

WOMEN & THE ENVIRONMENT:

a key challenge for sustainable development



STUDY BY THE



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ADAPTATION

Adapting to changes and deteriorations in the climate demands strategies, initiatives and measures (individual or collective, involving companies, associations, public authorities etc.) which focus on finding effective ways of reducing the vulnerability of human and natural systems faced with the observed or predicted effects of climate change¹.

MITIGATION

Mitigation actions are measures taken to limit the impact of climate change, for example reducing direct and indirect greenhouse gas emissions. This includes reducing energy consumption and using renewable energy sources wherever possible.

EMPOWERMENT

Empowerment is all about making people more independent, a process of education

and awareness-raising which gives people the power to influence their lives and their environment. Empowerment is about boosting people's capacity to act autonomously and make choices about their own lives, but also to promote change in the world around them, through collective action and citizenship. Empowerment is thus both an individual and a collective concern.

GENDER

Gender refers to a set of "socially-constructed" roles, attitudes, attributes, aptitudes and abilities connected with the biological sex of an individual in a given society at a given moment in time. The designation "socially-constructed" indicates that these characteristics are in no way "natural" or "innate", but rather that they are constructions and products of society and can therefore be modified and transformed. This gives rise to the Gender approach².

GENDER RESPONSIVE POLICIES/PROGRAMMES

Policies which incorporate an attentiveness to gender inequality, implementing specific and cross-disciplinary measures designed to challenge such inequalities in terms of access to justice, resources, opportunities and participation in decision-making, with a view to promoting the empowerment of women and achieving greater equality between the sexes.

RESILIENCE

Ecological resilience is the capacity of an ecosystem, habitat or population to continue functioning and developing normally after a significant disruption (ecological factors). The deterioration of an ecosystem reduces its resilience. By extension, we also use the term ecological resilience when considering the solutions implemented by certain communities, or mankind in general, in response to local or global ecological crises (wars,

over-fishing, desertification, deforestation, tsunamis and other climate events)³.

¹ Glossary of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2011)

² Climate Development Network (Zénabou Zegda), "Report on Gender and Climate", 2015

³ Glossary of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2011)



“ Not only does climate change have dramatic consequences for the environment, it also poses a threat to global peace and security, as well as to our collective health and fundamental human rights. Although they often bear the least responsibility for greenhouse gas emissions, it is the world's poorest communities who are worst affected by the resulting deterioration of our environment. This is particularly true of women.

For the past ten years, the RAJA-Danièle Marcovici Foundation has been working to defend women's rights internationally and it is proud to stand alongside those

fighting for greater recognition of the major role that women have to play in the struggle against climate change.

The battle to save our planet cannot be won without women. Not only because they represent half of the world's population or because they are often on the front line in terms of the effects of climate change, but also because, all over the world, women are working day-in, day-out to protect the environment. With their know-how and expertise, these women have taken the lead in adapting the way we live in response to the changing climate.

And yet, this essential contribution is still not fully appreciated. Women are still largely excluded from the most important environmental decisions. Certain measures adopted in recent years may even have a negative impact on women, aggravating the existing inequality between the sexes.

That is why the RAJA-Danièle Marcovici Foundation, supported by the RAJA Group, is committed - through the publication of this study, and more generally with the Foundation's "Women & Environment" programme - to highlighting the crucial role played by women in counteracting the effects of climate change. We remain committed to fighting for a more prominent role for women in environmental protection initiatives, encouraging development which is truly sustainable.

It is high time that the vital contribution of women is fully recognised and celebrated! ”

Danièle Kapel Marcovici

*Chief Executive Officer of the RAJA Group and
President of the RAJA-Danièle Marcovici Foundation*



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As we continue to analyse the outcomes of the UN COP21 Climate Conference, held in Paris from 30 November to 10 December 2015, the publication of the “Women and the Environment: a Key Priority for Sustainable Development” report by the RAJA - Danièle Marcovici Foundation casts new light on the connection between gender inequality and the effects of climate change and the deterioration of the environment.

Structured around an analysis of extant international data and a presentation of 9 innovative projects backed by international NGOs, this report highlights the importance of placing gender equality and women's independence at the heart of our considerations when it comes to financing sustainable development.

Women, the first victims of climate change and the deterioration of the environment

First and foremost, this report demonstrates that women are hardest hit by climate change and environmental problems. In fact, they are doubly exposed to these risks. Firstly, because the effects of climate change are most keenly felt by the world's poorest people⁴ and 70% of all those living on less than \$1 a day are women⁵. Secondly, on account of the role they play in the household, with responsibility for food and domestic matters. Women in rural areas have seen their workload (for example, collecting water and firewood) increase as a result of phenomena such as deforestation and desertification.

All over the world, women continue to suffer discrimination in all areas of life, limiting their resilience and adaptation capacity. In many countries, inequalities in access to, and control of economic resources and the means of production - including land, credit and technologies - limit women's chances of maintaining and developing their economic power in the face of climate chaos.

Women, key players in the face of climate challenges

In spite of the many difficulties and discriminations which they face on a day-to-day basis, women continue to make crucial contributions to protecting the environment, adapting to climate change and working to ensure the survival of our societies.

As a result of the traditional division of labour between men and women, women have a wealth of knowledge relevant to the preservation of natural resources, the protection of biodiversity and sustainable agriculture practices. On the strength of this knowledge, women are well placed to devise sustainable alternative strategies for offsetting the decline in agricultural production, staving off the risk of malnutrition and steering the transition towards sustainable energy sources such as biogas.

And yet, the contributions made by women remain under-appreciated and misunderstood, not least because women are under-represented on decision-making bodies, limiting

the impact of their actions. This lack of representation adversely affects the efficacy of existing sustainable development policies. Allowing women to participate fully in decision-making would allow us to better comprehend their needs in relation to climate change, and recognise their vital contribution to the preservation of our environment.

Five key questions to place the empowerment of women at the heart of sustainable development programmes

In facing up to the climate challenges of the future, we need to welcome the input of the men and women who drive development, recognising the connection between environmental issues, questions of gender equality and the empowerment of women⁶.

The empowerment of women is a process based on expanding women's decision-making capacities in the personal, economic and public spheres. The acquisition of greater power and autonomy makes women less vulnerable, reinforcing their capacity to adapt and resist the vicissitudes of environmental and climate change.

This report proposes a development tool box, inspired by the work of various international NGOs and structured around five key challenges which must be addressed when designing any successful development project.

Nine impactful initiatives combining gender equality with environmental action

In an effort to demonstrate the added value of such an approach, this report turns the spotlight on nine innovative, effective initiatives led by French and international NGOs and focusing on questions of sustainable agriculture, fishing, access to energy and waste management.

These projects in Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America are highly varied in terms of their methods and scope of action. But they all serve to illustrate the benefits of taking male-female inequality into account when designing projects to protect the environment and nurture sustainable development.

By focusing on concrete examples of innovation on the ground, the RAJA-Danièle Marcovici Foundation hopes to contribute to the process launched in 2014 at the COP20 conference in Lima, with the Gender and Climate Change Action Plan, continuing at COP21 in Paris and looking ahead to COP22 in Morocco.

This ambition is in keeping with the commitment of the Foundation, and the international community more broadly, to creating and backing innovative, operational solutions which put gender equality at the heart of sustainable development. ■

⁴ World Bank: *Shock waves, Managing the impact of climate change on poverty, Climate and Development series*. November 2015

⁵ World Bank: *Global Development Report, “Gender Equality and Development”, 2012*

⁶ Or “gender approach”



**Women:
the first victims of
climate change and
the deterioration
of the environment**

All over the world, men and women have different relationships to the environment and are affected in different ways by the consequences of climate change.

This can be partly ascribed to the different roles allocated to men and women on the basis of their gender, with different tasks in the home, the economic sphere, the community and the political sphere more broadly.

It is also a result of persistent gender inequality in terms of access to education, fundamental rights, economic resources (land, machinery, credit, technology etc.) and decision-making power, which impedes women's resilience to climate change.

The effects of climate change in fact serve to aggravate gender inequality and violence against women.



Poverty and discrimination mean that women are more vulnerable to the effects of climate change, limiting their resilience capacity

As amply documented in a recent report from the World Bank, the world's poorest people, living in vulnerable regions and in precarious conditions, are also the most exposed to the adverse effects of climate change. Women are affected directly, as they account for **the majority of poor people in the world, making up 70% of all those living on less than 1 dollar a day**⁹.

Women are also more vulnerable to climate change as a result of the **different forms of discrimination they face in all areas of life**.

Indeed, in spite of the international efforts made since the turn of the century in the context of the Millennium Development Goals, two-thirds of the world's illiterate citizens are women. Women have limited access to economic resources such as land, credit and technology, and account for the majority of people employed in informal jobs which do not provide access to social security. Women are also under-represented in decision-making bodies: only 21.8% of the world's members of parliament are women⁹.

Men and women also fulfil different roles and tasks, which determines the manner in which they are affected by the consequences of climate change. **As a global average, women are responsible for 2/3 of domestic chores and "care"**¹⁰. Women are traditionally responsible for managing the household and its meals, as well as the domestic energy situation, often by collecting wood or coal and ensuring a sufficient supply of water. As such, diminishing water and timber resources have a direct impact on their quality of life, increasing the time spent and distance travelled to secure these essential materials. In Kenya, for example, it is estimated that collecting water occupies up to 85% of the time which women devote to domestic chores, as a result of desertification¹¹.



Women account for between **60% and 80%** of food production in developing nations



Women account for **2/3** of the world's illiterate people, and **56%** of children not in education



Women account for **70%** of people living on less than \$1 a day



The mortality rate of women and children is multiplied by **14** when faced with natural catastrophes



The discrimination and inequality with which women are faced also serve to reduce their resilience, limiting their access to resources and depriving them of opportunities to develop viable strategies of adaptation.

This is the case, for example, in the agricultural sector, with **women accounting for between 60% and 80% of food output in developing nations**¹². The majority of the world's farmers are women. Women also play a key role in fishing and the management of maritime resources, which have been hit hard by abusive industrial practices and pollution.

And yet, faced with the deterioration of their land, via desertification and the decline of biodiversity, women's capacity to bounce back and diversify **their economic activities is hindered by discrimination in access to technologies, credit and land**.

As a result of discriminatory inheritance practices, women collectively own just 10-20% of all the world's property¹³. In Sub-Saharan Africa, for example, the little land women are allowed to own is often relatively infertile and far from their homes. Women must ask their husband's permission for certain decisions such as the use of machines or certain kinds of seed.

And of course, restrictions on access to education, information and basic survival techniques such as swimming combine to **multiply by 14 the mortality rate of women and children in the event of a natural disaster**. During the 2004 tsunami in Aceh, Indonesia, between 55 and 70% of the victims were women for this very reason¹⁴. When Hurricane Katrina swept through Louisiana and Mississippi in 2005, African-American women - one of the poorest socio-economic groups in the USA - were hit hardest¹⁵. ■

Climate change aggravates gender inequality and increases the risk of violence

The consequences of climate change also serve to aggravate discrimination against women and existing inequalities between men and women in various domains, such as nutrition, violence against women and underage marriage.

In countries where access to food is dictated by a hierarchical structure, **women are at risk of malnutrition**, especially when they are pregnant or breastfeeding.

In Ethiopia, for example, where climate change is already causing shortages of food and water, social norms mean that women and girls are often undernourished. Women are accustomed to eating only once they have fed their families, and often there is little left¹⁶.

Furthermore, in a context where an estimated 1 in 7 women in the world are victims of violence, **violence against women tends to increase in times of catastrophe**, including within emergency aid camps¹⁷. Precarious living conditions, promiscuity and a lack of security within camps serve to increase the risk of sexual violence. In Haiti, over 250 rapes were reported in various camps in the first 150 days following the earthquake which rocked the country in January 2010. The perpetrators of these violent acts were primarily armed men roaming the camps¹⁸.

Last but by no means least, environmental risks may lead to an increase in the prevalence of forced and child marriages. In a study conducted by Human Rights Watch¹⁹, some families reported marrying their daughters early as a direct result of natural disasters. When the consequences of climate change increase food insecurity for families, or threaten to destroy their home, marriage may appear to be the best option to remove a daughter from the situation. ■

It thus seems clear that gender inequality significantly amplifies the impact of climate change on vulnerable women and their families, compromising their resilience and capacity to adapt. Nonetheless, and in spite of the many difficulties and discriminations which they face, women play a crucial role in the day-to-day deployment of efforts to protect the environment and minimise the adverse effects of climate change.

7 World Bank: Shock waves, Managing the impact of climate change on poverty, Climate and development series. November 2015

8 United Nations

9 United Nations, 'Millennium Development Goals, 2014 Report'; unwomen.org

10 UN Women: unwomen.org

11 K. Duncan, Global climate change and women's health, Women & Environments International Magazine, 2007, Issue 74/75, pp 10-11

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13 FAO, Economic and Social Perspectives 8, Gender and Property Rights 2010

14 UNFEM, Responding to the tsunami tragedy one year later, A report card, 2005

15 Rachel Harris, Gender aspects of climate change in the US Gulf Region. Case study 5.7 in Irene Dankelman, Gender and climate change: An introduction, Earthscan, 2010

16 Christian Aid, Climate Justice for All: putting gender justice at the heart of the Paris Climate change agreement

17 GGGCA, IUCN UNDP. « Training Manual on Gender and Climate Change », 2009

18 Amnesty international, "Doubly affected by the tragedy, women speak out against sexual violence in Haiti's camps," January 2010

19 Human Rights Watch, Marry before your house is swept away, Child marriage in Bangladesh, June 2015



Women: key players in the face of climate challenges

Women are synonymous with both traditional knowledge and innovative adaptation strategies

By virtue of the roles they traditionally occupy in managing the household and its economic resources, **women often possess unique, specific expertise** in the preservation of natural resources, the protection of biodiversity, the use of energy resources and sustainable agriculture practices.

Women are also a source of innovative solutions for adapting to climate change and protecting the environment. They develop adaptation strategies, often at community level, which have a direct impact in terms of improving living conditions for local people.

In the Sine Saloum region of Senegal, for example, women who make their living from shells have developed alternating fertilisation and harvesting techniques which allow them to protect the coastline and guarantee the quality of their shells. They have also received support as they seek to diversify their economic activities, helping families to survive and overcome the consequences of intensive over-fishing, rising sea waters and salting of the soil.

In Egypt, women’s organisations have been involved in discussions focusing on transport policy and the consequences of urban pollution. Their involvement has seen an increase in public transport (produces less pollution, more likely to be used by women), as well as the creation of an innovative “water taxi” system on the Nile: a network of taxi boats managed and piloted exclusively by women²⁰. ■

20 IUCN, “The Art of Implementation, Gender strategies transforming National and Regional Climate Change decision making”, 2012

GENDER EQUALITY AND THE GREEN CLIMATE FUND

The **Green Climate Fund (GCF)** was officially launched in 2011 at the Durban Climate Change Conference (COP17). It is a UN-backed fund linked to the UNFCCC. The goal of this fund is to transfer funds from developed nations to the world’s most vulnerable countries, to be distributed to projects which aim to combat the effects of climate change. The stated objective is to endow this Fund with a total of 100 billion dollars per year by 2020.

Questions of gender inequality were taken into account when drafting the Fund’s founding objectives and guiding principles, and remain central to the GCF’s core philosophy. The GCF is thus committed to:

- acting with an awareness of the issue of male-female inequality
- taking into account gender parity and equality when selecting the members of its Board of Directors
- ensuring that both sexes are equally represented in the staff of the Fund’s Secretariat
- in terms of access to funding: encouraging the participation of vulnerable groups, while remaining sensitive to questions of gender (FCCC/CP/2011/9/Add.1)

EXPERT VIEW



An interview with **Hindou Oumarou**
President of the Association of Indigenous Fula Women in Chad (AFPAT) and expert on gender studies and human rights

Founded in 1999, AFPAT’s goal is to improve living conditions for Fula people by promoting fundamental human rights and the rights of indigenous peoples, as well as protecting the environment.

“Women’s contribution to protecting the environment is crucial.”

“In Sub-Saharan Africa, 80% of people live in rural areas. Women in particular are in constant, direct contact with the environment through the day-to-day tasks for which they are responsible (subsistence farming, rearing livestock and collecting water and firewood). With a great responsibility for managing natural resources, protecting biodiversity and implementing sustainable farming practices, women have developed unique expertise in the preservation of seed stocks and medicinal plants.

This expertise is a precious resource when it comes to identifying seeds and crop varieties capable of withstanding climate change.

Women also have specific expertise and know-how when it comes to saving water, feeding their families and treating certain illnesses, overcoming the decline in agricultural yields, staving off the risk of malnutrition and coming up with alternative solutions to compensate for the lack of healthcare services in situations such as haemorrhaging during childbirth.

In spite of their environmental skills and expertise, women are often under-valued and excluded from international development programmes. Their skills may even be studied and recorded by scientific researchers, without any intention of sharing the benefits of such research with the women who hold these skills”.





EXPERT VIEW



An interview with Lorena Aguilar

Senior Expert on Gender at the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

The world's first environmental organisation, founded in 1948, the IUCN now has some 1,200 member organisations from 140 countries.

“National action plans which fail to take the contributions and expertise of women into account cannot have a sustainable impact.”

“Involving women in the construction of sustainable development programmes and policies is essential if they are to succeed.

Ensuring that women are full partners in climate discussions and decisions allows us to come up with solutions which actually address peoples' needs, and particularly the needs of women. It also ensures that our approach to such problems is attuned to questions of gender equality, with the constant aim of reducing gender inequality and opening up access to fundamental rights and resources.

To achieve this goal, we need to work on boosting the “quantitative” participation of women, with better representation of women and women's organisations. Nonetheless, in order for that impact to last, **women need to be more involved in the decision-making process in a “qualitative” capacity**, i.e. with the capacity to analyse and comprehend situations, and to put forward concrete solutions to dealing with the problems faced.

It is not sufficient for women to be simply informed of the challenges of climate change and the different consequences it entails for men and women, they also need to understand that they are not only victims, but also key stakeholders and drivers of change.

Qualitative consultation techniques are defined and promoted at national level by the IUCN, as part of the ongoing work to create Climate Change and Gender Action Plans (CCGAP). These action plans are based on a unique methodology which aims to boost the capabilities of women and women's organisations, incorporating questions of gender equality into the construction and deployment of national climate change strategies. The IUCN is currently working on projects of this nature in 14 countries, including Haiti, Mozambique, Mexico, Nepal, Jordan and Liberia”.

The under-representation of women in decision-making bodies risks making their vital contribution invisible

The role played by women, and particularly their vital contributions to the protection of the environment, are underappreciated and undervalued by national and international policies and programmes. This may be at least partly explained by the fact that women are **generally under-represented on decision-making bodies, particularly in environmental organisations**.

At the international level, in spite of a ruling adopted in Doha in 2012²¹ which calls for equal representation of men and women in the decision-making bodies and processes of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), women are still under-represented. There are, for example, 10 women and 15 men in the Expert Review Team (ERT), and 3 women and 21 men on the executive committee of the Green Fund²².

At national level, **women also have limited access to consultation and decision-making bodies**. Women are not always consulted, or taken into consideration.

The majority of national reports on climate change submitted ahead of COP21²³ fail to mention issues of gender equality, because women and women's organisations were not directly consulted.

This under-representation of women continues at local level. For example, women are often not represented at all on the local committees responsible for managing forestry resources, even if they are just as involved in forestry work as men. A study conducted in 2015²⁴ in 69 villages and 18 REDD+ sites²⁵ across 5 countries (Brazil, Cameroon, Indonesia, Tanzania and Vietnam) found that women accounted for just 17% of the membership of such decision-making committees.

This chronic under-representation has a negative impact as it leads to a systematic undervaluing of women's contributions. Allowing women to participate fully in decision-making would allow us to **better comprehend their needs in relation to climate change**, and recognise their valuable knowledge and vital contribution to the preservation of our environment. This would ensure that women are no longer left out of social and environmental policy decisions.

Such policies would be more effective if they involved women at all levels, while working to expand access to basic rights and resources. ■

²¹ Decision 23/CP.18

²² Climate Development Network (Zénabou Zegda), ‘Report on Gender and Climate’, 2015

²³ Intended nationally determined contributions (INDCs) were the voluntary contributions submitted by each country ahead of COP21, setting out their efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and combat climate change

²⁴ Center for International Forestry Research: <http://www.cifor.org/gender/gender-redd-analyzing-womens-roles-sub-national-initiatives>

²⁵ Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation



THE LIMA WORK PROGRAMME ON GENDER

The Lima Work Programme on Gender was adopted at the COP20 conference in Lima, Peru in 2014.

With this biannual programme, the signatories request that the Secretariat of the UNFCCC include in its annual report **information regarding decisions and actions taken on questions of gender**. Signatories are also called upon to boost the number of female representatives present at UNFCCC meetings, and where possible to put forward proposals for strengthening their position (negotiations, drafting of key legal texts and communications).

All signatory Parties also commit to further clarifying the meaning of the formulation “gender-responsive climate policies”, in order to improve the design and deployment of such policies. An inaugural workshop on these questions was held in Bonn in June 2015. A second workshop will be held in May 2016, focusing on adaptive policies and strengthening the position of women. The resulting reports should help the Parties to refine the text of the Lima Work Programme, at the 22nd Climate Change Conference in Marrakesh (COP22) in 2016.

Finally, the work programme calls for the nomination of a dedicated lead coordinator for gender issues within the UNFCCC Secretariat.



EXPERT VIEW



An interview with **Henri Rouillé d'Orfeuil**
Agronomist, Member of the Executive Committee of the RAJA-Danièle Marcovici Foundation

A respected expert on sustainable development, Henri Rouillé d'Orfeuil has worked for the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the World Bank.

He is also a member of the Agricultural Research Centre for International Development.

“Equality between men and women is a key priority, which is more relevant than ever in the wake of COP 21.”

“Women and men are not affected by changes in the environment and climate in the same way, and do not always have the same needs in terms of sustainable development. And yet, the needs and expectations of women receive less attention and consideration, with numerous obstacles still preventing women from expressing themselves: the unequal distribution of revenue, the traditional allocation of social roles, the under-representation of women in the public sphere...

Furthermore, the family is very often considered as the fundamental social unit in terms of development projects. But the traditional family model can also be a source of inequality, stifling the needs of individuals, and particularly women and children.

For example, in many agricultural communities, land deeds are held exclusively in the husband's name, excluding women from key decisions.

It is therefore essential that we systematically seek to take the specific needs of women into account when developing environmental projects. Some NGOs already do this, gathering and studying gender-specific data during the analytical phase of their projects. Using this information, they are able to obtain a precise understanding of the situation and propose effective solutions allowing women and men to achieve greater autonomy.

Furthermore, boosting the autonomy of women is a crucial economic and ecological priority for developing nations. The agricultural techniques used by women are often different from those used by men, offering invaluable alternatives in terms of productivity and environmental sensitivity. Our objective should be to promote these practices and share the under-appreciated expertise of women, helping the whole community to move forward.

It is also vital that our political decision-makers understand the valuable contribution women make to innovation in the environmental sector.

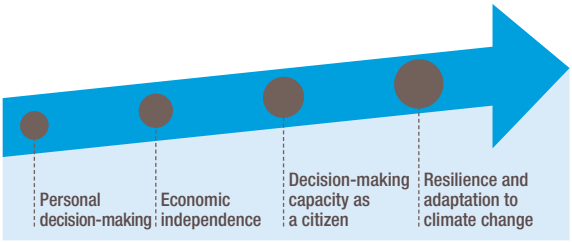
This is the role of NGOs, who are uniquely well placed to observe and pass on innovative solutions developed by women to the highest political levels, particularly at international conferences such as COP21, and of course next year's COP22, where I hope gender equality and the environment will be recognised as a crucial priority of the political agenda.”



Placing women's independence at the heart of sustainable development programmes

Empowerment of women a factor in resilience to climate change

In order to combat climate change effectively and support the development of long-term adaptation programmes and resilience capacities, it is crucial that we put the empowerment of women and gender equality firmly on the political agenda. Increasing women's autonomy serves to enhance **their capacity for action and decision-making in their personal, economic and public lives.** Empowering women also helps to make their living conditions less precarious, with **positive consequences for their resilience and capacity to adapt** when faced with climate change and environmental challenges. In doing so we can empower women to take effective measures to preserve the environment and promote sustainable development. ■



Crucial questions for putting gender equality at the heart of our environmental efforts

It is therefore of vital importance that we incorporate questions of gender equality every step of the way when designing, monitoring and assessing environmental initiatives, in order to maximise their impact for local people. Among these questions, **five key criteria** must be taken into consideration if we are to effectively incorporate gender equality into our environmental policies. These key criteria acknowledge the current lack of recognition afforded to women's initiatives, working to boost their capacities and power to act, while constantly highlighting instances of male-female inequality.

- 1 Recognising and promoting the environmental expertise and contributions of women
- 2 Participation at all levels of environmental and public decision-making
- 3 Equal rights, particularly the right to education, information and sexual and reproductive health services
- 4 Access to and control of economic resources and means of production
- 5 The division of labour and equal sharing of tasks between men and women

1 Recognising and promoting the environmental expertise and contributions of women

As we have established, the expertise and contributions of women are often under-appreciated and underestimated.

Identifying and sharing such measures is a way of acknowledging their environmental importance, promoting collective opportunities and solutions for the future.

2 Participation at all levels of environmental and public decision-making

Involving women in decision-making bodies allows us to better comprehend their specific experience of climate change, taking their needs and expectations into account and capitalising on their expertise. This all serves to boost the impact of environmental initiatives.

3 Equal rights, particularly the right to education, information and sexual and reproductive health services

Guaranteeing women's access to fundamental rights reinforces their decision-making power and autonomy. This is particularly true of literacy, education and information, particularly information on the environment and climate change, which empowers women to take informed decisions based on a better understanding of climate risks and available solutions. Pregnant and breast-feeding women are also particularly vulnerable to the food penury and malnutrition caused by changing climate conditions. Access to sexual and reproductive health services such as contraception, abortion and pre- and post-natal care help to reduce the rate of deaths in childbirth. These services also enhance women's capacity to make their own decisions regarding their bodies and, to a certain extent, to avoid violence. These issues are central to the empowerment of women, and are absolutely essential to increasing their resilience in the face of climate change.

4 Access to and control of economic resources and means of production (land, inputs, technology, credit etc.)

Access to and control of resources are crucial when it comes to boosting women's capacity to adapt and resist, empowering them to create new economic alternatives. Increasing women's financial and economic autonomy allows them to better provide for themselves and their families, especially when they are the main breadwinners and/or are particularly affected by climate change. Greater autonomy also helps to increase women's decision-making capacities and influence within the household, but also as citizens in their communities.

5 The division of labour and equal sharing of tasks between men and women

Climate change may increase the time required for certain tasks traditionally allotted to women (collecting water and wood, for example), requiring a new distribution of economic activities. These changes are so many opportunities to rethink the gendered division of labour, and the excessive burden placed on women.

Involving men in this process allows us to challenge the very foundations of gender inequality and propose collective solutions to combat discrimination and promote equality between men and women.

For each of these key criteria, specific questions will arise at the outset of the project, during the situational analyses and at other stages of the process. Responding to these questions may require gender-specific data and the gathering of detailed, qualitative information via interviews and mixed and non-mixed focus groups.

Situational analyses can help us to define specific actions which can be used to reduce gender equality and increase the autonomy of women in these 5 key areas. Working closely with partners and beneficiaries, such analyses help us to set both quantitative and qualitative objectives for social change. ■

Some key questions which we can ask ourselves to determine whether or not a project is gender-responsive:

Recognising and promoting the environmental expertise and contributions of women	
Does the project draw upon women's traditional expertise in managing water, food and other resources, including their knowledge of the nutritional and medicinal benefits of certain plants, as well as their expertise in managing energy resources?	Does the project seek to understand, define and promote such forms of expertise?
Participation at all levels of environmental and public decision-making	
Are women and women's organisations represented on the relevant (local and national) environmental decision-making bodies?	Does this project aim to achieve full participation by women in its discussions and decision-making processes?
If not, what are the underlying reasons for this under-representation (organisation of meetings, provision of information, internal resistance, self-censorship, etc.)?	
Are women informed in advance of these meetings? Are they able to speak up and make proposals?	
Equal rights, particularly the right to education, information and sexual and reproductive health services	
Do men and women have equal access to information regarding natural disasters and climate change? How is such information relayed?	Does the project aim to expand access to climate and environment information?
Do men and women, girls and boys all have equal access to literacy and education? Why?	Does the project incorporate actions to promote equal access to education, rights and sexual and reproductive health services?
Do women have full access to information and services regarding their sexual and reproductive health (family planning, prenatal care)? Why?	
To what extent are women and girls, men and boys free to make decisions about their own sexuality (marriage, family planning)? Are they at risk of violence?	
Access to and control of economic resources and means of production	
Do men and women have equal access to economic resources and the means of production, including land, credit and technology? In practice, do they make use of these resources?	Does this project aim to expand women's access to resources, ensuring that they have control of such resources?
Has access to these resources been affected by climate change? Do women need access to new resources to meet the challenges posed by climate change?	Does the project promote equal access to new resources, in order to boost the resilience of women and families?
The division of labour and equal sharing of tasks between men and women and the involvement of men	
How are tasks divided between women and men? How much time do women, men, girls and boys spend on these tasks? Has the workload of women been increased as a result of changes in the environment?	Does the project aim to offset the increase in women's workloads via a more equitable division of tasks between women and men?
Are men involved in the actions taken to raise awareness of gender inequality? Are they aware of the skills and expertise held by women in the environmental sphere, as well as the discriminations they face?	Does the project promote the involvement of men and spaces for mixed interaction?

This table is based on the one used by CARE for environmental projects

GENDERED ANALYSIS OF VULNERABILITY AND CAPACITY TO ADAPT TO CLIMATE PRESSURES

GCVCA, (Gender Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis) as proposed by CARE International.

In 2009 CARE, an NGO which has been fighting for greater autonomy for women for many years, put forward a specific methodology designed to guarantee that environmental projects serve to further (or at the very least do not impede) the empowerment of women.

The GCVCA methodology was born of CARE's realisation that gender-responsive situational analysis was an essential condition for ensuring that environmental projects have a positive impact for women. Gendered analysis of vulnerability and capacity to adapt to climate change provides us with an analytical framework which takes into consideration the specific needs of both sexes and the context in which they must face up to climate change.

The GCVCA method has three primary objectives:

- To analyse vulnerability and the capacity to adapt to climate change, among women and among men
- To appreciate and accumulate the expertise of communities with regard to the climate, for a better comprehension of the impact of climate change on men and women, as well as adaptation strategies at local level.
- To work with communities to find effective adaptation solutions and actions, corresponding to the needs and expectations of all members of the community

GCVCA analysis operates on several different levels: individual, familial, community, regional, national.

The aim is to find responses to all of the questions which arise when implementing a project focused on adaptation to climate change: What are the applicable agricultural cycles? What institutions are capable of responding to crises? What structures are at work within these families and communities? How do the vulnerability matrices (revenue sources, climate risk etc.) of men and women compare? Etc.

For each of these questions, gender-specific information is collected in order to identify the vulnerabilities, needs and capacities of women and men. Once this data has been analysed, an adaptation strategy is devised including specific measures for both women and men, as well as for the community as a whole.

The method used to conduct GCVCA analysis is community-based and involves the beneficiaries directly. The resulting adaptation strategy is presented to the communities who are the focus of the project, who choose for themselves the solutions they wish to adopt. In this participative process, particular care is taken to ensure that women are involved. Mixed and non-mixed groups are formed in order to ensure that both sexes have their say.

The GCVCA methodology developed by CARE is currently in use in projects in Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Bangladesh. In these projects and others, it has been used to ensure that gender issues are taken into consideration from the outset.



Impactful initiatives which combine gender equality with environmental action

The projects presented below are backed by NGOs in different parts of the world. What links them is their ambition to combine environmental action with a sensitivity to gender equality, seeking to boost women's autonomy and improves their lives.

Their results are clear: a positive contribution to the preservation of the environment and the reduction of greenhouse gases, greater recognition of the role of women and a reduction in gender inequality.

On the following pages, we take a look at nine projects in the fields of agriculture, fishing, sustainable energy and waste management.



Women defending biodiversity in India

Solidarité

Founded in 1989, Solidarité is an NGO working primarily in rural areas on questions of food sovereignty, autonomy and resource management.

In the Indian region of Uttarakhand, Solidarité is working hand-in-hand with the NGO Navdanya, founded by Alternative Nobel Prize winner Vandana Shiva, on the **“Seeds of Hope”** project aimed at women farmers. The aim of this scheme is to boost the resilience of farmers in the face of climate change, increasing their economic autonomy by promoting biodiversity and organic farming methods.

Women farmers are the principal stakeholders in this programme. This is partly because they represent the majority of farmers in the region, but also because **it is these women farmers who possess the expertise required to identify, preserve and disseminate the right seeds, playing a key role in the promotion of biodiversity.**

In their day-to-day work in the fields, and at home within their families, women are experts at crop protection and reproduction. They have an encyclopaedic understanding of their flavours and properties. They guide the process of food production “from field to plate”, teaching children about the nutritional qualities of each crop and ensuring that their families are fed properly.

BIO-SCHOOLS CHAMPIONING YOUNG GIRLS

The Bio-Schools project is an environmental and education pilot scheme led by Solidarité.

The aim of the programme is to reach out to young people, particularly those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds, in order to change attitudes on matters relating to the environment and waste management. This includes the **creation of school gardens**, teaching children about environmental responsibility and establishing model eco-farms using sustainable techniques.

The project aims to reach young girls in particular, giving them the chance to assert themselves and fulfil their potential. Each week, a boy or girl is responsible for managing the garden. This is a test of responsibility and leadership, boosting self-esteem and encouraging the kids to assert themselves and their new skills as the project progresses. The programme aims to instil certain values in its young charges, including **championing the contribution of women and girls** to their community. The project also serves to preserve and disseminate sustainable approaches to resource and waste management, as well as increasing the autonomy of the girls taking part.



The scheme aims to **celebrate the expertise of women**, recognising the scientific value of their skill in selecting and protecting seed stock capable of resisting climate challenges. Seed experts thus play a key role in the educational process. These women are charged with identifying and preserving the most resistant seed strains. They then receive support as they educate other farmers about how best to use these resistant seeds, a role not often filled by women in rural areas.

Finally, they are put in charge of the seed banks in their villages. **This official role gives them a clear new status within their communities, for whom good seed is synonymous with survival.**

Through this process of empowerment, **women farmers gain greater confidence and recognition**, and their contributions to the local economy and environment are finally acknowledged by their peers.

As the association's founder and sponsor Vandana Shiva puts it, *“it's an opportunity for the seed inside them to bloom, to fulfil their true potential within a genuine process of empowerment.”* ■



Providing women farmers with access to climate information

CARE France

In Northern Bangladesh, rural populations are faced with increasingly frequent flooding and rain cycles which have been disrupted by global warming. These changes hit women harder than men, not least because they are less likely to have access to meteorological information.

Traditionally, it is the men of the community who travel to the nearest town to seek information on weather forecasts and natural disaster warnings. Women, meanwhile, rarely leave the village unless accompanied by their father or husband. Men thus represent women's sole source of information on the outside world, and particularly climate change. But as a result of the frequent floods which have destroyed whole harvests in recent years, men are now increasingly forced to go looking for work in the big cities, far from their families.

Deprived of their main source of information, women are unable to anticipate flooding and rainfall cycles, leaving them helpless to defend their families, their property and the farming yields of their villages.

Furthermore, although women perform farming duties on an equal footing with men, **they are not formally recognised as farmers by the local community and authorities.** Property deeds are generally held by their husbands, who are therefore the sole beneficiaries of government subsidies. Moreover, women do not have access to the agricultural and environmental education they need to adapt successfully to their environment.

It is this challenging context that CARE has established the **“Rainfall”** project, aiming to **help the people of Northern Bangladesh adapt to climate change, while also increasing the autonomy of women in the region.** The “Rainfall” project started with a gender-specific analysis of the situation, aimed at identifying the specific requirements of women and proposing pertinent solutions.

The programme soon identified two key priorities for boosting women's resilience when faced with environmental challenges: **access to information and access to agricultural and environmental education.**

To address the first priority, CARE has organised educational meetings aimed at helping women to seek out environmental information for themselves. Participants were provided with mobile phones and useful numbers. These sessions have already borne fruit, and the women are no longer reluctant to call the local authorities themselves to obtain information, helping them to respond more effectively to meteorological variations. **These women now have direct access to climate information.** Moreover, these daily calls have prompted the authorities to realise just how central these women are to the day-to-day management of agricultural production in the region, and that they must therefore be able to benefit from these services accordingly.

For the second priority, access to agricultural and environmental education, CARE has established a series of “Farmers' Schools” offering **technical training and discussion sessions focusing on farming practices**, open to the whole community.

In order to maximise the number of women taking part in these training sessions, several formats were tested, with mixed and single-sex classes and different hours and structures. The idea was to identify the most effective way of reaching women farmers, adapting to their household schedules and the other constraints which determine their daily routine. The results of the scheme are currently being evaluated. ■



Organic agriculture and the involvement of men in resource sharing

Service International d'Appui au Développement [SIAD]

SIAD is an NGO founded in 1988, specialising in providing support for economic development in French-speaking Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly by backing small businesses and job creation.

In Burkina Faso, SIAD is present in Oudalan, one of the country's poorest regions, working to improve and secure opportunities for women farmers. In this border region rainfall is scant and sporadic, and farmers have seen a general decline in crop yields as a result of erosion, drought and the deleterious effects of chemical fertilisers.

In a bid to stem the rural exodus and offer women farmers genuine alternatives, the project focuses on three interlinking actions:

- **promoting organic agriculture**, protecting soils and the environment,
- establishing a **fair trade** programme to ensure that producers are paid properly for their work,
- **tackling the gender inequality** faced by women farmers, which impedes their economic capabilities.

One particular project has seen SIAD working with women who produce organic onions. These farmers have had trouble diversifying their activities because they do not own their own land, which is used by men for much of the year to produce cereal crops. They are therefore obliged to wait until after the cereal harvest before planting their onions, which represents a serious obstacle. Furthermore, women farmers do not have equal access to transportation and mechanical tools, thus reducing their output.

SIAD has established **community consultation groups** in partnership with the "Women in Action" network, giving women and men the chance to discuss the specific problems encountered by women in terms of access to and control of economic resources, including ownership of carts for transporting vegetables, and access to machinery and land.

Men are invited to take part in these discussions, and the debates are broadcast on local radio. Messages are broadcast encouraging men to help the women dig wells for water, and to ensure that the land is freed up by late September so that onion cultivation can begin, as well as lending their carts for transporting goods to market. **These actions have raised awareness of the issues among men, encouraging them to work towards equal access to resources.** ■



Supporting social change in reaction to climate change in Togo

Agronomes et Vétérinaires sans Frontières [AVSF]

The NGO AVSF works to support farmers of both sexes as they adapt to climate change by diversifying their agricultural activities. This particular project focuses on Togo's north-west Savannah region.

The people of this region are mostly farmers, and women play an active role in food production and ensuring the food security of their families. **In spite of their contribution to household income, women are subject to severe legal, economic and social inequalities.**

Discriminatory family law and the practice of informal marriages combine to prevent women from becoming full owners of their property, and thus from making their own decisions regarding the land they farm. Landowners are predominantly men, who keep the most profitable and fertile land for themselves while leaving the less fertile and less accessible farmland to the women. The same goes for livestock farming: men keep control of the cattle, which are more profitable, while the women are left to look after the poultry and sheep.

These inequalities have been aggravated by climate change, which has had an impact on the distribution of agricultural production.

Until recently, the men farmed their land intensively, leaving the smaller, less fertile plots for the women to grow less profitable crops such as soy and cowpeas. Changes in the climate have caused corn yields to fall, leading men to take up new activities and appropriate certain activities traditionally left to women, which have now become more profitable.

AVSF, as part of its gender-responsive approach, pays close attention to such shifts in social roles and the division of tasks between men and women, seeking to limit the negative consequences these changes may have for gender equality.

In an effort to challenge inequalities, the project operates on three key levels, addressing individuals, the community and society as a whole.

- At individual level, AVSF works to keep women **informed of their economic and social rights**, with literacy programmes and campaigns focusing on decision-making within the household.
- At community level, **training and awareness programmes have been conducted for the benefit of villagers** and members of the producers' unions, focusing not only on **agricultural techniques**, but also on **respecting the rights of women and girls**. Women's rights monitoring committees have been established in some villages, in order to measure the progress made. The NGO also supports more female participation in the cereal producers' unions.
- At societal level, AVSF has initiated a project which seeks to change attitudes by promoting gender equality via local and regional radio. ■



Diversification of economic activities related to fishing and the division of labour in Senegal

ENDA Graf

The ENDA network's **GENDDER** programme combines gender equality with environmental education and sustainable development in 5 countries: Senegal, Colombia, Vietnam, Ethiopia and Tunisia.

In Senegal, ENDA Graf's work is focused specifically on preserving natural resources, sea shells and ecosystems in the Sine Saloum region, a nature reserve whose resources are under severe threat as a result of drastic, exploitative over-use.

Since 2006, **the region's women have been working together on a series of environmental protection initiatives.** With the economic activities traditionally performed by men - such as fishing and farming - threatened by climate change (particularly rising sea levels and salting of the soils, diminishing their fertility), collecting sea shells remains one of the

most profitable economic activities available to local families. Women collect, dry and then sell these shells.

In each village, the women have formed their own interest groups with the backing of ENDA Graf. A rotation system has been organised to fertilise the shellfish in batches, spacing out the harvests in order to ensure the sustainability of these precious resources. This project, supported by Senegal's University Institute for Fishing and Agriculture, has led to **greater recognition of the traditional practices preserved by women, and their vital expertise** in shellfish conservation. Meanwhile, in order to diversify their economic resources, the women have developed new activities including harvesting wild fruit and managing forestry resources.

ENDA Graf is particularly attentive to matters of gender equality at every step of the process. Special attention is paid to the **attribution of roles** within the family, in the economic sphere and on decision-making bodies, encouraging greater participation of both women and men.

One area of particular interest is the **workload of women, and division of labour between the sexes.**

ENDA Graf thus launched an initiative based around the concept of a **"time budget"**, quantifying the hours spent on different everyday tasks by men and women, based on their usual schedules. Formally setting out this time budget has prompted a **collective realisation of just how overburdened the women of the community are**, responsible for domestic chores and child-rearing as well as economic and community activities. Having established this point, mixed meetings were held to discuss a reallocation of tasks within the family, encouraging men to contribute more to the household (educating their children, going out for water and firewood).

During these discussion session, the NGO also raised the issue of the division of economic activities between men and women, and the distribution of resources within the family. Last but not least, steps have been taken to **boost the participation of women in decision-making processes**, including greater representation on forestry management committees. These efforts have included management training sessions. Giving women a greater say in the decisions taken by their communities is a priority recently recognised by the introduction of a quota policy in Senegal, but obstacles still remain. ■

FOCUS ON THE NATIONAL NETWORK OF WOMEN WORKING WITH MARITIME RESOURCES IN SENEGAL (REFEPAS)

Fishing occupies a central position in the Senegalese economy. Seafood is the primary source of protein for Senegalese people, supplying almost 75% of their intake. Fish processing is largely done by women, and represents a major source of income for their families, particularly single-parent families where the mother is sole earner. The economic benefits of these activities are felt in all areas, from education to health-care and food, and it is thus unfair to consider them as activities of secondary importance.

But Senegalese women are now experiencing ever greater difficulties in accessing resources. As a result of the mass export of fish to Asia, raw materials previously reserved for the local population are no longer available for processing. The close bonds the women had previously enjoyed with local fishermen have been worn away by new intermediaries. As a result of new standards imposed in the European markets, processing facilities are now increasingly separate from fish landing points, increasing production costs and leading many women to give up their activities.

Since the opening up of new markets in the region and the introduction of new machinery (including braising ovens), fish processing is increasingly a job for men. Women have suffered from this aggravated competition.

In order to highlight and respond to these new economic circumstances, the women of the region's fishing sector have formed REFEPAS: the National Network of Women Working with Maritime Products in Senegal. They have joined forces to **exert political pressure in favour of greater recognition of their fish processing activities**, and the positive impact they have on the local economy and environment.

One of REFEPAS' proposals is for a new system of professional registration to regulate their profession, guaranteeing fair access to resources and cutting out unfair competition. They are also demanding that questions of gender equality receive greater attention from those in positions of power, as well as greater recognition of the best practices developed by women in terms of environmental protection and the conservation of resources²⁶.

26 ENDA Graf Sahel: Equality and fairness: fishing isn't gender-specific! An appeal to defend the traditional occupations of women in the Senegalese fishing sector



Access to sustainable energy sources and reducing time spent on domestic chores in India

Good Planet

Good Planet is a foundation created by Yann Arthus-Bertrand in 2005, with the goal of raising awareness of environmental issues and encouraging concrete actions.

With its “Solidarity Carbon Action” programme, focused on combating climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, Good Planet supports local NGOs and helps them develop their projects.

In the Indian region of Karnataka, Good Planet is working in partnership with Indian NGO SKG Sangha to help small farmers. In this rural region, **women are responsible for collecting wood and preparing meals**. They spend several hours each day collecting wood, a particularly painstaking task.

Mallama, 65, shares her experience: *“When I got married and came to live with my husband’s family, I had a lot of work to do. Most of my work involved going out to find wood in the fields, and cleaning the dirty tools.”*

The primary goal of the project backed by Good Planet is to open up access to clean energy sources, installing biogas digesters capable of fermenting animal waste to produce gas. This gas can then be used by local women to cook their food.

Women are the primary stakeholders and beneficiaries of this project. They directly managed and own the biogas production facilities, signing an official contract to this effect. This is a major step forward in a country where, despite the recent adoption of a law promising equal inheritance rights for women and men (the Hindu Succession Act of 2005), a majority of women still renounce their inheritance to conform to social norms, and as a result rarely own property.

Female management of biogas production has a **double impact, at once social and environmental**. Firstly, the project has avoided the burning of 3440 kg of wood and the production of 7 tonnes of greenhouse gases each year. It has also drastically reduced the time spent collecting firewood, **saving women up to 240 hours per year** and making their lives much easier. The time freed up by this change can be used by women and their daughters to pursue other activities (education, training, money-making activities, involvement in associations and community groups).

Finally, the use of biogas has led to a clear **reduction in lung and eye problems linked to wood smoke**, problems which primarily affected women as they were traditionally responsible for preparing and cooking food.

“People who live in the city and are used to cooking with gas can’t begin to understand what a relief it was for me when I finally got a gas stove: no more smoke, no chest pains and, even better, no more black cooking utensils!” (Mallama)

As such, although the project has not yet succeeded in challenging the existing division of labour between men and women, it has given women the opportunity to **free up more time for themselves** and to manage their energy resources independently, improving the living conditions of the whole family in a sustainable manner. ■



Participation of women in the management of solar power in Georgia

Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF)

Georgia is a country still strongly afflicted by poverty and energy insecurity. Energy prices are very high, and many homes in underprivileged rural regions do not have electricity. To satisfy their heating and lighting needs, families often turn to dangerous, DIY systems using fuels which may be toxic.

Women suffer the consequences of energy insecurity more directly than men. Due to the traditional division of roles within the family, they spend more time indoors performing domestic chores. They are therefore more exposed to the risk of explosions, and inhaling toxic smoke. As well as being responsible for cooking, women are also expected to gather firewood and fuel, which takes up a lot of their time.

NGO WECF (Women in Europe for a Common Future) believes that **women are best placed to promote the spread of solar power in Georgia**. As the greatest consumers of energy, they are the logical targets for an energy transition programme which will provide safer, simpler and cheaper energy. With the **“Switch to the Sun – Live in Comfort!”** project, WECF

has been working to install solar panels in 22 communities in rural Georgia, training locals to use and maintain them.

In order to ensure that women are properly represented in this project, two training programmes were organised: training on how to install solar panels, primarily attended by the men of the community, and training on maintenance techniques for which the majority of participants were women. As such, once the solar panels are installed the women do not need any help from the men to use them, and can carry out repairs when necessary. Moreover, as women are greater energy users they are more attentive to the correct usage and technical maintenance of their solar panels.

The WECF project has had a **triple impact** in these poor, rural areas of Georgia: **reducing energy insecurity, increasing the quality of life, health condition and autonomy of women** and paving the way for an **energy transition** which should help to limit both deforestation and greenhouse gas emissions.

Based on the success of this local project, the Georgian government asked WECF to oversee a similar project on a national scale. Launched in 2015, the NAMA (National Appropriate Mitigation Activity) project aims to combine solar power with greater autonomy for women, tackling energy insecurity and combating climate change in Georgia. ■



Economic and environmental empowerment of women in Myanmar

GERES (Groupe Énergies Renouvelables, Environnement et Solidarités)

Myanmar is a densely-forested nation. However, since 1990 it has had one of the world's highest rates of deforestation: 1.17% of forest was lost every year between 1990 and 2005.

Furthermore, domestic fuel prices have increased fourfold since 1994, leading to unregulated plundering of the timber reserves found in the forests around rural villages, where people live in conditions of extreme poverty. Burning wood for heat releases greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, contributing to climate change.

Acutely aware of this problem, GERES has launched the **SCALES project to encourage the production, dissemi-**



nation and use of ovens running on biofuels.

The key objectives of this project are to put a brake on deforestation and greenhouse gas emissions, while also improving living conditions for the rural population.

During the project planning phase, GERES and its partners EverGreen and Energia soon identified another priority: empowering local women. In Myanmar, women are traditionally responsible for cooking. They use small ceramic stoves, burning wood or charcoal. These ovens are generally constructed locally, with many women involved in their fabrication. Although women have the skills required to perform all of the tasks involved in the production of these ovens, **they cannot be involved at every stage of the fabrication process** because certain tasks are reserved for men, such as sculpting the clay. This gendered distribution of tasks prevents women from setting up their own businesses. Moreover, **the work done by women in these manufacturing groups is often undervalued and underpaid**, dismissed as less physically difficult than the work done by the men.

GERES and its partners therefore decided to make gender sensitivity a key focus of their SCALES project, involving women every step of the way in the introduction of their new, eco-friendly ovens. GERES was particularly keen to emphasise the key role of women as **both users and makers of cooking ovens**.

On the former point, GERES has launched **awareness campaigns focusing on cooking techniques**, educating women about how to reduce the amount of wood they burn with the help of their new, more efficient ovens. Reducing the cost of raw materials helps to reduce overall energy bills, enabling families to devote more of their income to other essential items such as healthcare and education. Furthermore, widespread use of these new, more efficient ovens reduces the total quantity of wood and charcoal burned, thus reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

On the production side, GERES works with the communities to promote the important role played by women in manufacturing these new biofuel ovens. **Technical training courses enable local women to master every step in the production process**. GERES also provides tailored support and advice for women entrepreneurs, accompanying them throughout the whole value chain, from manufacturing to distribution of these new ovens. The skills they acquire allow the women to establish their economic autonomy, independently of men, **positioning themselves as entrepreneurs specialising in sustainable energies**. ■



WASTE MANAGEMENT

The role of women in waste recycling in Colombia

ENDA Colombia

The association ENDA Colombia has been working with recycling projects in Bogota for over 25 years. This work includes supporting the creation of ground-level organisations devoted to federating workers in order to improve their working conditions and defend their rights.

The recycling industry employs thousands of women and men, heirs to the poverty and social exclusion of the rural people who first gravitated towards the big cities in the mid-20th century, later turning to recycling as a means of subsistence. **There are now 13,000 recyclers working in Bogota, and thanks to them the city's total waste output is reduced by 1200 tonnes every day, equivalent to 19%.** The vital environmental role they play in managing household waste is recognised by the local authorities, who have adopted measures to improve their working conditions, including the introduction of a minimum per-kilo price for recycled materials. But in spite of these reforms, the majority of recyclers are still faced with awful working conditions.

60% of recyclers are women, and many of them are single parents. Recycling is a job which occupies whole families, with men and women performing the same tasks with the same level of physical demands. And yet, **women end up working "double or triple time,"** as programme coordinator Maria Victoria Bojaca puts it. They work all day, but are then still expected to perform all of the domestic and childcare chores. They are regularly at risk of violence, particularly when working at night, and are socially stigmatised on account of the perceived dirty nature of their work. Within the household, men are often the sole decision-makers. This imbalance of power and labour is being perpetuated even within the recycling organisations.

Although they are the main contributors to the organisations' efforts to defend their collective rights, taking part in huge numbers in marches, petitions and other public actions, **women have no representation on the decision-making committees**.

In an effort to combat this imbalance, ENDA Colombia has launched training and education programmes for its members, aiming to **raise awareness of the enduring impact of gender stereotypes** and the way in which they influence attitudes and behaviour. The NGO's stated goal is to "open people's eyes", ensuring that the important **work done by women is recognised and appreciated**, while also **tackling the discrimination** they face.

Though progress so far has been slow, Maria Victoria is quick to note the determination of the recycling women to join forces and move forward together. The women have already started to organise themselves, setting up discussion sessions to address issues such as basic rights and the struggle against violence. **These sessions are places for dialogue and useful advice, beacons of solidarity which are indispensable to the long process of empowerment.** They provide access to information and training, helping the women to organise themselves for greater visibility and representation in collective decision-making processes. ■



Conclusion

As we face up to the great social and environmental challenges of the age, this report from the RAJA-Danièle Marcovici Foundation serves to demonstrate that gender equality and the empowerment of women are fundamental requirements for successful sustainable development programmes.

These challenges need to be prominent in our minds as we create, implement and monitor new development projects, paying particular attention to questions of recognising and championing the expertise and contribution of women in the field of environmental protection, their involvement in environmental and political decision-making processes, their fundamental rights and economic autonomy, and the equal division of labour between men and women.

These are significant questions for any development programme, and are all the more pertinent since it is now generally acknowledged that women are doubly impacted by climate change as a result of the various forms of discrimination which they must endure. As this report makes clear, the empowerment of women is a fundamental priority which will help us to increase their resilience in the face of climate change and its consequences, with tangible benefits for their families and communities.

By focusing on concrete examples of innovative methods and successful projects on the ground, this report hopes to contribute to the process launched in 2014 at the COP20 conference in Lima, with the Gender and Climate Change Action Plan, continuing at COP21 in Paris and looking ahead to COP22 in Morocco in 2016.

This ambition is in keeping with the commitment of the international community to creating and backing innovative, operational solutions which put "words into action", ensuring that gender equality is treated as a central priority of sustainable development.

ACRONYMS

AFPAT: Association of Indigenous Fula Women in Chad
CCAFS: Research Programme on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security
FAO: The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation
GCF: Green Climate Fund
GG: Greenhouse gases
INDC: Intended Nationally Determined Contributions
IUCN: International Union for Conservation of Nature
NAMA: National Appropriate Mitigation Activity
REDD: Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation
UNFCCC: The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change

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For almost 10 years the RAJA-Danièle Marcovici Foundation, working under the aegis of the Fondation de France, has been working to secure greater freedom and better working conditions for women all over the world.

Funded by the RAJA Group, every year the Foundation supports community projects in such varied but equally crucial domains as education and training, professional integration and support, campaigning against violence and defending women's rights.

The Foundation also works to raise awareness and draw attention to the violence and discrimination suffered by women, calling upon each and everyone of use to make these inequalities a thing of the past.

Since its creation in 2006, the Foundation has funded 300 projects reaching over 50,000 women, distributing almost €3.5 million

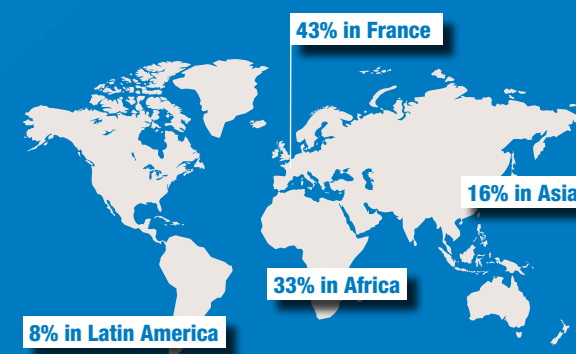
303 projects co-financed all over the world

207 associations supported

reaching over **50,000** women

in **44** countries

€3.5 million distributed



The "Women & the Environment" Programme

As well as being the primary victims of climate change and natural disasters, women all over the world are guardians of traditional expertise and creators of innovative solutions which can help save our environment.

In the wake of the 21st UN Conference on Climate Change in December 2015, the RAJA-Danièle Marcovici Foundation is campaigning for the crucial issue of gender equality to be pushed to the forefront of future environmental discussions.

With over a decade's experience of campaigning for women's rights, the Foundation aims to promote and champion the role of women in protecting the environment and fighting climate change.





Further reading:

www.femmes-et-environnement.com
www.fondation-raja-marcovici.com



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