Streamlining Gender Issues within Natural Resource Management

Local communities often play a key role in natural resource management (NRM); therefore the support of the entire community is a critical element for its sustainability. Men and women use natural resources in different ways and at different rates and have different allocation and conservation measures. Understanding the different roles and responsibilities of men and women in the natural resource management system is critical to understanding how changes to that system will affect food security, resource management practices (e.g., land, livestock, and fisheries), and hence productivity and sustainability.

NRM requires participation, management, and commitment from both sexes. Women’s participation in community organizations that manage natural resources is not just an equity issue, but also one that affects efficiency and effectiveness. In general, women have a high degree of responsibility of natural resources in performing their daily household tasks as women are the ones involved in subsistence activities such as collection of fodder, and wood for fuel and construction.

Women are also actively involved in the management, conservation, and maintenance of natural resources for individual and collective consumption and often have detailed knowledge of their local environment which is critical to strategies for development and change.

The World Bank’s core goals

Natural resource management demands attention to cross-cutting and cross-sectoral issues, perhaps to an even greater degree than other areas of development. Poverty reduction and natural resource management are core goals of the World Bank, going beyond a narrow focus on the use of natural resources, and aiming to integrate institutional aspects of NRM into rural development strategies and programs through strengthening of human and social capital. Through its focus on Natural Resources Management Institutions, the Bank addresses the key issues of sustainability and integration. The institutional dimensions of natural resource management are essential to the success of the Bank’s work in this area from community-based projects to the international level, with public-private partnerships and civil society programs.

Particular areas of concern, with a strong need for future improvements, are benefits to vulnerable groups, gender inclusion, and property rights with a strong need for future improvements. In terms of sustainability, on average, the projects with NRM components demonstrate sufficient design and implementation schemes to ensure economic, and environmental sustainability.

Good practices in gender inclusion within NRM Projects

China: Gansu and Xinjiang Pastoral Development Project: The project development objective is to promote sustainable natural resource management by establishing improved livestock production and marketing systems that would increase the income of herders and farmers in the project areas. This project demonstrates numerous good interventions for sustainable land resources management with a variety of applied research and extension approaches as well as with a deliberate consideration to the vulnerable groups. The Beneficiaries Participation Manuals and the
Minority Ethnic Group Plans are prepared with special provision in order to “streamline” beneficiary participation in implementation. In addition, as an important group among beneficiaries, women’s participation in the implementation will be closely monitored and followed up through measurable monitoring indicators.

In this project women will be beneficiaries of rural loans, training, and of capacity building activities. The role of women in the farming and herding systems in the various ethnic minority communities are described in detail within the social assessment. All activities were planned to be culturally appropriate and in accordance with the wishes of the various ethnic minority beneficiaries. Women’s participation in the implementation of activities will be closely tracked through measurable monitoring indicators.

**China: Jiangxi Integrated Agricultural Modernization Project:** As a part of the project, a component is included to support women and ethnic minority farmers with the objective of ensuring active participation of and benefits for women. The Jiangxi Provincial Women’s Federation will play a leading role in the project implementation. Women Development Facilitators will be appointed and trained at provincial, county, and township level and they will work with women farmers in the project areas ensuring that they have sufficient access to training, extension, and loans.

**Western Altiplano Natural Resource Management Project in Guatemala:** Institutional strengthening programs and projects will give special emphasis to developing and strengthening women’s groups by assisting them in preparing subprojects for grant financing and encouraging women’s participation in other local organizations. The project preparation team has acquired additional funds to enhance the project’s ability to benefit women. Special studies will assess constraints to participation by women, Mayan groups and other disadvantaged people and identify corrective actions to facilitate their inclusion and participation.

**Streamlining gender strategy at a national level**

**Benin: Poverty Reduction Support Credit:** As a part of the project, streamlining gender strategy and reducing gender gaps is supported. The proposed program will aim at supporting the implementation of the gender strategy focusing on effective integration of gender issues in certain sectors while improving the capacity of the ministry in charge of social development to coordinate, monitor and promote strategy implementation.

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