

There is increasing recognition that the wise use and management of wetlands requires a more thorough understanding of human rights and gender-equality considerations. Numerous studies and experiences worldwide have confirmed that gender inequalities must be addressed as part of the conservation of biodiversity, landscape restoration, adaptation and mitigation to climate change, and efforts to transition to an inclusive and regenerative green economy - especially after the pandemic.

Gender equality: refers to the equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities, and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Equality between women and men is seen as a human rights issue and a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centered development.

It is also recognized that gender inequalities are rooted in legal and social norms. Including unequal access to education, economic opportunities and decision-making, and other social factors—such as age, wealth, and ethnicity—which dictate how (and if) women and men access, use, and control wetlands¹. Within this context, in 2019, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) established General Recommendation 34

on the Rights of Rural Women. It recognized that “rural women continue to face systematic and

persistent barriers to the full enjoyment of their human rights and that, in many cases, conditions have deteriorated”².

At the international level, the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development makes explicit commitments to gender equality (SDG5)³, both as a standalone goal on gender equality and women's empowerment and as a cross-cutting issue for all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDG 5 states that providing women and girls with equal access to education, health care, decent work, and representation in political and economic decision-making processes will bring about sustainable economies and benefit societies and humanity at large⁴.

As a relevant global player, the Convention on Wetlands holds a unique position to strengthen efforts and reduce gender inequalities. Specifically, Resolution XIII.18 on *Gender and Wetlands* marks an essential step in advancing gender issues in the wise use of wetlands and provides the framework for the development of these guidelines. Implementation of

Gender-responsive approach: Recognizes and acknowledges gender norms and inequalities and responds to them by creating actions, policies, and initiatives to address the different needs, constraints, and opportunities of women and men. A gender-responsive approach ensures that women and men's differential needs are addressed; that participation of women and men is equitable; and that distribution of benefits, resources, status, and rights are equitably addressed.

1 Castañeda Camey, I., Sabater, L., Owren, C. and Boyer, A.E. (2020). Gender-based violence and environmental linkages: The violence of inequality. Wen, J. (ed.). Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. 246pp. Available at: <https://portals.iucn.org/library/node/48969>

2 CEDAW General Recommendation 34 on the Rights of Rural Women. Available at: <https://16dayscampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/N1606190.pdf>

3 Targets specified under SDG5: “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls,” address key issues, including discrimination and violence against women and girls, unpaid care, domestic work, and access to productive resources.

4 UN Sustainable Development Goals.

this Resolution requires a gender-responsive approach to address women’s and men’s specific needs and to provide and empower women to participate at all levels in the decision-making and implementation of wetland-management programmes.

Linkages between gender and wetlands

Gender is, in essence, a term used to emphasise that sex inequality is not caused by the anatomic and physiological differences that characterize women and men, but rather by the unequal and inequitable treatment socially accorded to them. In this sense, gender alludes to the cultural, social, economic, and political conditions that are the basis of specific standards, values, and behavioural patterns related to genders and their relationships⁵.

Gender: Refers to the roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society at a given time considers appropriate for men and women. These attributes, opportunities, and relationships are socially constructed, context/ time-specific, and can change over time and vary widely within and across cultures. Gender is part of the broader sociocultural context, including class, race, ethnic group, and age.

Individual women and men are as unique and diverse as their needs and capacities. It is important to flag that gender interacts (intersects) with other social variables or ‘identities’—such as age or ethnicity—which factor into and define differentiated rights, roles, and responsibilities. Women, or men for that matter, are not a homogenous group.

Despite recent advances, it remains the case that there are significant differences

between the rights realised and opportunities available for women and men in most societies. These include, among others: differences concerning land and resource rights, access to goods, services and financial resources, and spaces to participate in and influence decision-making processes. The reality is that inequality between men and women is ingrained in socio-cultural norms and values worldwide. Even in those countries demonstrating the highest levels of equality, discriminations and inequities persist, creating obstacles for families and communities to attain their highest levels of wellbeing.

Case Study: Moeyungyi Wetland Wildlife Sanctuary (MWWS).

Moeyungyi Wetland Wildlife Sanctuary (MWWS) is one of the six Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites) in Myanmar. The Norway-Myanmar bilateral project, namely “Conservation of Biodiversity and Improved Management of Protected Areas in Myanmar”, focuses on strengthening the management of Myanmar’s wetlands and protected areas.

Gender is one of the critical aspects of sustainable resource use or extraction activities in MWWS. Women are directly involved in many livelihood activities such as fishing, boat transportation, collection of leeches, snails, shells, lotus, insects (or giant water bugs) and firewood, duck farming, making textiles from lotus stems, and establishing paddy fields in transition and wise-use zones.

Thanks to the gender approach implemented throughout the project, women are more engaged in conservation activities like adding small fish for increasing fish stock. They also become more aware of wetland values and obey fishing regulations in the permitted season and zoning areas. Moreover, they even report illegal fishing activities and the damages to boundary pillars within the site.

Read more on this case study in Section III of this document.

Gender can often strongly predict how an individual can be meaningfully engaged in resource-management programmes and decision-making, and how those programmes might positively or negatively impact that individual. Existing gendered power imbalances in wetlands decision-making and resource ownership specifically affect women’s capacity to influence change and expand their roles in managing and safeguarding wetland resources. Additionally, due to social, cultural, and gender-based constraints and barriers, women’s dependency on wetland resources tends to be greater⁶.

5 Aguilar, L., Granat, M., & Owren, C. (2015). *Roots for the Future: The landscape and way forward on gender and climate change*. Washington, DC: IUCN & GGCA.

6 Sunderland, T. et al. 2014. Challenging perceptions about men, women, and forest product use: a global comparative study. *World Development*, 64(1), 56-66.

Case Study: Restoration of Urmia Lake.

Lake Urmia, Iran, is one of the world's largest hypersaline lakes. More than 5 million people living near the lake rely on this ecosystem. In recent decades, it has lost 95% of its volume. Various human-induced processes (construction of dams, the extension of irrigated farmland, excessive groundwater abstraction, increasing water demand in urban areas, and climate change) have been the root causes of this socio-ecological disaster. A family microenterprise was formed with the women's group's loan revolving funds to initiate non-farm livelihood activities. In some cases, families gave up cultivating land once the income generated from their newly established business was sufficient.

Results to date

- Rural women's voices gradually began to be heard once they proved to their families and the community that they could contribute to household income.
- Some women influenced farmers' decisions to grow crops with low water requirements or to even rely on rain-fed farming.

Read more on this case study in Section III of this document.

Moreover, it is also crucial to recognise that women and men may have divergent understandings of the use and management of natural resources or traditional knowledge about biodiversity, ecosystems, and climate.

Consequently, wetlands initiatives should ensure:

- People-centred governance that respects women and those living in margins of development through full access and control of valuable assets, including land ownership, rights, and economic autonomy.
- Secure equal access to and control of natural resources for women and young women to manage and protect their livelihoods.
- Recognize women and young women as decision-makers and leaders, participating in decision-making processes at all levels in the wise use and conservation of wetlands.

The most considerable changes in the loss of wetlands continue to be from unsustainable agriculture, forestry, and extractive industries, the impacts of population growth (including migration and urbanization),

and land-use changes that override environmental considerations⁷.

The drivers behind these pressures involve complex gender dynamics that, in turn, affect the solutions for reversing loss and degradation. For example, women's insecure access to land, lack of access to sustainable farming inputs, extension services, and financial resources may translate to women farmers not having the means to employ sustainable agricultural practices, even if they understand the benefits. Their practices can further degrade wetlands. Conversely, if involved in primarily cash crops, men may not fully appreciate the importance of preserving wetland ecosystems due to their income needs. Realization and consideration of these social dynamics in planning and decision-making require that wetland resources, social risks, and wetland-ecosystem benefits are measured, addressed, and understood from a gender perspective.

Degradation of wetlands can also impact water access and availability, which carries gender-based implications for women and girls, due to the burden of water-collection falling disproportionately on them⁸. In areas where water is not available onsite, women and girls are responsible for fetching it in eight out of ten households. In these areas, they can make several

7 Chakrabarti, S., Sarrazin, M.L., and Raеisi, R. (n.d.). Addressing Gender Issues and Actions in Biodiversity Objectives. Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

8 UNICEF, WHO (2019). Progress on Drinking Water and Sanitation. Available at: https://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/publications/jmp-report-2019/en/

Case Study: women’s empowerment through wetland management.

In Uganda, women are responsible for the security and subsistence of the household. The loss of wetlands has created difficulties in the country’s largely rain-dependent agricultural activities, which involve some 72% of Ugandan women. Moreover, tensions are high between communities over water scarcity, resulting in stress and harassment.

The WENG programme builds local communities and enhances the agency and importance of having women and girls involved in the field while raising awareness for better water-management in communities. Some of the strategies utilized are engaging communities in pre-emptive water harvesting during the rainy season and setting up early-warning systems around water depletion.

Results to date

- More than a decade of relative stability for the ecosystem.
- Less stress placed on wetlands and an ongoing replenishment of previously-depleted resources (water and food).
- Reduced incidences of gender-based violence and increased productivity.
- Women involved in wetlands advocacy now work for the local government council, which gives them a voice and serves as an example for other women on how to access power.

Read more on this case study in Section III of this document.

trips a day to water sources, reducing the time spent on other activities—such as attending school, carrying out income-generating activities, or enjoying leisure time—perpetuating the gendered cycle of poverty^{9,10}.

Additionally, during the collection of offsite resources, women and girls are often exposed to various forms of gender-based violence (GBV), including verbal and physical harassment and sexual violence¹¹.

Similarly, climate change has significant impacts on wetlands. Flooding, drought, and high temperatures threaten the health and functionality of wetland ecosystems and place wetland-dependent communities (particularly women) at increased risk of adverse livelihood impacts, while undermining a range of human rights, including rights to water, food, and health. Neglecting such gender-specific impacts can significantly reduce the effectiveness of climate-change initiatives. It may even result in poor adaptation

practices causing men and women to be worse off than before the intervention.

In this context, it is imperative to recognise that resolving gender inequalities is not only a matter of “righting a wrong” but an important opportunity to make use of previously underutilized (and under-recognized) talents, knowledge, and abilities for combating and adapting to climate change. Moreover, there must be a paradigm shift in wetland initiatives from perceiving women as victims to viewing them as powerful agents of change.

Coupled with the effects of climate change are the global economic impacts of the COVID-19 crisis. The ongoing pandemic may have a silver lining as the catalyst for a long-overdue transition to a world that prioritises sustainability, human wellbeing, and nature. The shift to an inclusive and regenerative green

9 UNICEF (2016). Collecting water is often a colossal waste of time for women and girls. Press release [website]. Available at: https://www.unicef.org/media/media_92690.html

10 Castañeda, I., Sabater, L., Owren, C. and Boyer, A.E. (2020). Gender-based violence and environmental linkages: The violence of inequality. Wen, J. (ed.). Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. 246pp. Available at: <https://portals.iucn.org/library/node/48969>

11 Ibid.

Case Study: Women Planting Trees to Save the Mangrove in Guinea.

Deforestation is a serious issue in Guinea, where mangrove forests are cut for firewood to dry and smoke fish. Mangroves play an important role as nursery areas for fish and crustaceans, and are essential for stabilizing the shoreline. Mangroves contribute to climate resilience by reducing the impacts of severe storms and cyclones. When burned for firewood, it contributes to global greenhouse gas emissions. This is why a group of local women in Guinea concerned with the disappearing mangrove forest decided to take action. They created cooperatives within four island villages to stop the deforestation of mangrove wood.

Results to date

- Saving up to 40 tonnes of CO₂ per year thanks to solar dryers.
- The use of moringa leaves to improve water quality has had a positive impact on the reduction of CO₂ emissions since mangrove wood is no longer needed to boil water.
- Women are now using solar dryers to dry the moringa leaves, fish, and fruits. They have also ascertained that the moringa seeds purify the water, which means no more water fetching or burning wood, no more water diseases, and better health for all.
- Moringa leaves are high in vitamins, nutrients, and protein, and contain all the amino acids needed to address malnutrition.
- Not only are these women addressing climate change and reducing mangrove deforestation, but they are also generating income by selling the moringa leaves and seeds.

Read more on this case study in Section III of this document.

economy that addresses climate change and recognizes the role of gender equality is essential¹².

Despite the need for gender-responsive programming, women's roles and expertise in wetland management continue to be overlooked and underacknowledged, with social and cultural norms often reinforcing an unequal participation of women in decision-making. If women's involvement is not represented, then their ideas, needs, and concerns around wetland management and benefit distribution go unheard.

There are consequences when gender issues are not acknowledged in wetland management. Gender-blind projects or programmes may:

- Exacerbate gender inequalities by failing to consider the differences between men and women.
- Jeopardize project/programme efficiency and sustainability outcomes by failing to understand the whole picture.
- Increase women's workload without proper compensation.
- Imprecisely identify primary stakeholders.

- Limit sustainability and long-term effectiveness of wetland management.
- Establish and/or reinforce inequitable systems for the sharing of benefits.
- Increase the marginalization of women in decision-making.
- Exacerbate violence and conflict, including GBV.

Promoting gender equality in the wise use of wetlands requires that both women and men have equal access to opportunities and the ability to participate in and benefit from development initiatives. Studies show that when gender dynamics are understood within a community and both women's and men's roles, needs, and priorities are mainstreamed into action, everyone benefits. These benefits including:

- Enhanced ability of women and men to realize their full human potential, rights, and freedoms.
- Greater awareness of the importance, roles, and experiences of women and men—including their everyday lives—to better address their needs and priorities.
- Poverty reduction.

12 Green recovery and reconstruction training toolkit. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/green-recovery-and-reconstruction-training-toolkit-humanitarian-aid>

Win-win scenarios for the wise use of wetlands and the promotion of gender equality.

New and innovative green jobs are being created as gender-agnostic in wetland projects. This is a huge advantage compared to other fields of work, as it will be possible to establish guidelines outside of gender roles or stereotypes.

Additional examples in countries such as Uganda, Brazil, Honduras, India, Myanmar, Iran, and Japan can be found in Section III of this document.

- Reductions in gender inequality throughout various social segments result in a decreased risk of violence and greater social and economic prosperity.
- Greater resilience and capacity for adaptation to unanticipated changes to wetland ecosystems.
- More favourable project/programme outcomes as they effectively respond to women's and men's different needs.

Strengthening gender equality in the wise use of wetlands requires comprehensive sex-disaggregated data collection, awareness-raising, equitable decision-making, and inclusive engagement of all stakeholders. Wetland-management plans, programmes, and policies require a gender-responsive approach that ensures the roles, needs, skills, and vulnerabilities of women and men are equally recognized. This includes an equal right to access and benefit from wetlands, and the equal involvement of women and men in decision-making in all matters. Through mainstreaming gender considerations in the wise use of wetlands to ensure that policies, programmes, and activities proactively address and overcome gender-based inequalities, these measures not only advance gender equality and women's empowerment in governance and decision-making, but also result in more effective and efficient management and conservation of wetlands.

II. KEY OPERATIONAL AND PRACTICAL ENTRY POINTS

Gender continues to be “one of the world’s strongest markers for disadvantage”, which is why reducing inequality is fundamental to achieving the SDGs and other internationally agreed-upon goals. Regrettably, many efforts to mainstream gender equality have too often been confined to simplistic, ad-hoc, and short-term technical interventions that failed in their implementation to challenge inequitable power structures. Gender disparities remain among the most pervasive of all inequalities, hindering the best of development efforts. Such inequalities span all sectors and initiatives related to wetlands are no exception.

The following seek to provide guidance to ensure that gender equality and women’s empowerment are upheld within, *inter alia*, the context of wetland

management and the implementation of the Convention and its Strategic Plan¹³.

Additionally, these could serve as the basis for the Standing Committee of the Convention for developing a gender action plan (GAP) for the Convention. The GAP represents a landmark opportunity to transform gender equality and women’s empowerment into action. It also serves to unite policies, programmes, stakeholders, and staff around a common issue. Moreover, it maps the steps necessary to meet these goals—of which the Convention and Secretariat are no exceptions.

The key operational and practical entry points are divided into four priority areas:

NATIONAL

- Enhance the competencies of Contracting Parties to conduct gender-responsive actions at the national level.
- Improve the integration of gender considerations in Contracting-Party reporting.

GOVERNANCE

- Advance the gender-balance goal and improve women’s participation in Convention negotiations and their representation within Constituted Bodies.
- Heighten the institutional capacity for mainstreaming gender.
- Strengthen the coherence on gender considerations within the work of the Convention.

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND ENHANCED COMPETENCIES

- Sharpen knowledge-sharing and communication.
- Enhance and develop competencies and skills on gender equality.

SYNERGIES

- Improve synergies with UN agencies and gender-responsive actions consistent with SDGs.

13 These key operational and practical entry points are drawn upon a review of other MEAs resolutions, mandates, gender policies, and gender actions plans; technical workshops under the Rio Conventions; UN agencies and international organizations’ guidance for mainstreaming gender in their operations/ implementation, as well as technical documents produced by UNWomen, especially the Research Paper. Towards a Gender-Responsive Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity. 2018.

PRIORITY AREA I: NATIONAL

A. ENHANCE THE COMPETENCIES OF CONTRACTING PARTIES TO CONDUCT GENDER-RESPONSIVE ACTIONS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

Gender equality should be mainstreamed in every aspect of national planning and decision-making, access to capital and financial aid, project development, and communications. This requires improved gender awareness, education and empowerment, and the proactive generation of information to identify both challenges and opportunities.

Articles 9 and 12 of Resolution XIII.18 provide mandates on this matter by:

- Encourage Contracting Parties to mainstream gender equality in their implementation of the Convention, paying special attention to the crucial

Empowerment: Is a process of ongoing change through which women and girls expand their aspirations, strengthen their voice, and exercise more choice. A woman or

girl can experience empowerment in varying degrees and across different areas of her

life—her home, family, workplace, and community. While empowerment is an individual behavioral change, it is achieved through appropriate gender mainstreaming.

role of women—including indigenous and local women—and their specific needs in wetland management.

- Strengthen efforts to empower all women—including indigenous and local women—as important actors in the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands.

Eight golden rules:

- 1 Structure inclusive and gender-sensitive project teams with capacities and technical expertise to support gender-responsive action.
- 2 Ensure the inclusion of existing national gender policy.
- 3 Ensure that women and women's organizations are represented in any stakeholder consultation.
- 4 Conduct gender analysis.
- 5 Promote equal rights to access and derive benefits from the use, management, and conservation of wetlands.
- 6 Support the full, equal, and effective engagement of women and men in decision-making and all action related to developing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating initiatives and projects.
- 7 Provide adequate resources- both expertise and financial- to support the development and implementation of gender-responsive interventions, policies, and programmes.
- 8 Ensure that the results frameworks are gender-responsive.

Possible actions by Contracting Parties

Consider the following eight “golden rules” for mainstreaming gender equality and women’s empowerment in processes of the Convention:

1. **Structure inclusive and gender-sensitive project teams with capacities and technical expertise to support gender-responsive action.**

Case Study: Moeyungyi Wetland Wildlife Sanctuary (MWWS).

The Norway-Myanmar bilateral project, “Conservation of Biodiversity and Improved Management of Protected Areas in Myanmar, focuses on strengthening the management of wetlands and protected areas of Myanmar, including the Moeyungyi Ramsar Site. The project focuses on contributing to the wise use of activities by supporting biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration, and livelihood enhancement.

Gender is one of the crucial aspects of sustainable resource use or extraction activities in MWWS. The team fully embraces the understanding that in wetland conservation is essential for conservation and wise-use activities, and have ensured that gender equality is fully incorporated in capacity-building programmes among park staff.

Read more on this case study in Section III of this document.

2. **Ensure the inclusion of existing national gender policy.** When mapping national legislation, it is essential address relevant gender issues that could impact wetlands during the design of policies, projects, and programmes.

Revising legal frameworks from a gender perspective entails identifying of all international, national, and municipal laws, regulations, and rules which promote the fair use, management and control of natural resources, equitable participation in decision-making, equitable distribution of benefits, and policies that protect against any form of discrimination or violence towards women.

Example from Mexico.

In early 2000, the Mexican Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT) signed a declaration committing itself to promote gender equality in environmental policies. This document was taken up by a group of non-governmental organizations to encourage similar commitments from authorities in six southern states.

Endorsed by the Governor of Tabasco’s wife, the declaration served as the catalyst for the Director of that State’s Protected Natural Area of Centla to revise the Protected Areas Management Plan from a gender-equality perspective.

3. **Ensure that women and women’s organizations are represented** in any stakeholder consultation (e.g., gender-equality ministries, national and local women’s groups, etc.).

There will always be various interests involved in the use, management, and conservation of wetlands—even uninhabited ones. Therefore, the assessment of all stakeholders should be as inclusive as possible, considering not just residents, resource users, business persons and industrialists, governmental and non-governmental organizations, traditional authorities, universities and research centres, etc., but also age, sex, and economic, social, and cultural standing.

These stakeholders include:

- Historical occupants, i.e., the people who reside within a wetland, also known as “the communities”.
- The owners of resources (land, forests, etc.), even if they do not reside therein.
- The organizations of producers and dealers, industrialists, and business persons who may have an economic interest in the wetland.
- Resource users, even if they are not residents, such as users of raw materials, water, labour, tourism, etc.
- Government institutions.
- Local authorities.

Case Study: Isla of Chira.

The Isla of Chira, in Costa Rica’s Gulf of Nicoya, is home to coastal ecosystems, mangroves, and dry tropical forests. The case of Isla de Chira is of interest because of explicitly gendered participation in the resource use, restoration, and organization of management efforts. Three communities were identified who had worked to restore the surrounding mangrove habitat. This is a case in which not only were communities empowered through education and active participation in resource-management, but in which involved women developed a sense of ownership of their communities’ forests.

- Women were able to communicate their needs and expertise, making up 67.8% of local participation in establishing the mangrove-management plan.
- During the zoning process, the input of women—both mollusc harvesters and mangrove re-foresters—was included.
- For local women, concerns about gendered home roles and dwindling mollusc populations affecting their livelihood cemented interest in mangrove conservation and wise use. Women who participated in mangrove restoration training and projects expressed that they felt empowered because they could communicate this new expertise with visitors and tourists—and provided some participants with meaningful alternatives to support themselves.

Read more on this case study in Section III of this document.

- Community associations, such as church and youth groups, parents’ associations, health care promoters, etc.
- Institutions involved in research, education, and cultural activities.
- Non-governmental organizations at the local, national, and international level involved in the conservation of natural and cultural resources, community development, and social equity within a site or adjacent area.
- Political and law-making groups that have shown an interest in it.
- Financial institutions or organizations that may become potential financial sources for management and administration.

1. Conduct gender analysis.

Gender analysis is the critical examination of how differences in gender norms, roles, power structures, activities, needs, opportunities, and rights affect women, men, girls, and boys across various socio-economic and cultural groups—including the management of natural resources in and around wetlands. This involves collecting and analysing sex-disaggregated data to better understand gender gaps, determine gender-specific risks and identify measures to prevent adverse gender impacts, and engage opportunities that address gender inequalities specific to the activity¹⁴.

In their Gender Guide (2020)¹⁵, the Blue Action Fund provides an example of how to conduct a gender analysis for coastal conservation and sustainable fisheries projects.

14 GEF Policy on Gender Equality. 2017.

15 Blue Action Fund. 2020. Gender Guide: Gender-responsive guidance for coastal conservation and sustainable fisheries projects. Available at: https://www.blueactionfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/200826_BlueAction_Gender_Guide.pdf

Table 1. Gender analysis.

Domain	Guiding Questions ¹⁶
<p>1. Socioeconomic, legal, and political context. Provides information on the socioeconomic and cultural context, policies, legislation, and laws (including customary) in which a project or programme operates. It identifies how women and men are differentially impacted by policies and rules governing institutions.</p>	<p>What is the socioeconomic, legal, and political context?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which social groups will be involved in the project? Are these groups characterized by class, ethnicity, age, matriarchal or patriarchal, caste, religion, or any combination of these categories? • Which behaviours, responsibilities, and obligations of women/men are not considered “normal” / are not socially accepted at the household and community level and outside the community? Which ones are? • Are gender issues (including GBV) identified and addressed in relevant laws, policies, and institutional structures specific to protecting women’s and men’s rights in coastal communities? How? • Are there customary laws or traditional user rights that affect women’s or men’s access to—and control over—marine and coastal resources?
<p>2. Gender roles¹⁷ and responsibilities, expertise, and skills. Provides information on the gender-differentiated roles and responsibilities within households, the community, and marine resource use and fishery value chains. This also provides information on who in the community possesses the relevant background and expertise to assist in the sustainable development of marine resources.</p>	<p>Who does what, and who knows what?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the different roles, responsibilities, and activities performed by individuals in the community’s formal and informal economy? • Who maintains the household and takes care of children and/or the elderly? How much time is spent doing so? • What impacts do women and men experience due to climate change-related risk (e.g., food insecurity, displacement)? • What coastal and marine resources do women and men harvest (for food and income)? • What traditional knowledge and practices do they use? Whose knowledge about resources is valued and respected?
<p>3. Access to (use rights) and control (decision-making rights) of resources and livelihood assets. Determines who has access to fishing grounds, transport, credit, markets; who controls decision-making related to the management of coastal and marine resources; and who controls finances (household and institutional levels).</p>	<p>Who has what, and who decides?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who has access to formal education? • Do women and men have equal access to education and training regarding coastal marine resource management and climate-change adaptation? • Who manages/controls household resources, assets, and finances? (e.g., buying equipment, paying for help with harvesting, selling products, using the income generated from harvest/production or sale of seafood products)? • How are women and men involved in community decision-making (e.g., creation of a new MPA, co-management, or no-take zones)? • What are the different levels of access to/control for women and men of fishery inputs (e.g., fishing vessels, outboard motors, bait, nets, freezers, processing tools, transport, markets, access to loans and credit, fisheries extension officers, and technical expertise)?
<p>4. Benefit-sharing. Provides information on how women and men will be affected and how gender or other social categories impact who bears the costs and who reaps the benefits of the proposed intervention.</p>	<p>Who benefits? Who bears the costs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will the benefits be shared? Will the project cause an increase/decrease in women’s, children’s, and men’s workloads? • Are there measures in place to support women’s tasks, including unpaid domestic and care work? • How might project activities change or affect gender and other social relationships? Is it possible these interventions could worsen tensions and increase/instigate violence or marginalization, leading to GBV or other forms of violence? • Are there opportunities to positively transform gender inequality by reducing women’s exclusion or create equal-development outcomes across communities?
<p>5. Knowledge gaps. Provides information on what proficiencies/resources are missing to conduct a complete gender analysis and how those gaps can be addressed in the planning/implementation of projects.</p>	<p>What are the knowledge gaps?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are any sex-disaggregated data available in fisheries, coastal management, or climate-change sectors? If so, what information do they provide? • What information is missing to conduct a robust gender analysis? • What data still need to be collected, and how can they be addressed during project planning? What measures can the project take to mitigate any relevant gender gaps¹⁸ and ensure benefits for both women and men?

16 Questions adapted from several guidelines including Pacific Community (SPC), Green Climate Fund (GCF), Global Environment Facility (GEF) and Mangroves for the Future (MFF). See a full list of resources for gender analysis in Annex 2.

17 Gender roles refer to the learned behaviors and activities performed by an individual based on their gender, determined by existing cultural norms in a given society or culture.

18 The gender gap is the difference between women and men as reflected in social, political, intellectual, cultural, or economic attainments or attitudes (World Economic Forum).

2. **Promote equal rights to access and derive benefits** from the use, management, and conservation of wetlands. Belize case study provides some ideas of actions in this respect.

Case Study: Coral reef restoration through women's empowerment.

In Belize, a restoration project was started in 2013 in response to the degradation and deterioration of the country's coral reefs and shoreline. The goal was to restore shallow reef habitats and mangrove forests that would help protect and maintain shorelines over time. Specifically, the programme advocates for the sustainable management of associated habitats by explicitly targeting and training women in coastal communities.

To date, results for women include:

- Better job opportunities and livelihoods. Working as a tour guide (and as a coral/mangrove restoration practitioner) generally pays US\$50/day—a very high wage compared to Belize's minimum wage of US\$1.65/hour.
- Women now participate in the diving industry, which had previously been male-dominated, and are involved in many other fully-funded training programmes in related areas (whose hours of operation allow working women and single moms to assist).
- Access to training in both tourism and marine-conservation sectors has allowed local women to earn higher daily wages than would otherwise be possible in domestic or hospitality industries.
- The local board in Belize is 50% female and their partner organization in the United States (Fragments of Hope CORP) has an all-female board.
- Inspiring young female students to learn more about their coastal marine habitats and how best to conserve them.

Read more on this case study in Section III of this document.

3. Support the **full, equal, and effective engagement of women and men in decision-making** and all action related to developing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating initiatives and projects.

A good example is the following:

Climate Change Action Plans (ccGAPs)¹⁹.

Twenty-six countries worldwide have developed ccGAPs. In order to better serve women and women's organizations both in ccGAPs and climate-change activities in general, a custom training session is organized to build technical knowledge, bolster women's confidence on climate change-related subjects, and to determine women's needs, expertise, priorities, and ideas. Depending on the specific country, representation in training sessions ranges from women with national and global policy experience to farmers, entrepreneurs, or technical professionals.

4. Provide **adequate resources—both expertise and financial**—to support the development and implementation of gender-responsive interventions, policies, and programmes.

Case Study: First lean solution to the temple waste problem.

Showering flowers (8 million tonnes annually) at temples and mosques is a religious ritual in India, Nepal, and Bangladesh. As these flowers rot, they create havoc for the Ganges river's fragile ecosphere and leach into groundwater. Moreover, the toxins from pesticides and insecticides used in growing the flowers enter riverways, turning the water poisonous. HelpUsGreen collects 11.4 tonnes of floral waste daily from temples and mosques. The waste is given to the women

19 Aguilar, L., et al. 2012. The Art of Implementation: Gender Strategies Transforming National and Regional Climate Change Decision Making. GGCA. Washington, DC. USA.

(manual scavengers) to produce hand-crafted, patented, organic fertilizers; natural incense and biodegradable packaging material. This has resulted in:

- Alternate forms of employment for women belonging to the poorest and most disadvantaged communities in India.
- Increased the standard of living of women workers and made them economically independent with regular incomes.
- 119 girls have now started going to schools, which earlier would have been a distant dream.

Read more on this case study in Section III of this document.

frameworks establish baseline targets and goals/objectives using gender sensitive indicators to separately measure women's and men's impacts.

Some of the characteristics of gender sensitive indicators are:

- Measure conditions or situations that affect men and women differently.
- Signal changes in power relations between women and men over time.
- Determine access to, use of, and control over resources and the distribution of costs and benefits.
- Point out changes in living conditions and the roles of women and men over time.
- Provide important inputs for planning, implementing, and evaluating field projects and broad programmes ranging from community livestock to watershed irrigation to national policies.

5. **Ensure that the results frameworks are gender-responsive.** These guides project both implementation and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and should include indicators to measure changes related to gender equality, equity, and women's empowerment over time. The

Examples of indicators.

Agriculture and Biodiversity

- Number of women holding elected leadership positions in community organizations, co-operatives, or decision-making councils (e.g., community forestry or fishing programmes, co-management councils for protected areas).
- Absolute and percentage changes in research funding over time being devoted to home gardens and species of value to women, including crops, non-timber forest products, wildlife, medicinal plants, fibres, etc.
- Gradual changes to women's and men's ownership of agricultural lands, including homes and home gardens.
- Differentiated access of women and men to credit and technical assistance.
- Numbers of households headed by women or couples that benefit from intellectual property rights.

Climate Change

- Numbers of women and female-headed households receiving training or assistance related to disasters (e.g., the number of women who know how to swim).
- Number of women owning and using energy-efficient technologies, using renewable energy, and involved in sustainable forest management (climate change mitigation).
- Proportion of women and men who own or make use of non-motorized or public transport.
- Amount of support for research on women's knowledge of drought and flood-related strategies.

Forestry

- Increased number of women that benefit from natural-resource concessions, compared to a baseline.
- Female ownership or co-ownership of equipment and tools for production, processing, commercialization, or any other services associated with natural resources.
- Number and percentage of women and men who attend Reducing Emissions for Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) training, disaggregated by type of training (e.g., benefit-sharing, MRV).
- Perception of women and men who consider that the operating plan of co-management responds to their needs and interests.
- Inclusion and or improvement of women's resources and tenure rights in laws or regulations

Fisheries and Aquaculture in Coastal Zones

- Improved access to and control over key resources by women (e.g., fuelwood, craft supplies, shellfish), compared to a baseline.
- Number and type of formal tourism-sector jobs held by women, not just domestic and food-preparation jobs.
- Percentage of women obtaining fishery-related business credit.
- Increased number of women managing successful productive projects (i.e., marine farms, ponds, zoo-farms, eco-shelters), compared to a baseline.
- Improved women's participation in wetland planning, professions, and research—at all levels—compared to a baseline.

Section III of this document includes 15 case studies that showcase examples of the merits of embracing a gender-responsive approach for the wise use and management of wetlands. They illustrate how initiatives in different parts of the world are operationalizing the eight “golden rules”.

Additionally, Annex 2 presents a set of resources to guide the implementation of the eight “golden rules”, applied by other United Nations (UN) Agencies, development agencies, and Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). They are intended to serve as examples in greater detail for Contracting Parties.

Potential actions by Secretariat

In 2018 UNCCD, thanks to the financial support from Finland, established a virtual help desk. Project proposals were channeled through the Global Mechanism of UNCCD. IUCN and UNWomen gender experts reviewed them and provide tailored-made technical advice on how to improve gender considerations.

Further the creation of a dedicated “gender help desk” (resources permitting) in partnership with willing organizations or consultants to support the Contracting Parties. This can provide support to various Parties and projects around the world. The “gender help desk” would be designed to provide online technical support for countries to include gender mainstreaming in their

policies, projects, and initiatives at the start, and can offer countries the following services:

- **Review of gender responsiveness in policies, project concept notes, or proposals:** The analysis will provide recommendations on how to mainstream or reinforce gender aspects.
- **Gender-analysis development:** This includes activities like responding to questions about gender analysis, assisting in the design of methodologies, reviewing data-collection tools, and guiding research.
- **Review and guide supplementary assessment materials:** This technical support includes reviewing questionnaires, progress reports, Training of Trainer (ToT) materials, and work plans.
- **Provide a list of available resources on gender and wetlands:** These will be available on the Convention's website.

B. IMPROVE THE INTEGRATION OF GENDER CONSIDERATIONS IN CONTRACTING-PARTY REPORTING

In 2016, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)²⁰ reviewed 553 National Reports submitted under the Convention by 119 countries since 1999. Of the 553 National Reports studied, only 87 reports (15.8%) contained the relevant keywords²¹. These 87 reports were from 50 of the 119 countries that submitted National Reports, indicating that most Parties did not include gender keywords. Considering temporal trends, the number of keywords mentions in the National Reports decreased sharply between 1999 and 2015. While the number of National Reports submitted increased, keyword mentions peaked in 2002 at 66 mentions and decreased by approximately 90% to only seven mentions in 2015. The 2009 removal of women-centred objectives from the Convention strategic plans likely contributed to this trend.

A review conducted to inform this Guidance document revealed that of the 156 reports studied, only 23 reports (14.7%) contained keyword mentions, leaving the other 133 reports submitted (85.3%) with none. In comparing the 2016 results with those of the 2020, there has been little to no progress in mainstreaming gender considerations in national reports. Regarding the distribution of keywords mentioned in the National Reports, there were 36 mentions in total—comprised of “*women*” (61.1%), “*woman*” (13.9%), and “*gender*” (25%), with no mention of terms “*female*”, “*girl*”, “*sex*”, “*equity*”, or “*equality*”.

It is worthwhile acknowledging that the Conference of the Parties 2014 (COP14) National Report Format (NRF) includes under Point H a request to Parties to “...provide a short description about the balance between men and women participating in wetland-related decisions, programmes, and research”.

As well, Articles 21 and 22 of Resolution XIII.18 encourage Contracting Parties to include “in their National Reports at least a short description about the balance between men and women participating in wetland-related discussions, and to highlight areas where change is necessary for achieving gender equality, and lessons learned when trying to improve equality between the genders”. It also “requests the Secretariat to prepare a synthesis report on the gender-relevant and sex-disaggregated information provided by Contracting Parties in National Reports, and on the actions of the Secretariat in this regard”.

The following are suggestions intended to improve the integration of gender considerations in Contracting Parties reporting:

- Review current reporting templates to determine possible entry points for meaningful reporting on gender issues, beyond simply gender balance, included in the COP14 NRF.
- Expand guidelines for mainstreaming gender equality in reporting. Other MEAs, specifically those in the “biodiversity cluster”, have developed guidelines for reporting that could be used as reference, such as NBSAPs (National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan), NDCs (National Determined Contributions), UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change), and National Communication Reports.
- Raise awareness among Focal Points and assist in training and education at the national level. This includes stakeholders actively assigned to gender and gender-environment issues.
- Encourage the exchange of information among Parties around their efforts to mainstream gender equality into their reports.

UNFCCC and CBD Parties have organized side events to share their experiences and lessons on mainstreaming gender in their national reports. Based on their experiences, the Secretariat commissioned the creation of practical guidelines on how to do it.

20 Available at: <https://portals.iucn.org/union/sites/union/files/doc/ramsar-wh-report-april2016.pdf>

21 Keywords: gender, women, woman, female, girl, gender, sex, equity, and equality.

PRIORITY AREA II: GOVERNANCE

C. ADVANCE THE GENDER-BALANCE GOAL AND IMPROVE WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN CONVENTION NEGOTIATIONS AND THEIR REPRESENTATION WITHIN CONSTITUTED BODIES²²

It is crucial to ensure that the equal participation of women in the Convention extends to the principles and objectives of international instruments and relevant multilateral processes—such as the CEDAW and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action—which recognize the importance of women's empowerment and their full participation on equal terms with men in all spheres of society, decision-making, and access to power.

This can be seen in the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the commitments under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly the recognition of women's leadership and their vital role in achieving sustainable development.

The System-wide Strategy on Gender Equality, launched by the UN Secretary-General António Guterres in September 2017, states that achieving gender equality should be top priority, not only as a fundamental human right but also because it is essential to the UN's efficiency, impact, and credibility.

Based on the four paragraphs (10, 16a, 19 and 20) under Resolution XIII.18 that call for advancing the gender-balance goal improving the participation of women in negotiations and their representation within Constituted Bodies, the Secretariat and the Contracting Parties to the Convention should take the following actions:

Potential actions by Contracting Parties

Parties to commit to meeting the goal of gender-balance by:

- Striving for gender-balance in their delegations to Sessions under the Convention.

- Accrediting in their delegations, grassroots, indigenous, and young women.
- Encouraging more women to run for positions within Constituted Bodies.
- Nominating women to bodies established under the Convention (SC, STRP, and CEPA) aimed at a gradual but significant increase in women's participation.

Invite current and future chairs of bodies to be guided by gender balance goal when setting up informal negotiating groups and consultation mechanisms (contact groups, spin-off groups, and panels) and when nominating their facilitators and chairs.

Possible actions by Contracting Parties at the national level

Ensure the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women (at all stakeholder levels) in national consultations on the development of all projects under the Convention.

Enable women's full, equal, and meaningful participation, and give them a voice and utilize their expertise and contributions in the design and implementation of wetland projects, policies, and plans.

Enabling considerations for women's participation.

It is essential to consider that women and men do not necessarily have equal access to information channels or assembly. For example, assembly for women may be possibly through their children's school. For youth through recreational spaces such as dance halls or athletic fields.

In the case of women particularly, consideration to household schedules and childcare should be given, since there may be times, they cannot attend meetings typically scheduled for other groups.

22 The Constituted bodies of the Convention are: The Standing Committee (SC), the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) and the Communication, Education, Participation, and Awareness (CEPA).

Possible actions by Secretariat

Negotiate with donors the establishment of a female delegate travel fund to support women's equal participation in all national delegations at sessions of Convention bodies, paying particular attention to the involvement of grassroots, local, and indigenous communities from developing and least-developed countries.

While acknowledging that governments have sovereignty on the attending nomination of delegates, the Secretariat is encouraged to earmark specific resources within its travelling fund to ensure that women have every opportunity to attend and participate in COPs.

Update the Parties' accreditation process as necessary to improve the accuracy of data on the gender of the participants to assess the progress made on the participation of women delegates in meetings of the COP and of Constituted Bodies.

Record and report data on the gender composition and participation of Constituted Bodies established under the Convention—including information on women's representation from regional groups. Additionally, record data on the gender composition of delegations to sessions under the Convention and report them to the COP to better monitor its progress towards the goal of gender balance.

Establish relationships with women organizations involved in environmental processes and UNWomen to determine the actions required to ensure that women are recognized an official observer constituency and to establish a woman caucus under the Convention.

Potential actions for Observer Organizations

Observer organizations to accredit grassroots women, indigenous women, young women, and gender experts within their delegations to COPs.

United Nations organizations—as well as multilateral, intergovernmental, international, and regional organizations—to complement Parties' efforts under the Convention to achieve gender-balance through innovative financing.

D. HEIGHTEN THE INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY FOR MAINSTREAMING GENDER

Institutional gender mainstreaming is the process of building the organizational/Secretariat capacity and control to influence gender-responsive programming, organizational structures, and procedures. It has external aspects (gender mainstreaming in programmes, services) and an internal aspect (institutional), namely: human resources, specialized staff, corporate policies, among other structures. In this vein, activities and actions are suggested to strengthen the capacity of the Secretariat:

Ensure high-level commitment regarding gender and wetlands within the Secretariat. Commitment and prioritization by senior management within the Secretariat are essential for mainstreaming gender equality within the Convention. Therefore, it is crucial to present gender-wetland issues to senior management to build awareness, secure their support, and be included within the Secretariat's rolling work plan. Additionally, include gender expertise as specific criteria in the terms of reference for new employees to the Secretariat.

Resources permitting, designate a full-time gender focal point (GFP) within the Convention. This person should not have other obligations. Assigning gender responsibility to a staff member of the Secretariat would significantly enhance the application of gender in the Convention processes and contribute to quality-assurance for gender mainstreaming across the Convention. Some of the responsibilities of the GFP could include:

- Development of proposals (in collaboration with the Resource Mobilization and Partnership Officer) to guarantee resources for travel and training for women delegates.
- Prepare both a composition and synthesis report every three years on gender composition progress in integrating a gender perspective (respectively) into Constituted Body processes.
- Provide capacity-building support to Constituted Bodies and Secretariat staff in incorporating a gender perspective into their respective areas of work in collaboration with relevant organizations.

All the Rio Conventions and the mayor's environmental financing mechanisms have full time designated GFPs. In some cases, donors have provided the resources to support the GFPs.

- Create and maintain a database of gender and wetland experts that can support national/regional processes.
- Enhance communication and information-sharing through existing web-based resources and communication activities of the Convention.
- Facilitate coordination with other United Nations entities, intergovernmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations.
- Participate in the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP) to strengthen the integration of gender considerations within the organization and work of the Secretariat, in addition to (as indicated on paragraph 18 of Resolution XIII.18) exploring the means by which it can generate aspirational goals consistent with the UN-SWAP.
- Strengthen coordination between work on gender considerations under the Convention and other relevant United Nations entities and processes—particularly the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the MEAs.

E. STRENGTHEN THE COHERENCE ON GENDER CONSIDERATIONS WITHIN THE WORK OF THE CONVENTION

The actions under this section seek to strengthen the coherence of gender-responsive considerations within the work of Convention Bodies, the Secretariat, and other United Nations entities and stakeholders towards the consistent implementation of gender-related mandates and activities.

Suggested actions by Contracting Parties

In 2012, UNFCCC COP approved gender equality as a standing item at every COP.

Include gender equality as a permanent topic on the agenda of sessions of the Conference of the Parties to ensure gender is always

discussed in relation to wetland use, management, and conservation, and to commit to the consideration of existing gender-responsive mandates across the various thematic areas and work programmes of the Convention.

Include information on progress made towards integrating gender-responsive considerations in

processes in the regular reports of all Constituted Bodies (SC, STRP, and CEPA) under the Convention.

Appoint a gender focal point for each of the Constituted Bodies.

Launch a like-minded or “Friends of Gender Equality” group under the Convention to strengthen Parties’ efforts to ensure the integration of gender-equality considerations in the implementation of the Convention and its related processes.

Friends of Gender.

One or various Parties under the UNFCCC and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) have created the “Friends of Gender”. This self-created group usually meets in between and during COPs to define a joint-advocacy strategy to support the mainstreaming of gender considerations in negotiations. On various occasions, the Parties invite observer organizations and UN agencies to provide technical support. The Gender Focal Point (GCF) of the Secretariat assists the Parties with meeting rooms, taking notes, and providing legal guidance.

Possible actions by Contracting Parties and Secretariat

Guarantee that there is political will for mainstreaming gender equality in the implementation of the Convention by ensuring that those responsible for high-level decision-making and international negotiations under the Convention are aware of gender commitments under global processes.

Make gender and wetlands a strategic priority of the Convention 4th Strategic Plan 2016–2024 by guaranteeing a process during the mid-term review so that gender equality will be fully considered at all levels and stages of planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

Progress reports on the Strategic Plan should include information and updates on the activities relevant to the promotion of gender equality and women’s empowerment. Additionally, the Secretariat should provide updates to Parties and partners on the progress of achieving gender equality.

The Constituted Bodies and the Secretariat’s work plans should include specific activities related to gender mainstreaming.

Identify a Contracting Party(ies) that could act as a “gender champion” to lead set actions to ensure that gender-equality considerations are adequately addressed throughout the various processes within the Convention.

Possible actions by Secretariat

Ensure that members of Constituted Bodies (SC, STRP, and CEPA) are introduced in a systematic manner to gender-related mandates and the relevance of gender in the context of their work. This can be done in collaboration with relevant organizations (i.e., UNWomen, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), IUCN, among others).

Provide guidance to the Constituted Bodies for reporting progress made in integrating gender considerations in their respective processes. The guidance will identify how and/or where those data may be reported and recognize how the Bodies could enhance gender considerations in the processes for which they are responsible.

Facilitate the exchange of views and best practices of the Chairs of Constituted Bodies to strengthen the integration of gender-responsive considerations into their work.

Review and update guidelines. Several guidelines developed within the Convention in the last years do not acknowledge gender equality, or inclusiveness, as a guiding principle (i.e., wetland managers’ toolkit). This would provide adherence and a more robust conceptual umbrella for the gender-wetland construct and enhance the application of gender equality in implementing the Convention.

Develop checklists and tools to support the consistent integration of gender-responsive considerations in the work of the Constituted Bodies, the Secretariat, and all areas of the Convention (i.e., how to conduct gender analysis, incorporation of gender consideration in the development of management plans, development of gender-sensitive indicators).

PRIORITY AREA III: KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND ENHANCED COMPETENCIES

F. SHARPEN KNOWLEDGE-SHARING AND COMMUNICATION

Paragraph 11 of Resolution XIII.18 encourages “...to consider how different genders are reflected in wetland communication material in order to promote equal representation and fairness”.

Therefore, Contracting Parties need to ensure that communication strategies and materials should reflect women’s perceptions, needs, and perspectives. Particular attention should be placed on the selection of communication channels that are most appropriate for women.

Similarly, the Secretariat is well-positioned to collect and disseminate information on gender and wetlands to establish a knowledge base to inform action by the Conference of the Parties, individual Contracting Parties, and partners to support the implementation of the Convention. Partners such as United Nations sister organizations, international organizations, regional networks, and national-level Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) can assist by providing information on their activities.

Potential actions by Contracting Parties

Design and implement appropriate communication technologies. Media and communication technologies can support rural women to share experiences and learn from one other. These technologies can be powerful tools for advising women on new ideas and practices. The majority of rural women are illiterate and live in remote, isolated areas where access to information, lack of transportation, and cultural and language differences are common problems, but problems that can be overcome if communication technologies are gender-sensitive.

Rural women have expertise and practices based on deep-rooted cultural norms, traditions, values, and generations of experience—and should be taken into account. Traditional methods of information-exchange and communication should be harnessed together with modern technologies (i.e., WhatsApp, homemade videos using mobile phones).

Because women are involved in many aspects of rural life, their traditional knowledge-systems are complex and holistic. As a result, communication programmes must consider the various economic and social issues affecting women—including agriculture, habitat, health, nutrition, family planning, population growth, biodiversity loss, and education.

Possible actions by Secretariat and Contracting Parties at the national level

Encourage communication that respects human dignity and social responsibility by examining messages based on the following principles:

- Ensure that women and men are represented in all internal and external message-formulation, corporate media, and corporate representation. In this sense, panels and moderation of official meetings, conferences, and workshops should be gender-balanced.
- Eliminate gender stereotypes and/or inaccurate representations. This may require that special attention be given to audio-visual and written communication, whether in articles, media, field visits, reports, or emails.
- Prevent the use of generic terms to foster balanced and inclusive language. Generics are nouns and pronouns used for both women and men. (i.e., manpower, mankind, man-made).

Feasible actions by Secretariat

Consider joining the pledge of non-participating in male-only panels²³.

Expand the website of the Convention to:

- Include content on gender and wetlands.
- Create links to other resources, events, and partners working on the ground.
- Design a repository of case studies, best practices, and lessons learned on the benefits of gender

23 Available at: <https://www.owen.org/pledge/>

mainstreaming in wetland use, management and conservation, and highlight the unique knowledge concerning wetlands held by women.

- Develop a database of gender experts and regional/national gender organizations

Incorporate gender considerations into the updates of Global Wetland Outlook (GWO) and showcase best practices in newsletters, World Wetlands Day (WWD), and COPs/Pre-COPs.

Commission research on emerging themes that could help influence the agenda on gender equality and women's empowerment and wetlands (subject to the availability of resources).

Promote, support, and encourage high-level events (such as round tables) on gender and wetlands at every COP.

Design a Gender Equality Award to feature the most innovative, scalable, and replicable examples of what people worldwide are doing to use, manage, and conserve wetlands in a gender-responsive manner.

Increase the understanding of the value of wetlands among women and gender organizations through an awareness-building campaign. This could be done in partnership with UNwomen. This will allow these organizations to identify opportunities for their full participation in the Convention processes and implementation.

G. ENHANCE AND DEVELOP COMPETENCIES AND SKILLS ON GENDER EQUALITY

While there is widespread interest in integrating gender equality and women's empowerment into the Convention, one significant barrier is the lack of technical competencies that can link gender to the use, management, and conservation of wetlands. Paragraphs 16 and 17 of the Resolution XIII.18 recognize the need to strengthen all delegates' and staff's capacities. The actions under this Section look to fix some of these gaps.

Possible actions by Contracting Parties and interested organizations at the national level

Build capacity at national and local level to collect, analyse, and use data disaggregated by sex, age, ethnicity, and other relevant demographic variables, as well as qualitative data, to ensure that issues of

individual communities and populations (including rural and indigenous women) are reflected above and beyond aggregate statistics at the national level.

Gather information on local norms, cultural frameworks, and other informal structures that restrict women's access, use, and control of natural resources (including land) while implementing projects and programmes.

Equip women (including indigenous women) with skills and knowledge they need to conserve and manage their land and related resources. This may include educating them to use new technologies or other related tools.

Direct capacity-building efforts to national women's mechanisms (i.e., Ministry of Women Affairs) so that they can engage in wetland management and consultation processes in a substantive and informed manner.

Potential actions by Secretariat

Improve the familiarity with gender-responsive policy, planning, and programming among Contracting Parties, Constituted Bodies, the Secretariat, and other stakeholders.

- Create a community of experts/practice to support information-sharing and capacity-building.
- Establish a roster of gender experts by region that staff and Parties can access to support their work, including experts from indigenous and local communities.
- Organize training and awareness-raising events for female and male delegates during COP on issues relating to gender equality and the use and management of wetlands (i.e., collecting, analysing, and using sex-disaggregated data, development of gender-sensitive indicators).
- Provide capacity-building to chairs and members of Constituted Bodies (SC, STRP, and CEPA) and technical teams of the Secretariat on how to mainstream gender into their respective areas of work.

Facilitate capacity-building for female delegates participating in Convention processes to enhance their leadership, negotiation, facilitation, and chairing skills. Encourage interested Parties and relevant organizations to support these capacity-building

efforts, particularly for delegates from least-developed countries.

Design with the Convention's Programme on communication, capacity building, education, participation, and awareness (CEPA) a strategy to:

- Review the 2016-2024 CEPA Programme to mainstream gender equality considerations.
- Develop training modules on gender and wetlands.
- Include gender considerations in capacity-building trainings and workshops organized under the Convention.

Establish an alliance with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) gender focal point and the GEF Small Grants Programme team, to:

- Disseminate the online course on gender and environment ²⁴ developed by these institutions (the training has five main courses: introduction, climate change, biodiversity, waste and chemicals, and drylands).
- Consider the possibility of developing a specific module on gender and wetlands.

Promote information-sharing with financing mechanisms such as the GEF and GCF -and their implementing agencies, within Contracting Parties to enhance their understanding and comprehension of gender-policy frameworks and the opportunities that these financing mechanisms offer (i.e., open channels through which countries can request support for capacity-building and training on gender).

24 Available at: <https://www.unclearn.org/open-online-course-gender-and-environment>

PRIORITY AREA IV: SYNERGIES

H. IMPROVE SYNERGIES WITH UN AGENCIES AND GENDER-RESPONSIVE ACTIONS CONSISTENT WITH SDGs.

International organizations (including several UN agencies, multilateral environmental agreements, and programmes) have recognized that gender equality and the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women are fundamental human rights and essential to achieve sustainable development. Particularly within the last decade, increased efforts by UN Bodies to identify key gender and environment linkages and implement action across sectors have included instituting mandates, commitments, and establishing frameworks. Examples include:

UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

- In 2011, COP 9 approved the Advocacy Policy Framework on Gender to address the adverse impacts of desertification, land degradation, and drought (DLDD), keeping in mind that gender-sensitive approaches and regularly informing affected countries and other key stakeholders on such procedures may help implement action programmes. In September 2017, a Gender Action Plan²⁵ to accompany the UNCCD 2018-2030 Strategic Framework implementation was approved. The GAP enhances the Convention's implementation, making it a more robust and strategic instrument for transforming millions of families' livelihoods.

UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

- The first of the Rio Conventions to develop a GAP (1st: 2008; 2nd: 2015-2020; 3rd in development). The GAP recognized the vital role that women play in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and declares the need for women's full participation at all policymaking and implementation levels for their effective conservation²⁶.

UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

- In 2017, the Climate Change Convention adopted its first GAP to support the implementation of gender-related decisions and mandates under the UNFCCC Process. In 2019 at COP 25, Parties agreed to a five-year enhanced Lima work programme on gender and a gender action plan²⁷.

Resolution XIII.18 on *Gender and Wetlands* strengthens these synergized efforts and reduces gaps in guidance and implementation of wetlands programmes and projects at both national and regional levels. Consistent with aforementioned international standards and mandates, the resolution to "[develop] guidance on integrating gender issues in the implementation of the Convention..." will help wetland and gender policymakers strengthen gender mainstreaming for numerous intersectional benefits.

The General Assembly in 2017 and 2018 adopted landmark resolutions to make the United Nations more agile and effective in delivering on its mandates. Drawing on this directive, the Secretary General has mandated that its different agencies and processes improve collaboration and coordination for better coherence.

Likewise, Parties to the Rio Conventions (UNCCD, UNFCCC, and CBD) have all recognized that improved coordination and collaboration would reduce duplication of efforts, make the use of limited resources more cost-effective, and ensure shared approaches were more impactful. In 2001 a Joint Liaison Group, composed of the Executive Secretaries of the MEAs, was established for this purpose.

The Convention on Wetlands participates in the Biodiversity Liaison Group (BLG) by bringing together Secretariat heads of seven biodiversity-related conventions: the CBD; the Convention on Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES); the Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species and Wild Animals (CMS);

25 Available at: <https://www.unccd.int/publications/gender-action-plan>

26 CBD Gender Action Plan 2008. Currently in development: a new gender plan of action for the post-2020 period.

27 Available at: https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cp2019_L03E.pdf

the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (WHC); the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA); and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC).

Suggested actions by Parties at the national level

Establish a joint working group around gender equality within the MEAs to strengthen coordination and collaboration in the gender-responsive implementation of the Conventions.

Potential actions by the Secretariat

Participate in the UN-SWAP to strengthen gender considerations within the organization and work of the Secretariat.

Pursue synergies in the gender-responsive implementation of the MEAs. The Convention is well positioned to enforce political commitment to gender mainstreaming across all MEAs.

Some of the areas for future collaboration could be:

- Mobilize resources to develop an innovative joint project. For example: the help desk (as described in Section H) could be an attractive service for the MEAs.
- Define joint efforts to support the commitments of Parties for implementation at the national level. For example: Parties to all the Conventions have committed to national-level research, capacity-building, development of gender-sensitive indicators.

Secure ongoing commitments from funders to support gender and wetlands:

- Raise awareness on gender and wetlands among donors to the Convention.

- Organize a donor round table to identify possible/innovative funding sources to finance gender mainstreaming activities.
- Explore how funding earmarked under “gender mainstreaming” can contribute to the implementation of the Secretariat’s activities.
- Establish a close working relationship and develop a common agenda with the Gender Focal Points/Senior Gender Advisor of the principal environmental finance mechanisms.

Undertake regular dialogues and information-sharing with other UN agencies, institutions, and relevant international instruments to advance related gender mandates, including any decisions/resolutions to improve the implementation of gender-responsive policies. Some spaces can be:

- Coordinate joint events and activities on the linkages between gender and thematic areas, such as food, security, climate change, land tenure, human rights, and health, among others.
- Prepare joint, periodic thematic reports on the implementation of the gender-equality mandates of the Conventions, highlighting best practices by Parties and other stakeholders, and identify research gaps to inform future work as well as policies and programmes.
- Encourage gender experts from different sectors within the UN to engage with the Convention.
- Support and develop strategic partnerships with UNWomen, specialized firms and environmental organizations working on gender issues, and women’s organizations that advocate and work for gender-responsive implementation of the MEAs.
- Engage ministries responsible for gender and/or women’s issues.

III. CASE STUDIES THAT SHOWCASE THE VALUE OF EMBRACING A GENDER APPROACH FOR THE WISE USE AND MANAGEMENT OF WETLANDS

A call for case studies on “enhancing the knowledge on the linkage between gender equality, women’s empowerment and the wise use, management and conservation of wetlands” was sent to Contracting Parties (Head of Administrative Authorities and National Focal Points), shared with gender experts lists, and posted on the website of the Secretariat.

Drawing from the extensive expertise of Contracting Parties and international, civil society, and indigenous peoples’ organizations, this section presents 15 examples (see Table 2) from around the world (see Map 1).

These initiatives provide information on the connection between gender equality, women’s

empowerment, and the wise use, management, and conservation of wetlands. The outcomes of these efforts illustrate that gender mainstreaming are not only possible but necessary for maximum efficiency. While the publication author has not vetted these conclusions, the strategies provide concrete evidence, opportunities for cross-sectoral and cross-contextual learning, and inspiration for action.

Table No. 2. List of case studies per classification of wetland.

Classification	Case study	Relevance to “golden rules”
Marine and Coastal Wetlands	Coral Reef Restoration Through Women’s Empowerment	5-6-7
	Gender roles in Mangrove Restoration on Isla de Chira	3-4-5-6-7
	Women Planting Trees to Save the Mangroves	3-5-6-7
	Building Resilient Communities, Wetland Ecosystems, and Associated Catchments	3-4-5-6-7-8
	Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Association (BANCA)	3-4
	Instituto Chico Mendes de Conservação da Biodiversidade (ICMBio)	3-6
	New Participatory Guarantee Model for Marine-Coastal Resources	3-4-5-6-7
Inland Wetlands	First Lean Solution to the Temple-Waste Problem	3-5-6-7
	Women’s Empowerment Through Wetland Management	2-3-5-6
	Reversing the Deforestation of Rainforests	3-5-6-7
	Federation of Handcrafted Fishery and Environmentalist of the Cesar Department	3-5-6
	Moeyungyi Wetland Wildlife Sanctuary (MWWS)	1-6-5
	Restoration of Urmia Lake	5-7
Human-Made Wetlands	“An-Girls” Guiding and Guarding Women of the Tai Wetland	5
Other	“Theatre Company Cinderella” Performing for Wetland Conservation	5

Map No. 1. Geographical distribution of case studies.



CORAL REEF RESTORATION THROUGH WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Country: Belize

Context

The Caribbean Acroporids, the fastest-growing coral genus in both the Caribbean and the Indo-Pacific, provides the physical and biological foundation for many shallow-water coral reef communities listed as Critically Endangered on IUCN's Red List. They have experienced a 98% decline due to climate change-associated impacts, such as increased frequency and severity of storms, rising sea temperatures linked to coral bleaching and disease events, and the erosion of coastlines.

Project overview

The project was started in 2013 after acknowledging the degradation and deterioration of the country's environment. The purpose of the project is to restore shallow coral reef habitats and mangroves that would contribute to shoreline protection over time. Additionally, it advocates for the sustainable management of associated habitats by explicitly targeting and training women in coastal communities.

Some of the strategies utilized are:

- Offering women evening training sessions, and fully funding tour-guide training and PADI/SCUBA certification through to divemaster level.
- Training fishers and tour guides to conduct coral restoration efforts. They work closely with regulatory agencies, including the Belize Fisheries Department. These activities also provide for new income.
- Analysing the reefs to identify and propagate heat-tolerant Acropora genotypes, build coral nurseries with different genotypes, and trim the coral colonies to produce fragments for transplanting at restoration sites.
- Conducting a UNESCO Sandwatch Programme in the three primary schools on the Placencia peninsula, using trained community members (all women) and the local junior college's natural resource management class (over half of whom are women).
- Training indigenous peoples (Creole, Garifuna, Mestizo, Mayan), targeting, but not limited to, coastal community members.
- Promoting activities related to mangrove and coral restoration to leave participants with a feeling of having personally taken action to help.

Results to date

For the environment, the country, and the communities:

- Corals have survived their first hurricane.
- Planted approximately 4,000 second-generation corals to reef patches.
- Re-established a genetically diverse Acropora population, containing possibly heat-tolerant genotypes, which could facilitate the restoration of sexual processes for natural recovery.
- Planted 70,000 corals.
- Increased live coral cover of 30% in under five years.

For women:

- Better job opportunities and livelihoods. Working as a tour guide (and as a coral/mangrove-restoration practitioner) generally pays US\$50/day, which is a very high wage compared to Belize's minimum wage of US\$1.65/hour.
- Women are now involved in the diving industry, which had previously been dominantly male, and are now a part of many other fully-funded training programmes in similar fields (whose hours of operation allow working women and single moms to assist).
- Access to training in the tourism and marine conservation sectors has also allowed local women to earn higher daily wages than in domestic or hospitality work.
- The local board in Belize is 50% women, and their partner organization in the United States (Fragments of Hope CORP) has an all-woman board.
- Young female students are inspired to learn more about their coastal marine habitats and how to best conserve them.

Challenges/Gaps

- Scale the programme up in other parts of the country.

For more information

Contact

Fragments of Hope

Website

<https://fragmentsofhope.org/home-2/about-us/>

GENDER ROLES IN MANGROVE RESTORATION ON ISLA DE CHIRA

Country: Costa Rica

Context

The Isla de Chira in Costa Rica's Gulf of Nicoya is home to coastal ecosystems, mangroves, and dry tropical forests. The case of Isla de Chira is of interest because of specifically gendered participation in the resource use, restoration, and organization of management efforts. Three communities were identified who had worked to restore the surrounding mangrove habitat.

Women mainly participated in mangrove-restoration projects on the island, initiating propagule nurseries, reforesting in degraded areas, and cleaning and maintaining established mangrove sites. Before these efforts (active reforestation efforts and wetland-restoration work on behalf of the communities and external organizations), much of the gulf mangroves had been deforested for firewood or converted to salt-evaporation areas and shrimp ponds.

On the island, women participated in mangrove-forest monitoring and restoration and played a key role in organizing education opportunities and forest management. Traditionally, men participated in artisanal fishing as their primary source of income, however, the negative impact of mangrove degradation had on overall household income mobilized women. The community traditionally associates women with mangroves because they commonly extract molluscs such as *Anadara tuberculosa* from mangrove forests for subsistence and income. Women's and men's gendered use of mangroves on the island are reflected in their participation in reforestation.

Chira is an example where not only was the community empowered through education and active participation in resource-monitoring and management, but where women directly engaged and involved developed a sense of ownership of their community's forests.

Project overview

There were three communities identified who worked to restore the surrounding mangrove habitat:

Palito: Located on the western-most end of the island is the community of Palito. Here, female members of the community fishing association, the Association of Handline Fishers of Palito, Isla Chira (ASOPECUPACHI), are credited with developing the first mangrove-restoration groundwork project. This

group of women established an oyster aquaculture project, dividing their time between household responsibilities and coastal work to maintain and monitor the new aquaculture project. One participant described how the women would collect mangrove propagules between changing tides and plant them along the coastal edges as they worked. In 2009, this casual practice marked the start of a decade-long presence of organized mangrove restoration on the island. Together, these women formalized this practice by establishing a mangrove nursery near their homes and worksite. The group used these mangroves to replenish the degraded areas they observed. An international NGO later supported the restoration project in Palito. The work done in this community ended around 2013 after internal conflicts and tensions dissolved the association.

Montero: Found on the north-west corner of the island, women fishers and mollusc-extractors from the Mixed Association of Fishers of Montero (ASOMM) partnered with an international NGO to launch their second mangrove restoration project in 2010, and is still active ten years later. Around 20 women, mainly mollusc-extractors, established a mangrove nursery in the community (where a variety of mangrove species were propagated) to be replanted in degraded areas. The nursery was also designed to incorporate tourism and education around local mangrove ecosystem. By 2019, the group included five women (and one man) ranging in age from 26 to 63 years old.

Bocana: On the eastern end of the island, a smaller-scale mangrove nursery was established by the Cooperative of Female Mollusc Extractors of Isla Chira (COOPERACHIRA) beginning with about 15 women. In 2019, one woman regularly worked at the nursery, maintaining and propagating mangroves and replanting them in nearby areas. This project was supported by an international NGO that provided tools and planting materials, as well as training and monitoring support.

Results to date

For the environment, the country, and the communities:

- Though the Palito project is no longer active, it remains relevant as the first restoration initiative on the island involving women and mangroves.

- Past participants describe how their work gave them a platform to talk to and educate other mangrove-users in the community.
- One previous participant described how, years ago, those who lived on the coast used to cut and burn the mangroves. They did not know, she said, that their homes would no longer be protected from the sea once these trees died. She describes that many in her community had to educate themselves around the value of mangroves and accept that deforestation was not advantageous for coastal inhabitants.
- In Montero, women described their desire to participate in mangrove restoration to protect their future access to important mangrove resources.
- Participants benefitted from their partnership with the international NGO, which offered training and workshops. Two participants from this project (a woman and a man) were sponsored by the NGO in 2018 and able to travel to an off-island meeting where they could share experiences and knowledge about the island's wise use and restoration of mangroves. This event put local community members in direct conversation with other communities across Costa Rica and Latin America.
- They were also able to present their projects for NGO leaders and government agents of the National System of Protected Areas (SINAC) and the Ministry of Energy and Environment (MINAE).
- Building local consciousness about conservation and wise use among communities was considered an important goal by participants of all three restoration project sites. (Some described how they were able to contribute to establishment of the mangrove management plan in 2018.)

For women:

- Women were able to voice their needs and unique expertise, contributing to Chira's mangrove management in a novel way, making up 67.8% of local participation in establishing the management plan (SINAC 2018).
- During the mangrove zoning process, the input of women mollusc-extractors and mangrove-reforesters was included.
- For local women, concerns about gendered home roles and dwindling mollusc populations affecting their livelihood cemented interest in mangrove conservation and wise use.

- Women who participated in training about mangroves and restoration projects expressed that they felt empowered because they could communicate this new knowledge from workshops and training with visitors and tourists. This presented some participants with another meaningful livelihood alternative.

Gaps/challenges

- Overall, on Isla de Chira, mangrove-restoration groups struggled to keep participants committed over time.
- Women participants describe the challenges they faced balancing childcare, domestic responsibilities, earning income, and volunteering. (Women are often viewed as having more flexible time than men and sometimes must share their time between multiple activities, including income-producing and unpaid labour).
- Some women stopped participating in mangrove-restoration projects because of a lack of time. Linking gender mainstreaming with conservation efforts may ensure that more women can take part in mangrove restoration in the future.
- Without male support, it can be difficult for women to stay engaged and participate.
- Men are still more likely than women to hold positions of power in local associations. For women to be heard and validated by the local community and external partners, they need to engage with men as equals in the wise use of mangroves. (After all, men who are typically associated with fishing also benefit from the restoration of mangroves, which are nursery habitats for targeted commercial fish species such as corvina and catfish.)
- External partners (such as NGOs) supporting mangrove reforesters need to be sensitive to both community and domestic relationships. This is especially important where both women and men are involved in the same associations. External pressures can lead to tensions elsewhere which may hinder women's empowerment.

For more information

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WOMEN PLANTING TREES TO SAVE THE MANGROVES

Country: Guinea

Context

Deforestation is a serious issue in Guinea, where mangrove forests are cut for firewood to dry and smoke fish. Mangroves play an important role as nursery areas for fish and crustaceans, and are essential for stabilizing the shoreline. Mangroves contribute to climate resilience by reducing the impacts of severe storms and cyclones. When burned for firewood, it contributes to global greenhouse gas emissions. This is why a group of local women in Guinea concerned with the disappearing mangrove forest decided to take action. They created cooperatives within four island villages to stop the deforestation of mangrove wood.

Project Overview

To conserve the mangrove forests, women now use non-polluting solar dryers to dry and smoke fish. They now plant fast-growing Moringa trees, whose leaves are high in vitamins, nutrients, protein, and contain all of the amino acids required to address malnutrition. Moringa planting now helps in local reforestation efforts and creates a sustainable source of income through the drying and selling the trees' nutritionally-dense leaves and water-purifying seeds.

Some of the strategies utilized:

- The creation of several associations of women members in four island villages to manage both their land and the programme (160 women are directly involved in the initiative).
- Inspiring local women who traditionally dry and smoke the fish with mangrove wood to opt to plant Moringa trees to generate income instead.
- Instructing how to cultivate, harvest, and process Moringa's nutritionally-dense leaves and water-purifying seeds into saleable products.
- The introduction of non-polluting solar dryers to dry and smoke fish.
- Instructing how to improve water quality using crushed Moringa seeds, which remove 96% of bacteria.

Results to date

For the environment, the country, and the communities:

- As a direct result of women's leadership and action, 25,000 Moringa trees have been planted by women across 20 hectares in North Guinea.
- Saving up to 40 tonnes of CO₂ per year thanks to solar dryers.

- The use of Moringa for improving water quality has an impact on reducing CO₂ emissions since firewood is no longer required to boil water.
- Reduction of deforestation.

For women:

- Moringa leaves are high in vitamins and nutrients, protein, and contain all the amino acids required to address malnutrition. This has also improved the health and nutrition of children.
- Women are now using solar dryers to dry Moringa leaves, fish, and fruits. They have also learnt to purify water with Moringa seeds, resulting in a reduction in wood-burning and water-borne diseases and improved health for all.
- Not only are women helping to address climate change and reduce deforestation, but they are also generating income by selling Moringa leaves and seeds.

Challenges/Gaps

- The Planting Trees to Save the Mangrove initiative is scalable and has the potential to grow in size. Solar dryers can be manufactured in countries where electricity is scarce.
- The initiative has the potential to be successfully implemented in other countries or regions, as it is easy to plant and harvest Moringa trees in rural communities. Moringa is drought-resistant and fast-growing.

For more information

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<https://mcjsupport.org/contact/>

Website

<https://www.plantonsutile.com>

BUILDING RESILIENT COMMUNITIES, WETLAND ECOSYSTEMS, AND ASSOCIATED CATCHMENTS

Country: Uganda

Context

The adverse effects of climate change are increasingly degrading wetlands and their associated ecosystem services in Uganda. This is negatively affecting the livelihoods of over 4,000,000 people living in and around the wetlands. Over 80% of people living adjacent to Uganda's wetland areas use wetland resources for their household food-security needs. Given that wetlands are highly vulnerable to changes in water supply quantity and quality, climate change will substantially alter ecologically-important wetland attributes and exacerbate the impacts of human activity. Conversely, the loss of wetlands could worsen the effects of climate change as they provide essential services to mitigate such effects.

This project seeks to support the Government of Uganda to take climate-change issues (increased climate variability and extreme weather events such as drought, floods, high temperature, violent storms) into account in the management of critical wetlands. It is expected to restore wetlands and their ecosystem services, based on wise-use principles and guidelines outlined by the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

The project also enhances sustainable land-management practices and reforestation, supports resilient agricultural practices, and alternative livelihoods for communities living in these areas, to reduce pressure on wetlands. It also strengthens climate information and early-warning systems to support marginalized communities (including women) to make climate-resilient decisions.

Project overview

In 2016, the Board of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) approved the Building Resilient Communities, Wetland Ecosystems, and Associated Catchments in Uganda. The project's primary goal is to restore and sustainably manage wetlands and support target communities in Uganda's wetland areas to reduce climate-change risks posed to agricultural-based livelihoods. This directly addresses the critical challenge outlined in the baseline scenario: namely, that climate change will further exacerbate increasingly degraded wetlands in Uganda, which provide valuable ecosystem services for local livelihoods (particularly those dependent on wetlands for water availability and agricultural production). The approach taken by this project is three-fold:

- First, it addresses the specific vulnerabilities of wetland areas themselves, through sustainable-management practices and restoration activities that consider expected climate-change risks.
- Second, GCF resources are used to strengthen agricultural practices and identify alternative livelihood options for those living in wetland-catchment areas.
- Third, the project helps strengthen the generation, analysis, and dissemination of relevant climate information and early-warning systems for targeted wetland areas.

Some of the strategies utilized are:

- Identification of project activities to specifically respond to and consider the climate-related impacts and vulnerabilities of these wetland ecosystems.
- Pinpointing the barriers that prevent Uganda from achieving preferable long-term solutions.
- Recognizing that women are an essential social group and that their role in managing and protecting natural assets (water, forests, fish, and wildlife) is tantamount to this project's success.

Results to date

For the environment, the country, and the communities:

- In 2019, 4,000 hectares of degraded wetlands were restored against a planned target of 10,000 hectares, and 148.2 kilometres of restored wetland boundaries demarcated against an intended target of 80 kilometres.
- One water-retention facility was completed in the Nyaruzinga wetland of the Bushenyi district, and another facility started in the Ruhorobero-Kandekye wetland of the Sheema district.
- Community awareness events were completed on wetland management and wise use for 200 community members (95 females and 105 males, against the targeted number of 400) to enhance awareness of wetlands to their survival.
- Developed two gender-responsive wetland management plans for the Lake Lemwa wetland in the Pallisa district and the Ntungwa-Nyabushoro wetland in the Kanungu district.
- Trained 41 technicians—25 meteorological (five women, 20 men) and 16 hydrological (four women, 12 men)—in the operations and

maintenance of automatic water-level and weather stations.

- Ten technicians (six women, four men) were trained on data rescue and digitization processes, including sorting, batching, digitizing, and quality control.
- National ownership of gender-responsive and community-led implementation processes and associated outcomes has resulted in transformational changes and informed decision-making on inclusive wetland management and wise use.

For women:

- The gender and social assessment revealed that women, children, and the elderly are frequently among the more vulnerable. In the wake of adverse climate impacts, their vulnerability is likely to be exacerbated.
- Women are not only key beneficiaries of adaptation measures under this project, but play a leading role in mainstreaming adaptation initiatives for broader target groups.
- Community sensitization, involving women's participation, and boundary-marking of buffer zones has led to be actions in the Namakole inlet stream of the Mbale district.
- The project's gender assessment identified both awareness-generation and education gaps as key challenges, and highlighted the need to consider differentiated roles, responsibilities, needs, and expertise of women and men in wetland management.
- Actions have increase access to land for women to engage in income-generating agro-based activities in a sustainable manner that promotes cash and food-crop-production by women and men.
- Develop and approve (by district) a technical-officer selection criterion for beneficiaries. This criterion determines the inclusion of vulnerable groups (women, children, and disabled persons)

as a requirement while undertaking project interventions.

- 63% of beneficiaries (52% of women) registered an increase in household income from the sale of crops grown using mini-irrigation systems.
- Develop skills and provide women opportunities. (Based on recommendation from a 2019 hydro-meteorological study, the land rights for installing automatic water-level and weather stations were acquired from respective local governments.)

Gaps/challenges include:

- There is a need to address women's land-ownership issues directly.
- Gender stereotypes cannot be addressed in the short run, so the project will continue to implement sensitization programmes targeted mainly at men and boys to change their behaviours and attitudes towards women and girls.
- Assess progress made against gender sensitive indicators highlighted in the gender action plan.
- The project can achieve more in terms of valuing the economic, cultural, and social benefits of women's wetland-based livelihoods and ensuring solutions to enhance gender equality are adapted to local cultural contexts.
- The inadequate skills among staff and relevant stakeholders for mainstreaming gender and addressing GBV.

For more information

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BIODIVERSITY AND NATURE CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION (BANCA)

Country: Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Context

BANCA has partnered with several international NGOs and projects. Its mission is the conservation of nature, primarily biological diversity (genes, species, ecosystems) through actions based on surveys and research, advocacy, partnership, network-building, environmental education and public awareness, people's participation, encouragement of stakeholders, and improvement of rural livelihoods.

BANCA has been involved in the designation process of Protected Areas and Ramsar Sites in Myanmar and is also filling Ramsar Information sheets in collaboration with the Forest Department. Moreover, having women's experiences in wetland conservation, the project has been involved in monitoring species and Ramsar Convention's Programme on CEPA in Ramsar Sites for various projects.

Project overview

BANCA has had significant experience in the conservation of wetlands (primarily coastal) for more than 10 years in the Gulf of Mottama, Mon State, Bago Region, and Nan Thar Island in the Rakhine State.

Some of the strategies utilized include:

- Since 2018, a Spoon-billed Sandpiper and shorebird monitoring effort at the Gulf of Mottama.
- Annual monitoring of shorebird species and implementation of the CEPA programme to make communities aware of the value of wetlands and biodiversity in the Gulf of Mottama.
- Identifying the Gulf of Mottama as an important winter nesting site for the Spoon-billed Sandpiper.
- Identifying local communities involved in shorebird hunting activities and changing their livelihoods, as well as the formation of Local Conservation Groups (LCGs).
- Conducting consultations for the designation process of Ramsar Site with various stakeholders (e.g., government departments, local communities, etc.).
- Annual monitoring of shorebird species on Nanthar Island and assessment of local communities' socio-economic situation around island's Local Conservation Groups (LCGs) to better involve communities in conservation activities.
- In 2015, the assessment of local communities living around sites to determine the value of

each wetland's ecosystem services in cooperation with park wardens and relevant government departments.

- The consideration of gender equality in dealing between local communities and the CEPA programme, made possible through interviews, surveys, and consultations.

Results to date

For the environment, the country, and the communities:

- Over the years, sites have become part of the Proposed Marine National Park and Ramsar Sites.
- Around 2010, the Gulf of Mottama in Myanmar was identified as an important winter nesting site of the Spoon-billed Sandpiper (which accounts for about half of the known global population).
- The hunters' livelihoods have changed: becoming Local Conservation Group members and helping to put a stop to illegal hunting.

For women:

- From 2011 to 2016, BANCA promoted the awareness of wetlands and species conservation to over 43,000 participants, both women and men. (In village programmes, the ratio of was the same.)
- As a result of wetland conservation through CEPA, an increasing number of women can now understand the importance of wetland ecosystems and natural resources that they depend on for their livelihood.

Gaps/challenges

- Women in Myanmar are increasingly responsible for managing small-scale agriculture, yet still do not have an equal voice in decision-making regarding land use or access to resources.
- Loss of biodiversity also creates a disproportionate burden for women and girls, increasing the time required of them to gather water, fuel, or wood, and reducing the time that could be spent on income-generation or education.

For more information

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INSTITUTO CHICO MENDES DE CONSERVAÇÃO DA BIODIVERSIDADE (ICMBio)

Country Brazil

Context

The Lagoa do Peixe National Park (PNLP) is a Conservation Unit (CU) located in the extreme south of Brazil and managed by the Chico Mendes Institute for the Conservation of Biodiversity (ICMBio): the government agency responsible for federally-protected areas. It is one of the most important migratory and wintering stopovers for shorebirds in South America. It is a great concentration of biodiversity, including the fish and shrimp traditionally exploited by local fishing communities.

The NP was created in 1986 to protect a sample of coastal ecosystems and migratory bird species. It was recognized as a Site of the Hemispheric Network of Shorebird Reserves (WHSRN) in 1990 and a Ramsar Site in 1993. The creation of the park on traditional fishing territories resulted in a historic conflict around restrictions on access and use to Lagoa do Peixe. Furthermore, the conflict was intensified by poor NP implementation and land regulation.

Gender relations in the region are patriarchal, with low political and economic participation of women. This extends to NP issues. Conflicts peaked in 2018, threatening both the park and the fishing community, coupled with a loss of protection for the site. To implement a conflict-management strategy that considered the rights and quality of life of local communities, dialogues were initiated with the Coordination of Conflicts in Territorial Interfaces (COGCOT), bird research centres (CEMAVE), socio-biodiversity associations (CNPT), and fisheries (CEPSUL); and from ICMBio communities, authorities of the Ministry of the Environment, and Mostardas and Tavares counties.

An Action Plan was prepared to mitigate the conflict and strengthen participation in the management of the park. Strategic axes were defined: clarification from authorities, access to and use of natural resources by local communities, the promotion of public use as a means of stimulating regional development, and involving local communities in park management. Because of the urgent need to prioritize fishing needs, ICMBio and local communities expanded current legislation to incorporate participatory monitoring.

Project overview

Beginning July 2019, the agreement resulted in a Term of Commitment (TC) in December 2019 with signatures from both the ICMBio and local communities. The TC stands out for its effective arrival at an agreed-upon solution with such positive ramification for the management of the site, and provided the opportunity for cooperation between local fishing communities and the ICMBio while helping to conserve the biodiversity of the Lagoa do Peixe National Park.

Some of the strategies utilized include:

- Three roundtables in the preparation of the TC between local stakeholders. These included an agreement around scheduled activities (with the ICMBio team, local fishing communities, NP management council representatives, and municipal authorities), an initial dialogue between stakeholders (and evaluation of the TC, requirements, and demands), and a second dialogue between stakeholders that consolidated the criteria of the agreement.
- The involvement of women in the planning, research, and monitoring during the negotiations—as well as the recognition of the role women played in traditional fishing activities. The clear defining of beneficiaries as reference in the National Policy for the Sustainable Development of Traditional Peoples and Communities, which defines self-identification as a guiding parameter for identifying traditional communities, as well as recognizing their collective identity.

Results to date

For the environment, the country, and the communities

- In December 2019, agreement was reached between ICMBio and local fishing communities with the national park after months of negotiations. The agreement established guidelines for the use, access, and management of natural resources by local fishing communities within the park, with the commitment to adopt sustainable practices to address conservation efforts and the livelihoods of local fishing communities. The result has been a reduction in conflict within the park.

- It was possible to set up studies, establish rules, clearly define the beneficiaries and their families of the agreement, and monitor the harvest of pink shrimp (*Pennaeus paulensis*) within the Lagoa do Peixe. The fishery plays an important economic role in the lives of the local people involved. In January 2019, the relationship between the fisheries and avifauna were studied in relation to the economics of local fish farms.
- Many birds (seabirds, waders, swans, flamingos, etc.) coexist with traditional fisheries in the lagoon. Shoreline monitoring will make it possible to evaluate impacts and adopt adequate measures to reconcile uses.
- The monitoring of shrimp fisheries made it possible to regulate the activity following the assessment of fish stocks and biodiversity impacts.
- As of August 2020, research centres, ICMBio staff, and representatives from local fishing communities have determined that the arrival of migratory birds in combination and filtering bird in combination with the ecological and biological impact of shrimp harvesting signified the end of the shrimp harvest.

For women

- The TC involved 2020 beneficiary fishers, of which 37 were women. In its first months, the agreement reduced conflict, benefited

biodiversity, and ensured the livelihood, rights, and way of life of the local fishing communities.

- Fisherwomen work mainly within the family, and their participation in the group's monitoring and representation is still timid, but not without impact.
- There is potential for growth in representation and participation in fishery management, and the implementation future supply chains.

Gaps/challenges

- It is still necessary to expand understanding of women's roles in traditional fishing dynamics carried out in Lagoa do Peixe. This will help women to be more visible in the park's decision-making and better understand the challenges they face.
- The need for community engagement and the profitability of the supply chain will be crucial.

For more information

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NEW PARTICIPATORY GUARANTEE MODEL FOR MARINE-COASTAL RESOURCES

Country: Honduras

Context

For years, fishing has been a source of generating income by women and young people on Isla del Tigre, in the municipality of Amapala. The exploitation of coastal marine resources consists of the extraction and collection of shellfish, sardines, clams, donkey hooves, and *canechos* (a type of crab)—to be sold in local and regional markets.

According to a gender analysis carried out on women and young people, the primary limitations they face include poor traditional fishing practices, little to no negotiating power, poor supply-chain planning, ecosystem fragility, and the poor participation of women and young people in public spheres.

Because of this, the Committee for the Defence of the Flora and Fauna of the Gulf of Fonseca (CODDEFFAGOLF), along with the financial support of Affaires Mondiales Canada (AMC)/Global Affairs Canada, through Oxfam Québec launched the New Participatory Guarantee Model for Marine-Coastal Resources of the Municipality of Amapala.

Project overview

The project consists of implementing a participatory system that guaranteeing coastal-marine resources to increase the competencies of women and young people. It respected the skills and involvement of stakeholders and facilitated more sustainable harvesting practices. The emphasis placed on the importance of coastal-marine resources allowed for certified commercialization (local markets, fair trade, etc.) and the potential for greater income generation.

Some of the strategies they have utilized include:

- Identifying and organizing women into collectives based on community.
- Collecting the necessary information and documentation establish collectives as legal entities and execute the corresponding procedures. Formed a participatory certification-guarantee system for seafood products in partnership with the Instituto Nacional de Formación Profesional (INFO), Agricultural School, CODDEFFAGOLF, Servicio Nacional de Sanidad e Inocuidad Agroalimentaria (SENASA), and Unidad Municipal Ambiental (UMA) de Amapala.

- Encouraged local municipal sustainability ordinances around shellfish harvesting, with an end goal of environmental protection. Presented the Seafood Women's Agenda to municipal and regional authorities.
- Organized focus groups. (The first included women beneficiaries, the second included women representatives in the governing body.) Conducted quantitative research into activities that women perform and established parameters for comparison with an initial baseline.

Results to date

For the environment, the country, and the communities

- The economic and social well-being of poor and marginalized communities have improved.
- The economic-environmental sustainability of shellfish harvesting done by women and youth of Amapala improved.
- The trainings, leadership schools, and other programmes addressed topics such as self-esteem, best fishing practices, safe-handling and relevant manufacturing best practices, domestic violence, gender, and development.
- Empowerment thanks to increased productivity and business training.
- 91% of people polled felt that their business prospects had improved. (Related in part to the legalization of multiple service companies, which enhanced skills and motivated women to pursue additional income-generation activities.)

For Women

- Improved economic and social inclusion for women and young people in Amapala. More than 112 women and young people from Amapala benefited from activities that took advantage of coastal-marine resources, resulting in both greater empowerment and greater responsibility.
- The local women learned about artificial shellfish breeding programmes from nearby women in Conchitas Manglares, El Salvador, as well as the requirements for establishing nurseries. The project made possible the unionizing of 112 women (47 of whom were young), legally recognized in four municipal-service companies. More than 49% of the women have also been involved in other community organizations

(school boards, water boards, parents' societies) and 55% in diverse organizations. At the family and organizational levels, 64% of women said that they experienced improved decision-making because their involvement in democratic activities.

- Decision-making within the household is shared.
- 82% of women and young people report improved fishing due to conservation efforts.

Gaps/challenges

- Even with the improved participation and leadership of women, gender gaps persist.

- Young women are not considered for leadership positions in their groups, so few feel compelled to participate.

For more information

Contact

Comité para la Defensa y Desarrollo de la Flora Y Fauna del Golfo de Fonseca (CODDEFFAGOLF)

Website

<https://coddeffagolf.org>

FIRST LEAN SOLUTION TO THE TEMPLE WASTE PROBLEM

Country: India

Context

Showering flowers (8 million tonnes annually) at temples and mosques is a religious ritual in India, Nepal, and Bangladesh. As these flowers rot, they create havoc for the Ganges river's fragile ecosphere and leach into groundwater. Moreover, the toxins from pesticides and insecticides used in growing the flowers enter riverways, turning the water poisonous. This is linked to contracting cholera, hepatitis, and severe diarrhoea, which are the leading causes (86.7%) of child mortality across India and Bangladesh. The temple-flower tradition is overpowering the Ganges' biophysical stability and killing it, so HelpUsGreen pioneered its "flower-cycling" technology to up-cycle temple waste and prevent the Ganges from becoming a religious sewer. This is done with the help of women (manual scavengers: the lowest in the Indian caste system), which in turn gives them work to support their families.

Project overview

HelpUsGreen collects 11.4 tonnes of floral waste daily from temples and mosques. The waste is given to the women (manual scavengers) to produce hand-crafted, patented, organic fertilizers; natural incense; and biodegradable packaging material. This act of cleaning the Ganges (a river considered sacred and holy) not only provides women with stability and healthier lives, but provides them dignity, respect, and social acceptance.

Some of the strategies they have utilized include:

- Changing a harmful, centuries-old religious practice of dumping temple waste in India's rivers—revolutionizing how the country handles the "million-tonne flower-waste disposal".
- Up-cycling the monumental temple waste from the Ganges River.
- Tapping into a new potential market (and creating a niche for women manual scavengers) by pioneering organic/natural alternatives to of the toxic chemicals commonly found in incense, fertilizers, EPS, etc.
- Created self-help groups for women to voice their concerns and provide them with their own bank accounts to have control over their earnings and preventing their husbands from forcibly taking their profits.
- Simplifying and codifying the manufacturing processes to train women manual scavengers who have limited skills.

Results to date

For the environment, the country, and the communities:

- In 2019, 11,060 metric tonnes of flowers upcycled.
- 110 metric tonnes of chemical pesticides offset.
- Changed the way temple and religious authorities think, and forced the government to think about better ways to dispose of temple flowers. The Government of India has shown interest in including HelpUsGreen in its Smart Cities Mission.

For women:

- Alternative means for employment for women manual scavengers, who are among the poorest and most disadvantaged communities in India.
- Positive impacts on local women's' livelihoods: 23 manual-scavenger families have increased their income by a minimum of six times, and 19 former HelpUsGreen members have rented a pond in the village to further increase their income five times with fish farming.
- Increased the standard of living for women workers and made them economically independent with predictable and regular incomes. Today they have bank accounts, ATM cards, health insurance, clean drinking water, and toilets. Moreover, they have become decision-makers in their homes.
- 119 girls have now started going to school, which Earlier would have been unimaginable.

Challenges/Gaps

- Production of HelpUsGreen products has been unable to keep up with demand.
- The need for an increase of operations to meet the growing demands of consumers, as well as having the right partners, teams, and means to grow beyond its current territories.

For more information

Contact

HelpUsGreen

Website

<https://helpusgreen.com/about-us/>

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT THROUGH WETLAND MANAGEMENT

Country: Uganda

Context

Wetlands cover about 11% of Uganda and are a source of livelihood for many communities. But between 1994 and 2008, wetlands shrank by nearly 30%, which affected the biodiversity of Uganda and the quality of life of many of its population. To address this, WENG developed an initiative highlighting the importance of having women responsible for both the management and restoration of the wetlands.

In Uganda, women are responsible for the security and subsistence of the household. The loss of wetlands has created difficulties in the country's largely rain-dependent agricultural activities, which involve some 72% of Ugandan women. Likewise, the organization recognizes that "good governance in wetlands management starts with increasing the participation of vulnerable communities and women in local governance structures – from their ability to make their voice heard giving them a seat at the decision-making table".

Moreover, tensions are high between communities (Otuke and Karamoja) over water scarcity, resulting in stress and harassment.

Project overview

Through negotiation, collaboration, and training, the WENG programme is helping to build local communities (enhancing the agency and importance of having women and girls involved in the field) while working in partnership with government to establish a firm wetland policy. The programme is also working to raise awareness of better water management in local communities.

Some of the strategies utilized include:

- Engaging communities in pre-emptive water harvesting during the rainy season and setting up early-warning systems around water depletion.
- Training media (and other agents of change) around risk-reduction and other courses of action.
- Combining indigenous knowledge of resource-management with science for a more comprehensive messaging campaign on wetlands.

- Converting scientific research into simple language, shared with local communities.
- Sharing knowledge on preservation and making it available to other communities facing similar issues.
- Working alongside government.
- Encouraging the increased participation of vulnerable populations (and women) in local governments, giving them the ability to have their voices heard and a role in decision-making.
- Recognizing that women are the most affected, and therefore the best positioned to be agents of change.
- Involving women and girls as mediators and negotiators.

Results to date

For the environment, the country, and the communities:

- More than a decade of relative stability for the ecosystem.
- Two wetland-management plans created by WENG and three more created by the government demonstrating the programme's value and replicability.
- Less stress placed on wetlands and an ongoing replenishment of previously-depleted resources (water and food).

For women:

- Reduced incidences of gender-based violence and increased productivity.
- Women involved in wetlands advocacy now work for the local government council, which gives them a voice and serves as an example for other women on how to access power.

Challenges/Gaps

- Better implementation of government policies continues to lag due to the movement of other communities in and out of Otuke, making decision-making challenging.
- There is a need for ongoing capacity-building of local communities.

- Additionally, budgets require greater backing from government and civilian groups.
- Greater influence on the private sector for more sustainable practices—looking into more eco-friendly investment opportunities as a possible means of avoiding funding pitfalls.

For more information

Contact

Care International's Women's Empowerment in Natural Resource Governance (WENG)

Website

https://careuganda.org/programs_weng.php

<https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/articles/womens-empowerment-through-wetland-management-uganda>

REVERSING THE DEFORESTATION OF RAINFORESTS

Country: Indonesia

Context

Between 2000 and 2010, Indonesian Borneo lost an annual 3,234 square kilometres of forest. Moreover, in 2015, the country's peat fires emitted more CO₂ than the entire United States economy, making reversing deforestation extremely important for Health In Harmony (HIH). A survey conducted by HIH found that the majority of the households depend on illegal logging, and the average logger cuts 533 mature trees every year.

Project Overview

HIH works with communities who live near protected rainforests in Indonesian Borneo and Madagascar, providing health care, agricultural training, alternate livelihoods, and more. HIH programmes are a pathway for communities to reduce logging, regenerate the rainforest, increase their quality of life, and create a climate-change solution that empowers people.

Since 2007, HIH has collaborated with the Indonesian-run ASRI Medical Centre and communities around Gunung Palung National Park (GPNP) to create and implement programmes that support human health, economic development, and environmental conservation. The GPNP is a rainforest containing carbon-rich peat swamp and 72 teragramme of above-ground CO₂.

After 10 years of ASRI's health care and community programmes, logging activity by household in the park in GPNP had dropped by 88%. The remaining loggers were entirely dependent on logging and knew no other way of making a living, so in 2017, ASRI launched a business development programme called Chainsaw Buyback. The programme helped former loggers find livelihoods other than illegal timber. In exchange for chainsaws, the loggers and their families receive seed money, mentoring, and business-planning assistance from ASRI staff—and supported them in the successful transition to entrepreneurial small businesses. To date, more than 100 logging families traded ASRI their chainsaws and switched to a sustainable livelihood.

The key innovation was a “green credit” system, in which patients from villages that reduced illegal logging were given discounts of up to 70% on health-care services. Patients could also pay with seedlings, handicrafts, manure, etc.—ensuring care was always within reach.

Some of the strategies utilized include:

- Operating a medical centre, dental clinic, ambulance and midwifery services on the GPNP border for a population of 120,000.
- Offering tiered discounts to communities that decreased illegal logging activity while accepting non-cash payments (such as rainforest seedlings) so households did not log to cover health-care costs.
- An alliance with the Chainsaw Buyback programme, trading chainsaws from loggers with seed money and mentorship to help households find alternative livelihoods.
- Working with park officials and community members to create orangutan corridors, stop illegal forest gardens, and protect carbon-rich peat swamps.
- Providing 95 no-interest loans to female and male heads –of household who previously relied on illegal logging. (76% have begun loan repayments.)

Results to date

For the environment, the country, and the communities:

- Reduction of logging households by 90%.
- Stabilized the primary cause of deforestation.
- Regrew 21,000 hectares of secondary forest inside the park.
- Scaled up its woman-led, planetary health model to sequester carbon among rainforest communities along the equator.
- The Chainsaw Buyback programme has purchased 145 chainsaws from loggers, keeping an estimated 31,000 old-growth trees standing.
- Allowed patients to pay for over US\$30,000 of health-care costs with non-cash payments, including 64,901 rainforest seedlings of 59 native species.

For women:

- A 67% decrease in infant mortality.
- A 55% decrease in the number of births –per –thousand women.
- The ASRI Medical Centre has treated over 86,200 patients, 55% of whom are women.
- HIH's all-woman programme of directly-observed tuberculosis treatment has provided medication to 700 patients in the last five years with a less-than 1% dropout rate.

- So far, 27 women have created successful businesses, including dry-goods shops, restaurants, and sugar-cane juice carts.
- Women gained control over income, decision-making power, and resources.
- HIH education programmes have reached 1,015 children in 27 primary schools as the only environmental education source.

For more information

Contact

Health in Harmony (HIH)

Website

<https://healthinharmony.org/vision-and-mission/>

FEDERATION OF HANDCRAFTED FISHERY AND ENVIRONMENTALIST OF THE CESAR DEPARTMENT

Country: Colombia

Context

Developed in the Chimichagua Cesar Municipality (specifically Sempegua, Salos, La Mata, and the Barrancones Island), the project focused explicitly on freshwater wetlands with an average depth of 3.5 metres. The main propose is protecting the wetlands near the Magdalena River and adapt them to the new challenges created by climate change.

Project overview

Beginning February 2017 and concluding March 2019, the project involved the Community Action Board, local institutions and organizations, as well as community members primarily comprised of nuns, teachers, people of African descent, and the children of members of various fishing associations. The primary focus of the project was to create a solution to help mitigate the effects of climate change by leveraging the following:

- Traditional fishing and fair trade.
- Productive backyards.
- Wetland restoration and hydrological connectivity.
- Knowledge and organizational strengthening.

Some of the strategies utilized include:

- Ensuring that the project always prioritized local communities, being sure to consider their unique requirements and expertise. Building on deforestation experience to restore native tree species in the wetland.
- Providing food security and autonomy for local communities.
- Economizing food-production costs for households by utilizing unused spaces in backyards.
- Reviving ancestral knowledge around plant medicines, art and myths, and traditional fishing practices.
- The full involvement of aforementioned community members in all project activities.
- Integrating conservation measures into public policy.

Results to date

For the environment, the country, and the communities:

- Helped educate communities and empower them to better plan the future of their territories. Adapt to the effects of climate change in the wetlands around the Magdalena River.
- Restoration of wildlife habitat, as well traditional fishing grounds.
- Increased food security for local communities.
- Greater appreciation for traditional knowledge and traditions, and applying them in future planning.
- The restoration of 10 sites into wildlife refuges (both land and water).

For women:

- Involved women in the recovery of native trees species and the restoration of the dry tropical forest.
- Converted 30 backyards into productive spaces minimizing food costs.
- Successful conservation has created sites that women (and fishermen) can visit.

For more information

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MOEYUNGYI WETLAND WILDLIFE SANCTUARY (MWWS)

Country: Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Context

Moeyungyi Wetland Wildlife Sanctuary (MWWS) is one of the six Ramsar Sites in Myanmar. The site is located in the Bago Region, sharing its three administrative townships: Bago, Waw, and Daik-U. More than 9,000 households depend on the site for their livelihoods. More than 60% of them are engaged in fishing-related activities. Due to the limited awareness of conservation and wise use of wetlands, local people use unsustainable fishing practices.

The Norway-Myanmar bilateral project (Conservation of Biodiversity and Improved Management of Protected Areas in Myanmar) focuses on improving the management of wetlands and protected areas of Myanmar, including the Moeyungyi Ramsar Site. The project's four main outputs are: staff capacity-building, the conservation and management of wetlands, strengthening management activities, and increasing the level of knowledge on the protection and management of wildlife and endangered species. The project supported the preparation of the site-management plan of MWWS, including the demarcation of management zones such as Core Zone, Transition Zone, and Wise-Use Zone, depending on the ecological conditions of the site. Consequently, this zoning enhances conservation activities and wise-use principles to local resource users, predominantly female.

Project overview

The project enhances wise-use activities (biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration, livelihood enhancement) by improving small-scale fishing practices to be more sustainable by providing the initial investment to buy standardized equipment. The project also supported CEPA activities regarding tourism and birdwatching further enhance conservation and wise use activities.

Gender is one of the key aspects for sustainable resource use in MWWS. Women are directly involved in many livelihood activities, such as fishing, boat transportation, collection of leeches, snails, shells, lotus, insects, , gathering firewood, duck farming, making textiles, and establishing paddy fields in the Transition and Wise-Use Zones. They are also indirectly involved in making fish sauce and fermented fish paste, both commercially and for household consumption.

Some of the strategies utilized include:

- Implementation of sustainable fishing practices for local communities in the MWWS by providing the initial investments purchase standard fishing gear.
- Giving control of funds to a committee comprised of village leaders and fishing representatives. The full involvement of women in the committee to ensure equitable distribution of funds. (The recipient has three months to pay back the loan, which is then passed on to the next person. In order to receive any funds, the recipient agrees to inform park authorities of any illegal fishing activities they encounter (including fishing with prohibited gear, out of season, or outside of designated zones.) The reason being that the core zone is protected for bird and fish breeding.
- Initial investment from the project was about US\$4,000 (\$1,000 per village)—adequate to cover the cost of distributing standard fishing nets to 20 volunteers per village. Requiring recipients to repay their debt in monthly instalments with interest. This helped to build trust between park authorities and local fishermen, as well as to grow public support for conservation efforts.

Results to date

For the environment, the country, and the communities:

- As a result of the programme, local fishermen implemented standard fishing nets with a mesh size greater than one inch (2.54 centimetres), reducing the depletion of young fish stock and helping to create sustainable small-scale fisheries. Greater commitment from local fishermen to practise wise-use principles in specified zones and only during fishing season. (In June 2020, the number of participants totalled 171 across four villages.)
- Following the success of the Moeyungyi Wetland Wildlife Sanctuary, the project has been applied to other Ramsar Sites in Myanmar, such as Meinmahla Kyun Wildlife Sanctuary.

For women:

- Women were active participants in the village committee, making important decisions regarding the fund and its recipients.
- Provided training programmes around birdwatching and tourism to teach the value of wetlands and the alternate livelihoods they can

provide. As a result, women are more interested in ecotourism activities (restaurants, local guide services, the selling of goods and fish) than unsustainable resource extraction.

- CEPA activities that proactively encouraged gender equality and reaching women in new ways through education talks, discussions, and campaigns. More active involvement in the community. Women with an increased awareness of the value of wetlands became more engaged in conservation activities like increasing fish stock, reporting illegal fishing activities and any damage to boundary markers within the site.
- Gender equality in capacity-building programmes among the staff helped to strengthen park management.

Gaps/challenges

- Difficulties creating a widespread awareness of gender issues in the wise use of wetlands, biological resource extraction, and value chains.

- Limited CEPA opportunities to communicate urgencies around wise-use practices with local communities.
- Increased and more-severe fishing activity negatively impacts the maintenance of wetlands, with an unclear understanding of women's involvement. Limited gender-responsive mobilization programmes for education facilities and vocational training.
- More effective CEPA activities are needed for younger women to ensure active participation and gender equality in wetland conservation.

For more information

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RESTORATION OF URMIA LAKE

Country: Iran

Context

Lake Urmia is one of the world's largest hypersaline lakes, and its surrounding wetlands are located in north-western Iran. More than 5 million people living near the lake rely on this ecosystem, yet over the past two decades, Lake Urmia has lost 95% of its volume. Analyses indicate that human activities are the cause of this socio-ecological disaster.

Presently, Lake Urmia and its wetlands are under severe water stress, making water availability a crucial issue. Several studies confirm that multiple factors, such as the construction of dams, extension of irrigated farmland, excessive groundwater extraction, and increasing water demand in urban areas, and climate change have resulted in the degradation of the lake's ecosystem.

Two institutional restoration measures have been sought, in collaboration with international agencies, to help conservation efforts of the lake and its biodiversity. In 2013, an expansive government-initiated programme, known as the 'Urmia Lake Restoration Program' (ULRP), was launched to increase the lake's ecological level to 1,274 metres above sea level by 2023. The other project (Restoration of Lake Urmia via Local Community Participation in Sustainable Agriculture and Biodiversity Conservation) was started simultaneously with the support of the Japanese government and co-managed by the Conservation of the Iranian Wetlands Project (CIWP) and the Jihad Agriculture (MoJA) Ministry at the provincial level. As agriculture has been hit particularly hard by the lake's desiccation, the sustainability of existing farming systems and livelihoods is in jeopardy.

Because of large agricultural and regional demands on water in the Lake Urmia basin, measures have been implemented to limit water use, agricultural run-off and pollution of waterways, and soil salinization to protect both the lake and the farmers who depend on it. There is a presumed relation between the lake and local water tables, therefore effective groundwater management is essential to restore the lake and conserve biodiversity.

Project overview

The CIWP was launched in 2005 as a joint initiative of the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the GEF, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It aims to strengthen the protection of the country's important wetland sites.

Some of the strategies utilized include:

- Improving wetland management systems while considering the impact of human activities on biodiversity.
- Promoting an ecosystem-based approach to wetland management in Iran.
- Introducing sustainable agriculture techniques to decrease water consumption for agricultural purposes.
- Beginning 2015, the CIWP began supporting rural women in several villages with microcredit loans. (The CIWP acknowledges the ultimate use of funds would not necessarily be eco-friendly, but while the conventional practice of women's economic empowerment is primarily to reduce poverty, the CIWP helped provide them with the skills and knowledge required for the wise use of water resources.) Contracting local organization to do community interventions in pilot sites. The objectives were: in the short term, mobilizing women around their need for funds; in the medium term, organizing women into a group for revolving loan funds; and in the long term, improving their quality of life by empowering rural women to create sustainable small businesses.
- Using multiple indicators to monitor progress at every level, the CIWP adopted a "learning by doing" approach to collect data (on consequences, both intended and unintended) to measure women's economic empowerment (WEE) and develop contextual-fit frameworks.

Results to date include

For the environment, the country, and the communities:

- In the past seven years, the CIWP developed community-based interventions to foster sustainable agriculture in 150 rural villages, located in the Lake Urmia basin. During this period, individual interventions were established to promote and support women's livelihood opportunities in 19 of those villages.
- The majority of these small-to-medium-sized group members had previously not had any earnings, working as subsistence farmers or unpaid workers on family farms. (A few women worked in low-paid jobs, and even fewer worked off of farms.) Therefore, the earnings of target groups technically increased from zero (or a low wage) to an acceptable income level.
- Several created jobs were new to the community.

For women:

- About 475 women welcomed the project and participated in various skill-training sessions, out of which about 442 women (either individually or collectively) used their learning to generate income.
- Those who worked together were encouraged by the project to form their own groups and small businesses (i.e., handicrafts, tailoring, dressmaking, textiles products and carpet weaving, traditional food making and processing, livestock breeding, beekeeping, greenhouse farming, etc.).
- Once some women began generating income, more community member were attracted to the project. In some villages, non-farm livelihoods were created using the women's revolving loan funds—resulting in a sort of family microenterprise.
- The formation revolving loan fund groups resulted in an increase in women's confidence creating small businesses and making individual and collective decisions on household savings and investments.
- Women took the initiative to use available resources, such as mobile phones, as a means of marketing to consumers outside their village to sell their products. Some more skilful groups mad use of social media to advertise their products.
- Improved communication skills meant women were able to lead negotiations with local authorities around developing their group work.
- Rural women's voices gradually began to be heard once they proved to family and community members that they could contribute to household income. Some influenced farmers' decision to grow crops with low water requirements or to even rely on rain-fed farming.

Gaps/challenges

- As long as demands for non-farm livelihoods and sustainable agricultural products continue to be met with opposition, the CIWP faces difficulties encouraging villagers around Lake Urmia to diversify their income sources and substitute their farming practices with activities that require less water.
- The CIWP needs to address challenges regarding rural women's participation in the wise use of wetland resources—specifically, sustainable revolving loan funds at the grassroots level.
- Donor funds for the project are year by year, which affects women's groups. Typically, it requires more time to run a women's economic-empowerment project successfully.
- Time constraints have also affected thoroughness of implementation because it prevents the CIWP from organizing the required training opportunities for its local partners.
- Project staff lack the assistance they need, especially for helping rural women build connections with local markets.
- It was nearly impossible to collect baseline data before starting the project, as facilitators were required to question villagers about their socioeconomic status, which could affect initial trust-building. The project needs to bridge the gap between the objectives (immediate and future) of the WEE project while enhancing water resource-management roles for women. To do this, the project needs two sets of indicators to measure progress for each. Additionally, he CIWP must develop a framework around best practices from the pilot sites. Re-educate existing beliefs that consider sustainable agriculture to be a technical matter and wetland management to be a man's domain. This requires policies and administration structures that can help to steer change.

For more information

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“AN-GIRLS” GUIDING AND GUARDING WOMEN OF THE TAI WETLAND

Country: Japan

Context

Toyooka City is located in the north-eastern Hyogo Prefecture. It is home to a programme dedicated to the reintroduction of Oriental White Storks through a complex and innovative wetland restoration initiative.

The Oriental White Stork (*Ciconia boyciana*) was once widely seen across Japan in the last century, but has vanished from the wild because of the steady deterioration of habitat, pollution, and farm pesticides. (The last Oriental White Stork was observed in Toyooka City, 1971). It is categorized as Endangered in the IUCN Red List. Although it became extinct in Japan in 1971, a reintroduction project was started in Toyooka City, the last-known habitat of this species in Japan.

Artificial-breeding efforts started in 1965 in Toyooka City, using captured wild storks. After 25 years, the effort succeeded, leading to reintroducing of the animals into the wild in 2005. There are now wild breeding populations.

Agriculture and fishery have been a source of livelihood for Tai District, a small village located at the north end of Toyooka City in Hyogo Prefecture. However, ongoing damage to crops by wild animals and changing lifestyles accelerated a loss of local farms, leading to the 2006 phase-out of rice farming in the area. In 2008, wild storks were observed in the former rice fields, prompting locals and NGOs to protect the fields. This led to the further phase-out of neighbouring paddies and the creation of a wetland area of about 12 hectares.

Project overview

Attracted by ecotourism, visitors began arriving to Tai District more each year, inspiring many local women to consider new livelihoods. This led to the formation of a local guide team known as the *An-Girls* (guiding women) in 2011 show visitors the region’s history, traditions, and natural beauty (including local storks). Today, the group has 14 active members.

Some of the strategies utilized include:

Cooperation between the city, civil groups, prefecture government, and the local university to rehabilitate the environment and increase the biodiversity of marshes, rivers, and fields—allowing captive-bred

storks to return. In 2007, the first chick hatched in the wild. The initial Oriental White Stork sightings in retired rice fields lead to the development of wetland areas throughout the village. The activities inspired a re-evaluation of how the district perceived abandoned fields, influencing a more positive perception of the natural environment. The *An-Girls* group has guided more than 4,100 visitors in and around Toyooka City. (Locals learnt of Tai District by word of mouth, while those coming from outside had learnt through the city’s website or lectures from various NGOs.) The *An-Girls’* guided tours typically consist of introductions of observable local fauna during the season, as well as local history and traditions.

By turning their local knowledge and observations into informed guided tours (along with a feminine touch), the group continues to grow and drive conservation efforts.

Results to date

For the environment, the country, and the communities:

- The establishment of a wetland area of about 12 hectares helped in the reintroduction of Oriental White Storks to the wild. After successful captive-breeding programmes, wild populations of approximately 140 storks have been successfully established in Japan as of 2018. There has been a fundamental shift in farming. Many farmers have stopped using pesticides and switched to organic methods. Crop yields are smaller, but organic rice can be sold for a higher price. The stork-reintroduction project has added value to people’s lives and culture—reinvigorating local pride and inspiring the entire community to work for the conservation of wetlands. Every year, researchers, students, businesspeople, and volunteers travel to the wetlands of Tai District to participate in the local conservation efforts.
- There are few examples in the world of successful reintroduction programmes that overlap with human habitation.

For women:

- Ecotourism opportunities, such as the formation of *An-Girls*, a volunteer group of wetland guides comprised exclusively of local women. The guided tours created new relationships outside

the village, bringing an estimated 5,000 visitors to Tai District—including those active in wetland conservation.

- To date, the *An-Girls* continue to focus on conservation and ecotourism—completely voluntarily.

Challenges/ Gaps

- Tai District (and Toyooka City) is suffering from an aging and declining population. As a result, the *An-Girls* are experiencing a decline in active membership and the training of successors is now an issue.

- To maintain relevance and local conservation efforts, developing a plan for a sustainable future for the wetlands is increasingly important.

For more information

Contact

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Website

http://www.env.go.jp/en/nature/npr/ramsar_wetland/pamph/ramsarpamphen/RamsarSites_en_web2018_07.pdf

“THEATRE COMPANY CINDERELLA” PERFORMING FOR WETLAND CONSERVATION

Country: Japan

Context

Established in 1984, the Theatre Company *Cinderella* is Japanese musical group based in Aichi –Prefecture that performs at Ramsar sites. The group is focused on producing musicals that convey the importance of conserving wetlands and living with nature. The company is comprised of 25 members, ranging from children to adults, most of whom (including the leader) are women. *Cinderella* produces original musicals under the slogan: “Living with a dream, hope, and adventure with nature”. Since 2017, the group has focused on nature-themed performances, holding events at various Ramsar sites across Japan, in collaboration with wetland-conservation NGOs.

The inception for this arose to conveying the importance of nature conservation. The idea was to normalize the concept so family/community members could enjoy and relate to the themes together. Members began to perform on a volunteer basis at a local Ramsar Site, Fujimae-higata (tidal flat) in Aichi Prefecture.

To raise awareness of wetland conservation, *Cinderella* has been expanding its performances to local environmental festivals and events beyond Ramsar sites—such as commercial areas like shopping malls.

Project overview

Cinderella's musicals are focused on illustrating the relationship between humans and living creatures in the wetlands. They seek to educate audiences about the problems living creatures face to inspire them to participate in wetland-conservation efforts.

The producer/director of *Cinderella* is a mother with a nursery schoolteacher's licence. She drafts the scripts for the performances, incorporating her research and interviews around wetland conservation, biodiversity, sustainable development, and climate change. She encourages younger performers to directly connect with these themes by impersonating the creatures in the wetlands, bring to life the crises they face.

Some of the strategies utilized include:

Entertainment is an effective way to communicate themes around conservation, while prompting performers to do their own research of issues (through site visits and interviews) and engaging audiences with

interactive quizzes. The support of child actors from mothers is essential to the group's continued success. The mothers make costumes, meals, and promotional materials. Through performing, child actors learn communication skills and improved team-building. Established in 1984, the group has enabled women to participate for several generation, and involve themselves at different stages of life.

Results to date

For the environment, the country, and the communities:

- More than 50 *Cinderella* production performances were conducted at 24 Ramsar sites across Japan, educating communities about the country's wetlands and the importance of their conservation.
- Each show had an average audience of about 100 people in attendance, leading to a total target audience of about 5,000 people.
- By performing at various commercial areas, *Cinderella* has delivered its message to numerous communities, creating a growing network of communities that are adjacent to wetlands across Japan.
- During the 10th Conference of the Parties of the CBD (Nagoya 2010), members organized a small group called 'COP10 Girls' to create performances and awareness campaigns at local supermarkets, touting the importance of biological diversity.
- In recent years, *Cinderella* has actively participated in campaigns by the Ministry of the Environment, such as *Cool Choice* and *Zero Carbon Challenge Cup*.

For women:

- Mothers of young performers whose early involvement was limited to rehearsal pick-ups grew to become advocates of conservation. Expanding its network of pro-conservation mothers, *Cinderella*'s activities have expanded beyond musical productions and into general conservation efforts—including clean-up events and providing food for staff at the events at Fujimae-higata Ramsar Site.
- Young female performers have started weekly radio programmes to introduce Ramsar sites and report on various environmental issues.

Challenges/ Gaps

- *Cinderella's* activities are funded by grants and subsidies intended for environmental conservation and education. A chronic shortage of funds has constrained activities to date. This problem has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has led to performance cancellations, hindering *Cinderella's* ability to meet one of its key goals of performing at all 52 Ramsar sites in Japan.

For more information

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ANNEX 1

Glossary

Agency: is the capacity to make decisions about one's own life and act on them to achieve a desired outcome, free of violence, retribution, or fear²⁸.

Empowerment: is a process of ongoing change through which women and girls expand their aspirations, strengthen their voice, and exercise more choice. A woman or girl can experience empowerment in varying degrees and across different areas of her life, home, family, workplace, and community. While empowerment is an individual behavioural change, it is achieved through appropriate gender mainstreaming²⁹.

Gender: refers to the roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society at a given time considers appropriate for women and men. These attributes, opportunities, and relationships are socially constructed, context/time-specific, can change over time, and vary widely within and across cultures. Gender is part of the broader sociocultural context, including class, race, ethnicity, and age³⁰.

Gender analysis: means a critical examination of how differences in gender norms, roles, power structures, activities, needs, opportunities, and rights affect women, men, girls, and boys in a particular situation or context. It includes collecting and analysing sex-disaggregated data and gender information to understand gender differences and gaps, determine gender-differentiated impacts and risks, identify measures to avoid adverse gender impacts, and uncover and act on opportunities to address gender gaps and inequalities relevant to the activity³¹.

Gender balance: is the ratio of women to men in any given situation. Gender balance is achieved when there is approximately an equal number of women and men present or participating.

Gender-based discrimination: refers to any distinction, exclusion, or restriction made on basis of sex, gender identity, or perceived social norms with the purpose of disenfranchising the human rights of others.

Gender-based violence: GBV is an umbrella term for any harmful act—physical, verbal, sexual, psychological, and socioeconomic perpetrated against a will that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between females and males. The nature and extent of specific types of GBV vary across cultures, countries, and regions. Examples include sexual violence, including sexual exploitation/abuse and forced prostitution; domestic violence; trafficking; and forced/early marriage³².

Gender equality: The concept that women and men, girls and boys have equal conditions, treatment and opportunities for realizing their full potential, human rights and dignity, and for contributing to (and benefitting from) economic, social, cultural and political development. Gender equality is, therefore, the equal valuing by society of the similarities and the differences of men and women, and the roles they play. It is based on women and men being full partners in the home, community and society. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female.

28 Klugman, J., et al., 2014. Voice and agency: empowering women and girls for shared prosperity. World Bank.

29 Definition builds on Gates Foundation, 2018.

30 Definition builds on UN Women, Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI) – concepts and definitions. <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm>

31 GEF Policy on Gender Equality, 2017.

32 Based on concepts and definitions from IUCN, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP, and UN Women.

Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men and girls and boys are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups and that all human beings are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by stereotypes and prejudices about gender roles. Gender equality is a matter of human rights and is considered a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centred development.

Gender equity: The process of being fair to men and women, boys and girls, and importantly the equality of outcomes and results. Gender equity may involve the use of temporary special measures to compensate for historical or systemic bias or discrimination. It refers to differential treatment that is fair and positively addresses a bias or disadvantage that is due to gender roles or norms or differences between the sexes. Equity ensures that women and men and girls and boys have an equal chance, not only at the starting point, but also when reaching the finishing line. It is about the fair and just treatment of both sexes that takes into account the different needs of the men and women, cultural barriers and (past) discrimination of the specific group

Gender-disaggregated data are data that are collected and analysed separately for women and men. This typically involves asking the “who” questions in an agricultural household survey: who provides labour, who makes the decisions, and who owns and controls the land and other resources. Or it may involve asking women and men about their individual roles and responsibilities.

Gender mainstreaming: refers to conveying the perceptions, knowledge, contributions, priorities, and needs of both women and men to enrich development. The process includes assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It makes women’s and men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, and monitoring of policies and programmes in all political, economic, and social spheres so that women and men benefit equality and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.

Gender gap: the discrepancy in opportunities, status, control over resources, access to education, health services, and power between women and men, girls and boys.

Gender parity: means an equal ratio of males and females, usually used in studies related to accessing education, in the workplace, and concerning public office. Some countries have laws on gender parity in decision-making.

Gender-responsive: to identify, understand, and implement interventions to address gender gaps and overcome historical gender biases in policies and interventions. Gender-responsiveness in application contributes—pro-actively and intentionally—to the advancement of gender equality.

Gender-responsive approach: Recognizes and acknowledges gender norms and inequalities and responds to them by creating actions, policies, and initiatives to address the different needs, constraints, and opportunities of women and men. A gender-responsive approach ensures that women’s and men’s differential needs are addressed; that participation of women and men is equitable; and that distribution of benefits, resources, status, and rights are equitably attended.

Gender indicator: is an indicator that measures gender-related changes in society over time as due to a policy, programme, or project.

Gender-sensitive: refers to understanding and considering sociocultural factors underlying sex-based discrimination. Its use has come to mean “do no harm.”

Gender-sensitive programming: refers to programmes where gender norms, roles, and inequalities have been considered and awareness of these issues has been raised, although appropriate actions may not necessarily have been taken.

Human Rights: Basic rights and freedoms to which all humans are entitled. All humans are born free and equal in dignity and human rights. These rights follow suit with the designations outlined in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (1948).

Human Rights-based approach (HRBA): HRBA is a conceptual framework based on the empowerment, protection, and fulfilment of international human rights. HRBA seeks to analyse the root causes of inequalities in development projects and address any discriminatory practices and power imbalances that hinder sustainable development progress. The universality, interrelatedness, interdependency, and

indivisibility of all human rights are also principles of HRBA³³.

Intersectional approach: takes into account the interconnected nature of social identities such as age, ethnicity, gender, and class as they are overlapping and interdependent systems of experience, discrimination,

and/or disadvantage. Rather than separate identity categories from one another and from points of marginalization or privilege, intersectionality highlights how different identities of an individual (e.g., gender and ethnicity) intersect and influence one another to create unique experiences and biases.

33 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). (2017a). Guidelines on Gender Mainstreaming and a *Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA)*. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations FAO, Rome. Available at: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i6808e.pdf>

ANNEX 2

Resources to Enhance the Mainstreaming of Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in the Wise Use, Management, and Conservation of Wetlands.

IF YOU WANT...	... access to gender policies and safeguards	... information on gender analysis, gender mainstreaming and integration, monitoring, and evaluation
CONSIDER THESE RESOURCES	<p>Green Climate Fund (GCF) GCF Gender Policy and Action Plan The Policy lays out the requirements for accredited entities, which develop funding proposals, as well as manages and monitors projects and programmes that have received funds from GCF to establish and maintain robust, systematic, accountable, inclusive, gender-responsive, participatory, and transparent systems to manage risks and impacts, under the Policy and the Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS).</p> <p>Global Environment Facility (GEF) Policy on Gender Equality This Policy sets out the guiding principles and mandatory requirements for mainstreaming gender across GEF’s governance and operations to promote gender equality and women’s and girls’ empowerment, supporting the GEF’s mandate to achieve global environmental benefits.</p> <p>International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) IUCN Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Policy: Mainstreaming gender-responsiveness within the IUCN programme of work. This Policy’s objective is to ensure a gender-responsive approach in the implementation of IUCN’s programme and project portfolio, including the design, planning, execution, monitoring, evaluation, and closure phases, as well as in related learning, communications, and advocacy efforts.</p>	<p>Mangroves for the Future (MFF), Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) Gender Analysis Toolkit for Coastal Management Practitioners A practical tool kit for coastal and fishery management practitioners seeking to understand how gender can affect coastal ecosystems’ resource-use, management, and coastal resilience.</p> <p>Conservation International (CI) Guidelines for Integrating Gender & Social Equity into Conservation Programming A practical guide to aid conservation practitioners in recognizing, understanding, and integrating gender and social-equity dimensions into community-based conservation projects.</p> <p>Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and CARE Good Practices for Integrating Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Climate-Smart Agriculture Programmes Provides guidance, tools, and examples for successfully integrating gender equality and women’s empowerment (GEWE) in climate-smart agriculture work. It demonstrates the necessity and benefits of incorporating a GEWE approach, describes strategies for enhancing women’s (and particularly vulnerable groups’) engagement, and provides practical examples and tools on gender equality and women’s empowerment in agriculture.</p>

**CONSIDER
THESE
RESOURCES**

World Wildlife Fund (WWF)

WWF Gender Policy Statement

This policy statement describes the rationale for gender mainstreaming in WWF's mission, biodiversity, and footprint goals. It outlines WWF's commitment to integrating a gender perspective in programmatic and operational structures and procedures.

Fauna and Flora International (FFI)

Fauna & Flora International's position on gender in conservation

FFI position statement endeavours to ensure that all FFI programmes integrate gender, that women have equal access to project resources and information, equal participation, and equal opportunities to benefit from FFI-supported activities.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC)

TNC Gender Equity Statement

TNC's gender statement explains how they understand and act on their commitment to gender equity, to live their core values of "Commitment to Diversity and Respect for Peoples, Communities, and Cultures".

IUCN

Framework for Conducting Gender-Responsive Analysis

A methodology to help implement a gender-responsive analysis for a wide range of partner institutions. Key questions are provided to uncover gender gaps and issues at local, institutional, and national levels, as well as gendered differences in the distribution of benefits, risks, and opportunities.

FAO

Voluntary guidelines on the responsible governance of tenure of land fisheries and forests

The purpose of these Voluntary Guidelines is to serve as a reference and to provide guidance to improve the governance of tenure of land, fisheries, and forests with the overarching goal of achieving food security for all and to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security. Intended to contribute to the global and national efforts towards eradicating hunger and poverty, based on sustainable development principles and recognizing the centrality of land to development by promoting secure tenure rights and equitable access to land, fisheries, and forests.

IUCN

About fishermen, fisherwomen, oceans, and tides: A gender perspective in marine-coastal zones

This manual acts as a tool for mainstreaming a gender perspective into marine-coastal management plans.

FAO and the Gender and Water Alliance (GWA)

Passport to Mainstreaming Gender in Water Programmes

The purpose of the passport is to support mainstreaming a gender perspective during the planning, implementation, and management of agricultural water-management projects and programmes.

GEF

Guidance to advance gender equality in GEF projects and programs

This toolkit centres on the GEF project cycle and focuses on the expected actions and steps needed to meet the requirements outlined in GEF's Gender Policy. The guidance applies to full- and medium-size projects, enabling activities as well as programmatic approaches. Target audiences include the GEF Agencies in charge of project design, implementation, monitoring, and reporting.

UN Women and the GCF

Mainstreaming Gender in Green Climate Fund Projects

This manual and tool kit help guide GCF partners on how to mainstream gender in projects and programmes, and meaningfully include women, girls, men, and boys from socially-excluded and vulnerable communities in all aspects of climate finance.

UNDP

Gender Analysis and NDCs

This guidance for government stakeholders on conducting a gender analysis for NDCs explains how the analysis should provide recommendations on gender-responsive policy alignment, institutional coordination, capacity building, sex-disaggregated data collection, and finance into the priority NDC sectors.

IF YOU WANT...	... comprehension of gender indicators	...guidance for developing gender-responsive national reports
<p>CONSIDER THESE RESOURCES</p>	<p>Asian Development Bank (ADB) <u>Tool Kit on Gender Equality Results and Indicators</u> This tool kit aims to help development practitioners ensure that a gender perspective is incorporated into development initiatives and to monitor and evaluate gender-equality results. It presents a menu of gender-equality outcomes, results, and indicators selected or adapted by users.</p> <p>UNDP <u>Gender Responsive Indicators. Gender and NDC Planning for Implementation</u> This report details how to design gender-responsive indicators in sectorial actions in climate-change initiatives, encouraging equal participation and fair distribution of benefits.</p>	<p>CBD <u>Guidelines for Mainstreaming Gender into National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans</u> These <i>Guidelines</i> assist the development of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) to meet the objectives of biodiversity-conservation and promote gender equality. They provide general guidance to Parties on the inclusion of gender considerations into existing and forthcoming NBSAPs.</p> <p>UNFCCC and NAP Global Network <u>Toolkit for a Gender-Responsive Process to Formulate and Implement National Adaptation Plans (NAPs)</u> This tool kit is designed to support country efforts to pursue a gender-responsive NAP process. It is useful for government actors coordinating the NAP process, as well as for stakeholders and development partners supporting adaptation, planning, and implementation.</p> <p>UNDP <u>Gender equality in national climate action planning</u> Presents a framework for integrating gender equality into National Determined Contributions (NDC) planning and implementation.</p> <p>Land Degradation Development <u>Gender and land degradation neutrality: A cross-country analysis to support more equitable practice</u> This paper identifies innovative entry points for, and benefits of, integrating gender issues into LDN, and the risks of gender inaction. Entry points for gender-responsive LDN are identified, including interventions that merge LDN gender plans with existing gender schemes at local and global levels, enable gender-sensitive early-warning systems, and narrow gender disparities, and safeguard women’s land rights through gender-sensitive LDN financing mechanisms.</p> <p>UNDP, UNEP, GEF, GGCA, and Ministry for Foreign Affairs Finland <u>Gender-Responsive National Communications Toolkit</u> This tool kit is designed to strengthen national government staff’s capacity and assist them in integrating gender equality into National Communications (NCs) development under the UNFCCC.</p>

IF YOU WANT...**... access to data sets****... better understanding of gender budgeting****CONSIDER THESE RESOURCES**

Secondary data can be obtained through a desk review of existing databases:

- [Gender Inequality Index \(GII\)](#)
- [Global Gender Equality Constitutional Database](#)
- [Gender Data Portal](#)
- [Social Institutions & Gender Index](#)
- [Concluding observations on states' reports to CEDAW](#)
- [Global Gender Gap](#)
- [National Laws and Regulations Concerning Women's Rights to Community Forests](#)
- [FAO Gender and Land Rights Database](#)

The Commonwealth Secretariat**Gender Section Social Transformation Programmes Division****Engendering Budgets:****A Practitioners' Guide to Understanding and Implementing Gender-Responsive Budgets**

A practical guide to aid practitioners in understanding and implementing gender-responsive budgets.

UNFPA, UNIFEM**Gender-responsive budgeting in practice: A training manual**

This training manual seeks to develop an understanding of gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) as a tool for promoting gender equity, accountability to women's rights, and efficiency and transparency in budget policies and processes.

OXFAM**A Guide to Gender-Responsive Budgeting**

This guide provides the principles and elements related to the development of gender-responsive budgets.



Convention
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AGENCY**



**Ympäristöministeriö
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Ministry of the Environment**

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