



The Case for Gender Integration

1. Summary of Rationale

To achieve improved conservation outcomes, WWF is embarking on a process **of integrating gender into the fabric of how we do our work**. Understanding the roles that both men and women play in the management of natural resources in our priority areas and promoting more equitable gender relationships **will improve conservation outcomes by generating goodwill and buy-in from communities and empowering all community members to become active stewards of the environment**.

WWF's mission is to create a future in which people live in harmony with nature. However, in many of the priority places in which WWF works, women face inequities—determined by complex social, economic, and cultural institutions—that limit their ability to participate in and benefit from our efforts. Evidence shows that analyzing gender-specific opportunities and constraints related to resource use is a crucial step in achieving efficient and sustainable conservation outcomes. To design and implement effective projects, **we must understand the differences in how men and women interact with the environment, analyze how they interact with each other, and create space for both men and women to participate meaningfully in our efforts**.

Integrating gender into all aspects of WWF's work will also demonstrate our commitment to fulfilling our mission equitably. Additionally, gender integration would allow WWF to develop a competitive edge in pursuing new partners, partnerships, and funding sources; and reflect WWF's commitment to being a global leader in consistently developing the most innovative approaches to conservation.

2. Definitions

Gender is defined as “the socially learned roles and responsibilities that are assigned to women and men in a given culture and the societal structures supporting them.”

Gender equity is defined as “the condition of fairness in relation between women and men, leading to a situation in which each has equal status, rights, levels of responsibility, and access to power and resources.”

3. Incorporating gender into project planning and implementation leads to improved conservation outcomes

Abundant systematic evidence illustrates the conservation benefits of not only taking gender into account when planning and implementing projects but also the harm that can result from ignoring gender dynamics.

Forestry. Forest conservation projects must take into account priorities, needs, and opinions of women, as well as how new regulations may impact them.

- In Zimbabwe, women head more than half of 800,000 communal-area farming families they also manage woodlots and nurseries.¹ A study in Uttar Pradesh, India, showed that 33-45% of women's income is generated by forests and common land, while men draw only 13% of their income from those sources.²

- In India, 15 states adopted a Joint Forest Management program that restricted firewood collection areas and imposed severe penalties, including public flagellation, for violators. Women in the region are largely responsible for fuel wood collection and would be impacted by these new regulations. The new protected area restrictions designated approved fuel wood collection sites that were up to 6.2 miles (10km) away from communities. Due to the incredible burden of walking this distance with heavy bundles of fuel wood (not to mention that a round trip to the approved site would take four hours round-trip), many fuel wood collectors were unable to comply with the new restrictions and continued gathering fuel wood in the newly appointed protected area. It is reported that 90% of the people punished for violating the protected area were women.³ This example highlights both how women are disproportionately affected by gender blind conservation efforts, as well as how those conservation efforts can fail to reach their full potential without both men and women's participation.
- Similarly, in Central America, conservationists worked to protect estuaries and adjacent forests by imposing use restrictions. Since men in this region fish away from shores, they supported and complied with this effort. However, the local women ignored the restrictions because the project failed to provide sustainable alternatives to their reliance on the estuary area for fishing and firewood⁴.

These forestry projects that have failed to consider women's resources use patterns often do not fulfill their conservation objectives. In addition, some failures in program design affected women in profound ways with violent implications.

Biodiversity. Women often provide reliable and specialized knowledge about local biodiversity.

- In Jaú National Park in Brazil, men's gendered role was to hunt and women's to process meat. Researchers found that the women were able to supply more accurate information about the consumption of species and numbers of animals harvested.⁵
- Women were critical to the success of a TRAFFIC South America project, because "women in local communities already understood the issues caused by unsustainable wildlife trade, making them natural allies in efforts to change attitudes towards over-exploitation of the rainforest' resources . . . Women have a strategic role to play on the sustainable use of Amazonian biodiversity and in indigenous land management, and have a wealth of traditional knowledge and practices, which are key to addressing this issue."⁶
- In Thailand, women rescued 230 species of plants from nearby forests that were being cleared, maintaining that diversity in their home gardens.⁷
- In Sierra Leone, women use trees for more than 30 different uses, whereas men use them for fewer than ten.⁸

It is therefore essential to include both women and men in any efforts to comprehend the scope of how communities utilize local biodiversity.

Climate change. Climate change will place a disproportionate burden on women because they tend to have a higher dependence on natural resources, yet less decision-making power, mobility, and access to assets and resources, like income, education and information.⁹

- As climate change shifts the distribution of fresh water sources, for example, women's time use will also shift as it is their gendered role in many societies to find and fetch water for their families.
- Climate change is already increasing the frequency and severity of natural disasters, which disproportionately affect women. "Of the 140,000 people who died in the 1991 cyclone that hit Bangladesh, 90% were women."¹⁰

Efforts to facilitate climate change adaptation, including natural disaster preparedness, must target both men and women. If gender is considered in these ways, climate change impacts and the benefits from adaptive efforts will not perpetuate and increase women's vulnerabilities.

Agriculture and Livelihoods. Women play vital roles in agricultural processes throughout the world. They must be able to access resources regarding sustainable agricultural practices, and conservation organizations should actively encourage full participation from women during agricultural projects.

- Women produce 60-80% of the food in most developing countries, and up to 90% of the food in rural poor families.¹¹
- It has also been demonstrated that women can work land as efficiently as men but with fewer inputs, such as chemicals or irrigation systems; researchers predict that women can out-produce men by 6-22%.¹²

Agents of Change. Despite common cultural barriers to decision-making and leadership, women are often community and environmental leaders, working collaboratively with other women, men, and children within their communities. . They are frequently the decision-makers around household spending and provide income for essential household purchases.

- Women are “often the ones who organize local environmental events, and have the greatest influence on their children, to whom they can pass along environmental messages.”¹³
- In India, when women recognized the link between deforestation and recurring floods and landslides, they organized to halt logging, eventually succeeding in pressuring the government to impose a 10-year ban on logging in the area.¹⁴
- In OECD countries, women make 90% of the consumption decisions; they are also more likely to be sustainable consumers and pay attention to ethical issues.¹⁵
- Women tend to invest more of their income into the household than men, and they also tend to think about more long-term consequences. For instance, one study found that women spent 90% of their earnings from the sale of forest-related products on family needs, whereas men spent only 15% of their earnings on family needs.¹⁶ Conservation projects that seek to link environmental health with livelihood improvements must consider how income is spent and who benefits from investments.

The role of women as agents of change and as drivers steering household purchasing should not be overlooked and they should be viewed as local resource persons who can turn our ideas for best practices into action on the ground.

4. Conservation organizations, including WWF, have discussed gender for more than a decade, and we should recognize and build upon those advances

WWF. WWF has long worked with women’s groups and worked to improve livelihoods as a part of its conservation work. However, this approach of targeting women and not both men *and* women is not the gendered approach that must now be integrated and mainstreamed into our projects and partnerships. Nor have we successfully measured the impact of gender on our work and vice versa. In 2001, a WWF report from the Conservation Strategies Unit noted that “it is WWF’s contention—and experience—that gender strongly influences how women and men respond to conservation challenges and opportunities. As such, the impacts of conservation initiatives are likely to increase when the rights and needs of those with an interest in maintaining biodiversity are understood and supported . . . Gender analysis, gender training, and resulting gender-based projects, however, will only achieve conservation results if they are directly referenced to biodiversity goals and socioeconomic realities.”¹⁷ The report recommended that:

- Socioeconomic assessments using tools such as stakeholder analysis and threats-and-opportunities research should include considerations of gender from the outset. This means collecting gender-disaggregated data, surveying women’s groups, and ensuring that during household data collection both women’s and men’s experiences, needs, roles, opportunities, and relative power are documented.
- Stand-alone gender analysis is not likely to be helpful to conservation planning and decision making.

- There is a need for increasing awareness of the important role of gender in conservation and the provision of concrete examples of its impacts through training and project experience. Commitment of senior staff in field offices and headquarters will facilitate this process.

These views are shared by many of the WWF field offices. For instance, the WWF Solomon Islands staff has engaged with issues of gender very directly and believes strongly that “gender analysis, training and gender-based strategies should be core considerations of any resource management plan and implementation strategy.”¹⁸

However, in **May 2011, a Network Policy on Gender was approved by Conservation Committee**, formally recognizing the importance of taking a gendered approach in our conservation work.¹⁹ The WWF Network must now work to roll-out this policy and put it into action.

Other organizations. The importance of incorporating gender into conservation work has been widely recognized by donor organizations as well other conservation NGOs. According to a study conducted by USAID and CI, “There are many ways in which gender-based differences are important to the success of conservation, and historical evidence suggests that certain improvements in gender equity may lead to improved conservation results.”²⁰

In USAID’s “Gender Matters” document, the point is made that “understanding gender roles, rights and responsibilities is a critical part of the policies and programs that support community conservation efforts. Women and men are key stakeholders who sometimes might have conflicting interests in natural resource use and management. Understanding their respective priorities and developing initiatives accordingly are crucial to the success of long-term conservation efforts.”²¹ USAID further stresses that “to maximize the chances that conservation initiatives and projects will succeed, those at the community level need to be invested in both the concept and the approach. This means their participation in decision-making processes and in the evaluation, monitoring, and management of natural resources and the environment. . . Moreover, the participation of local people is one of the surest ways to build long-term capacity to maintain project gains once the original activity is complete.”

TNC is committed to considering gender in its projects: “The inclusion of a gender equitable perspective in the design, monitoring and evaluation of conservation initiatives will have a positive impact on the social fabric of communities living in protected areas. This, in turn will enhance conservation outcomes.”²²

In September, 2010, Conservation International released a new brand logo, mission, and vision that has a determined focus on empowering “societies to responsibly and sustainably care for nature for the well-being of humanity.”²³ CI is pushing the gender agenda and conducted a one-week gender training workshop for its staff at the DC office in June 2011, and they are beginning to form their own policy on gender.

Although WWF has had “people and conservation” focused projects for over twenty years, and a history of supporting women’s empowerment, it is clear that other conservation organizations are now pushing to be viewed as leading the social dimensions of conservation movement. **It is essential for WWF to roll-out our new gender policy immediately and garner support from both domestic and field staff to maintain our reputation as an organization that works to create a future in which people live in harmony with nature.**

5. WWF can modify its standards and systems to be more gender-aware, thereby maximizing the value of our work and fulfilling the promises of our gender policy and organizational mission

To best fulfill our mission and achieve the most equitable and sustainable outcomes, WWF must:

- Recognize that gender is one component within multiple social dimensions, and can be a crucial stepping stone to addressing the myriad social aspects of conservation;
- Provide gender training and encourage and support staff at all levels to integrate gender considerations into their work;
- Increase awareness of the importance of addressing gender in conservation to improve effectiveness;
- Consult external gender experts while building internal capacity for gender in conservation;
- Recognize that, as with other elements of social justice, gender equity lies at the heart of WWF's core values of results, honesty and integrity;
- Create a partnership between field offices and HQ, and establish mechanisms to promote sharing of human, intellectual and financial resources on gender-related issues;
- Build capacity of project staff and partners to conduct gender analysis and evaluate gender aspects of project activities.

Recognizing that previous efforts have been insufficient to build capacity to promoting gender equity in WWF's work, we are resolved to making a sustained investment of time, political will and of human resources to get the process going. **We request the full support of senior staff in these efforts as we seek to:**

- Create a Gender Task Force to identify steps for moving the gender integration process forward and sustaining progress made during trainings and workshops;
- Develop standards that outline how to integrate gender, collect gender disaggregated data, and ensure that needs of disadvantaged and disenfranchised groups (including women) within the stakeholder population are not overlooked;
- Empower the appropriate person(s) to screen outgoing proposals for gender components (especially for USG proposals);
- Encourage proposal concepts that integrate capacities and resources to address gender-related aspects of conservation and that draw strategically on the potential of gendered conservation approaches.

6. References

¹ Martin, Angela (2004) Gender Makes the Difference – Forestry. IUCN Factsheet.

http://www.gendercc.net/fileadmin/inhalte/Dokumente/Actions/Forestry_IUCN.pdf

² Id.

³ Aguilar (2004) Gender Makes the Difference – Protected Areas. IUCN Factsheet. See http://www.frameweb.org/adl/en-US/2337/file/234/WCC_Gender_Fact_Sheet_on_Protected_Areas.pdf

⁴ USAID Office of Women in Development, GenderReach Project. *Gender Matters Quarterly*, Issue 3 (June 2001).

http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNACP513.pdf

⁵ Id.

⁶ Ana Puyol, Programme Officer with TRAFFIC South America, quoted in *Women hold key to solving wildlife trade issues in Amazon*,

<http://www.traffic.org/home/2011/2/22/women-hold-key-to-solving-wildlife-trade-issues-in-amazon.html>

⁷ Aguilar (2004) Gender Makes the Difference – Protected Areas. IUCN Factsheet. See http://www.frameweb.org/adl/en-US/2337/file/234/WCC_Gender_Fact_Sheet_on_Protected_Areas.pdf

⁸ Aguilar (2004) Gender Makes the Difference – Biodiversity http://www.wocan.org/files/all/biodiversity_ing.pdf

⁹ UNDP (2010). *Gender, Climate Change, and Community-Based Adaptation*. New York, NY: UNDP.

¹⁰ Aguilar et al. (2007?) Gender and Climate Change. IUCN . <http://www.gender-climate.org/pdfs/FactsheetClimateChange.pdf> Overall,

“Women and children are 14 times more likely to die than men during a disaster.” See also

<http://www.cbd.int/iyb/doc/prints/factsheets/iyb-cbd-factsheet-gender-en.pdf>.

¹¹ Id.

¹² Conservation International (2008) *Incorporating Gender into PHE Strategies: Experiences from Conservation International*

http://www.conservation.org/Documents/CI_gender_and_conservation_experiences.pdf (see that document’s reference section for Alderman et al (2003) and Kennedy (1994) citations).

¹³ Gonzáles, A.M. and Martin, A.S. (2007). *Gender in the Conservation of Protected Areas*. Innovations in Conservation Series. Parks in Peril Program. Arlington, VA, USA: The Nature Conservancy. See <http://www.parksinperil.org/files/gender.pdf>, citing Hill Rojas (1999).

¹⁴ Martin, Angela (2004) Gender Makes the Difference – Forestry. IUCN Factsheet. See

http://www.gendercc.net/fileadmin/inhalte/Dokumente/Actions/Forestry_IUCN.pdf

¹⁵ Presentation by Lorena Aguilar: available at <http://www.capwip.org/Phillipinas%20presentacion%20-%20Lorena%20Aguilar.pdf>.

¹⁶ Id. See also Aguilar (2004) Gender Makes the Difference – Protected Areas. IUCN Factsheet. See http://www.frameweb.org/adl/en-US/2337/file/234/WCC_Gender_Fact_Sheet_on_Protected_Areas.pdf (reporting that in Zimbabwe, “when farming income is received solely by the ‘head of family’ (most often a male member of the household), the income does not necessarily improve the quality of life of all members of the family”; in Cote d’Ivoire “raising women’s share of household income reduced household expenditures on alcohol and cigarettes, but increased spending on food;” and in Rwanda, “holding income constant, members of female-headed households consumed 377 more calories day . . . than in male-headed households.”) See also Kalgovas, V. (2002) *Gender and conservation: A WWF Solomon Islands’ perspective*. *Development Bulletin*, no. 58, pp. 93-95.

http://devnet.anu.edu.au/GenderPacific/pdfs/10_gen_legal_kalgovas.pdf (“Support for income-generating projects to date has largely been directed to women’s projects, and the benefits in employment and income from these projects flow deep into the communities.”)

¹⁷ WWF Conservation Strategies Unit (2001) *Social Dimensions in a Biological World: Integrating Gender and Conservation in Priority Ecoregions*. Washington, DC. See http://wwf.panda.org/about_our_earth/all_publications/?4262/Social-Dimensions-in-a-Biological-World

¹⁸ Kalgovas, V. (2002) *Gender and conservation: A WWF Solomon Islands’ perspective*. *Development Bulletin*, no. 58, pp. 93-95. See

http://devnet.anu.edu.au/GenderPacific/pdfs/10_gen_legal_kalgovas.pdf

¹⁹ See WWF’s recently released Gender Policy Statement <https://sites.google.com/a/wwf.panda.org/social-development/issues-1/gender>.

²⁰ Conservation International (2008) *Incorporating Gender into PHE Strategies: Experiences from Conservation International*

http://www.conservation.org/Documents/CI_gender_and_conservation_experiences.pdf

²¹ USAID Office of Women in Development, GenderReach Project. *Gender Matters Quarterly*, Issue 3 (June 2001).

http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNACP513.pdf

²² Gonzáles, A.M. and Martin, A.S. (2007). *Gender in the Conservation of Protected Areas*. Innovations in Conservation Series. Parks in Peril Program. Arlington, VA, USA: The Nature Conservancy. See <http://www.parksinperil.org/files/gender.pdf>, citing Biermayr-Jenzano (2003).

²³ Conservation International website. Accessed 9.9.2011.

http://www.conservation.org/about/mission_strategy/Pages/ci_new_logo_new_mission.aspx