



Gender Mainstreaming

Scope of the Challenge

Gender relations between women and men, and girls and boys, play a key role in the access to environmental resources, control of the resources, and the goods and services they provide. The relevance of gender to environmental issues has been discussed since the early 1970s, when the growing debate on environmental issues intersected with the emergence of studies on women's roles in development

Accounting for dimension of gender is an important consideration for projects that address global environmental issues. To successfully address gender issues, projects must recognize the role of women as primary land and resource managers and weigh the different ways women and men consider conservation incentives.

Literature and studies on this topic recognize that failure to understand and address gender dimensions within environmental projects risks wasted development resources and negative effects on household welfare, women's equality, and environmental sustainability. Moreover, various studies, including an evaluation of gender conducted by the World Bank, find that project results are superior when gender considerations are integrated into the design and implementation of projects.

KEY FACTS

- Gender is an important consideration for projects that address global environmental issues.
- About 40 percent of reviewed GEF projects from 2003-06 included some kind of action to mainstream gender issues.
- Many projects under the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) have been recognized for their success in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women.

In addition, the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro (1992) and the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing (1995) made explicit references to the need to design environmental programs with a gender focus to increase women's access to and control over resources, as well as improve the effectiveness of such projects.

GEF Response

The GEF has a long history of investing in local actions to achieve global environmental objec-



tives. Today, an even deeper understanding exists of the relationships among household welfare, women's equality, and environmental sustainability. Making gender issues part of the GEF's six focal areas — biodiversity, climate change, international waters, land degradation, persistent organic pollutants, and ozone depletion — presents opportunities to further enhance the value of projects as well as advance gender equality.

The GEF recognizes that this approach is good for projects, good for gender equality, and good for achieving GEF goals. Since the GEF's beginning, a public participation policy has been applied that ensures both women's and men's involvement in GEF projects. The GEF agencies have also developed their own gender policies and strategies, which are applied to our projects. About 40 percent of reviewed GEF projects that were approved and implemented between 2003 and 2006 included some kind of action to mainstream gender issues. About 20 percent involved components, outcomes, or activities that specifically target women, and in some cases men, to adequately address the gender dimension. These results are encouraging, but clearly there is more work to be done.

For GEF projects to achieve their desired objectives, project interventions should account for gender differences in how resources are used and managed, women's roles as primary land and resource manager, differing conservation incentives faced by women and men, and other gender-related issues.

The Millennium Development Goals emphasize the clear links among gender equality, poverty alleviation, and sustainable development. Not only is the third goal, "Promote gender equality and empower women," specifically targeted toward gender, it has been recognized that gender issues will play a key role in the effective achievement of the other seven goals, including the seventh goal, "Ensure environmental sustainability," for which the GEF plays a key role.

The Rio Conventions — namely the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the UN Convention on Combating Desertification (UNCCD) — for which the GEF serves as financial mechanism, also recognize the important linkage between gender-related issues and achievement of the Conventions' goals and objectives.

Many projects under the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) have been recognized for their success in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women. Gender is one of the mandatory cross-cutting requirements incorporated into the GEF's Small Grants. About 17 percent of such projects supported worldwide have focused specifically on the involvement of women.

Gender Mainstreaming and Gender Equality

Gender mainstreaming has been the primary method for integrating a gender approach into environment and development efforts. In practice, gender mainstreaming means deliberately giving visibility and support to both women's and men's contributions individually, rather than

assuming that both groups will benefit equally from gender-neutral development interventions.

Within a project context, gender mainstreaming commonly includes identifying gaps in equality through the use of sex-disaggregated data, developing strategies and policies to close those gaps, devoting resources and expertise to implementing such strategies, monitoring the results, and holding individuals and institutions accountable for outcomes that promote gender equality.

Gender equality does not mean that women and men will become the same, but rather implies equal treatment of women and men in laws and policies, and equal access to resources and services within families, communities, and society at large. To achieve this goal, a two-pronged approach of gender mainstreaming is often required:

- Systematically analyzing and addressing in all initiatives the specific needs of both women and men; and
- Targeted interventions to enable women and men to participate in — and benefit equally from — development efforts.

Gender equality is not solely a women's issue; in fact, it seeks to tailor activities to the beneficiaries of the project from both sexes. Gender equality is advantageous to both men and women and cannot be achieved without the full engagement of both.



RURAL SUCCESS IN MALI

In Mali, women are the major producers of fuel wood and in charge of daily budgets, cooking, and commerce. Providing electricity, improved cookstoves, and LPG stoves to such women, particularly in rural and low-income areas can greatly reduce the physical toil to produce energy and improve their lives and those of their families, while reducing environmental pressures. An increase in the number of improved wood stoves and kerosene and LPG stoves used is directly correlated to a positive impact on women's and children's education, health, and energy expenditures

A GEF-supported project to help these families adopt renewable energy technologies included social assessments and consultation with women and men during project preparation, identifying women as a major target and a direct beneficiary of the project. This led to a number of different and successful project strategies that are improving the lives of rural and peri-urban families, particularly women.



For more information, see "Mainstreaming Gender at the GEF," found on the GEF Web site.

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