

*Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender  
Equality –IANWGE*

*Task Force on Indigenous Women*



**INDIGENOUS WOMEN**

**AND**

**THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM**

**GOOD PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED**

Compiled by  
Secretariat of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

# Table of Contents

## INTRODUCTION

### Indigenous women and CBD

1. SCBD work with indigenous women (2000-2005)

### Indigenous women and FAO

#### *Africa*

1. Gender, Biodiversity and Local Knowledge Systems to Strengthen Agricultural and Rural Development (LinKS) Tanzania, Mozambique, Swaziland

### Indigenous women and IFAD

#### *Latin America*

1. Rural Development Programme for Las Verapaces (PRODEVER), Guatemala, Latin America
2. Programme of Reconstruction and Development for Quiche and Proderqui Departments (PRODEQUI), Guatemala, Latin America
3. Sustainable Agricultural Development and Environmental Protection Project for the Darien (PRODARIEN), Panama, Latin America

#### *Asia*

1. Enhancing Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Protecting Intellectual Property Rights in Western Mindanao, The Philippines, Asia
2. Hills Leasehold Forestry and Forage Development Project (HFFDP), Nepal, Asia
3. North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Project for Upland Areas (NERCRMP), India, Asia
4. Oudomxai Community Initiatives Support Project, People's Republic of Laos, Asia
5. Rural Income Diversification Project in Tuyen Quang Province, Viet Nam, Asia
6. Wulin Mountains Minority Areas Development Project, People's Republic of China, Asia

### Indigenous women and ILO

#### *Latin America*

1. Education for work, employment and rights of indigenous peoples –ETEDPI, Honduras, Nicaragua and Guatemala
2. Legal Empowerment of Indigenous Peoples in Central America, Central America

### Indigenous women and UNFPA

#### *Latin America*

1. Strengthening of the Ngöbe Indigenous People family and improvement of its Sexual and Reproductive Health. Ngöbe Indigenous People Territory, Panama
2. Jambi Huasi –health clinic, Otavalo, Ecuador

## **Indigenous women and UNIFEM**

### *Latin America*

1. Prevention of gender violence toward young women or teenagers in situation or at high risk of violent relationships in El Alto, Bolivia
2. Indigenous Women: Local Development and Leadership Building, Saraguro, Ecuador

# INTRODUCTION

The Task Force on Indigenous Women of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANGWE) was established in 2004 and adopted a three-year programme of work. During the first year, 2004-2005, the Task Force conducted a general survey of work of the UN system with indigenous women. During the second year, 2005-2006, the Task Force devoted its efforts to collecting good practices and lessons-learnt from the work of the UN system with indigenous women.

The Task Force is pleased to submit this collection of case studies to IANGWE at its February 2006 annual session. The collection contains cases submitted by CBD, FAO, IFAD, ILO, UNFPA and UNIFEM about their work with indigenous women in Africa, Asia and Latin America. It is the intention of the Task Force to publish this collection and disseminate it widely so that it may serve as a practical tool for future work of the UN system and other organizations engaging with indigenous peoples.

# INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND CBD:

## SCBD work with indigenous women (2000-2005)

The Convention on Biological Diversity in its Preamble recognizes “the vital role that women play in the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and affirming the need for the full participation of women at all levels of policy-making and implementation for biological diversity conservation”.

A specific framework for the participation of indigenous women is found in the Program of Work of Article 8(j) and related provisions (Decision V/16)<sup>1</sup> regarding participatory mechanisms for indigenous and local communities. Thus, Task 4 of the First Phase of the Programme of work insists on:

“Parties to develop, as appropriate, mechanisms for promoting the full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities with specific provisions for the full, active and effective participation of women in all elements of the programme of work, taking into account the need to:

- Build on the basis of their knowledge;
- Strengthen their access to biological diversity;
- Strengthen their capacity on matters pertaining to the conservation, maintenance and protection of biological diversity;
- Promote the exchange of experiences and knowledge;
- Promote culturally appropriate and gender specific ways”

In order to ensure the full involvement and participation of indigenous women in the work being carried under the CBD with regards to traditional knowledge, the Secretariat takes into account gender considerations when selecting participants to our meetings, in our research work, when creating experts groups and in general in all activities related to policy-creation and implementation of the CBD provisions. In addition, being traditional knowledge a cross-cutting issue within the CBD, the promotion of the participation of indigenous women is applicable to meetings regarding each work program and decision of the Conference of the Parties.

In light of the recognition of the role of women in the CBD and, in particular, in the work programme on Article 8(j), the Secretariat is pleased to participate in events related to indigenous women and biodiversity. In this regard, for instance, the Secretariat delivered a presentation in a workshop for indigenous women on Biodiversity and Traditional Knowledge on 6 May 2004, in New York. The workshop was organized by the Indigenous Women’s Biodiversity Network (IWBN), an open network of Indigenous women interested environmental issues, initiated in 1998 at the 4<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties of CBD, held in Bratislava, Slovakia.

Finally, the Secretariat continues to cooperate with the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, among other relevant organizations, and with women representatives of indigenous and local communities to ensure that the perspectives and strategies of indigenous women in biodiversity related issues are taking into account in the work being done under the CBD with regards to traditional knowledge.

**For more information, contact:**

---

<sup>1</sup> The Programme of Work of Article 8(j) is available at <http://www.biodiv.org/decisions/default.aspx?m=COP-05&id=7158&lg=0>

UNEP - SCBD  
United Nations Environmental Programme  
Secretariat for the Convention on Biological Diversity  
Email: [john.scott@biodiv.org](mailto:john.scott@biodiv.org)  
URL: <http://www.biodiv.org>

# INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND FAO:

## GOOD PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED

### *Africa*

1.

<b>Project title:</b>	<b><u>Gender, Biodiversity and Local Knowledge Systems to Strengthen Agricultural and Rural Development (LinKS)</u></b>
<b>Thematic area/programme:</b>	Gender, agrobiodiversity and Local Knowledge
<b>Project duration:</b>	7 years (1998-2005)
<b>Location:</b>	Tanzania, Mozambique, Swaziland
<b>Beneficiaries:</b>	Researchers and Development workers from governmental and non-governmental institutions
<b>Executing agency/agencies:</b>	FAO
<b>Implementing agency/agencies:</b>	FAO together with numerous partner institutions in each project country such as National Research Institutions, Universities, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, Extension Service, Seed Units, NGOs, etc.
<b>Source of funds:</b>	Government of Norway

#### Overview

The project did not focus on indigenous peoples or indigenous women, but on local, or indigenous knowledge and gender roles and responsibilities in relation to biodiversity management and food security. However in Tanzania the project supported one research study which explored local knowledge of Maasai on breeding and selection of cattle, sheep and goats and its relation to the goals of food security and herd survival.

Maasai pastoralists possess a specific knowledge system that they have used for generations to maintain their livestock and their production system. This study set out to investigate local knowledge, preferences and criteria regarding breeding and selection, and the differentiation in local knowledge depending on roles, responsibilities, age and gender. Furthermore possible changes in local knowledge under the influence of migration were investigated. The preliminary results of this study will be highlighted here.

#### What was planned (Objectives and main activities):

The main objective of the study was to understand the dynamics of local knowledge on breeding and selection of livestock in the Maasai community and to find out if changes in the local knowledge system occur when the Maasai migrate to different agro ecological zones.

The specific objectives were to explore preferences and criteria for breeding and selection of cattle, sheep and goats of Maasai in two different regions, one in Simanjiro (North of Tanzania, presumed to be the area where Maasai originate from) and the other region in Mbarali (South of Tanzania, a preferred migration area for Maasai since the last 30-50 years). The local knowledge systems of the Maasai from these two regions were specifically verified in their relation to:

- Gender and age,
- Roles and responsibilities,
- Decision making,



Goals and food security and herd survival.

### **What was the strategy**

The research team was a multidisciplinary group of scientists and extension staff which identified the main stakeholders and tried to involve them as far as possible in the study. During the field visits the team applied a participatory action research approach (PRA), using PRA tools and gender analysis tools. Data were collected, analysed and presented in a gender disaggregated way wherever possible. The team organized several field visits; each visit was followed by data analysis, report writing and feedback meetings to the rural communities. After the feedback meetings the next field visit was planned.

The study was done in three parts, Phase I focused on Maasai in Simanjiro, Phase II focused on Maasai who migrated to Mbarali and in Phase III exchange visits between Maasai from the two regions were organized to give them the opportunity to exchange experiences, understand from each other how they respond to different agro ecological zones. The exchange visits were an excellent opportunity for all of the participants to learn from each other.

### **Who was involved**

A multidisciplinary team of seven researchers, comprising social scientists, animal scientists, breeders and veterinarians from the Ministry of Water and Livestock Development, University of Dar es Salaam and Sokoine University of Agriculture, District extension staff and pastoral/agro-pastoral communities.

### **Specific changes resulting from the project (outputs and impact)**

#### **Sustainability**

Some of the research team members understood that Maasai are real livestock specialists, that they do animal breeding for specific purposes. Furthermore they understood very well, that Maasai women have in depth knowledge and understanding of livestock, that they know the animals they milk very well and that they play important roles in monitoring the animals, giving advise to their husbands about breeding and treating sick animals. The research study raised a lot of awareness about the importance of local knowledge in livestock breeding for the Maasai.

Awareness raising material will soon be available for extension staff, researchers and policy makers.

#### **Replication /spin effects**

All of the research team members went through an intensive on-the-job-learning process. Their understanding and insight about Maasai and their local knowledge systems was increased. Hopefully the research team members will apply this knowledge and experience in their future work and dissemination of research results.

### **What was learned**

- It is important to work with a multidisciplinary team to get a better in-depth understanding of the complex local knowledge systems of the Maasai. A detailed gender analysis at the beginning of the study was crucial.
- Intensive training in data collection and a clear understanding of the concepts “gender, local knowledge and biodiversity” of the research team was necessary before going to the field.
- During data collection it was important to collect information from separate men and women groups of Maasai. This gender disaggregation was important to understand different gender roles and responsibilities.

- Gender roles and responsibilities are flexible and adapt themselves to changing situations (drought, diseases, etc.) and outside influences (policies, markets, etc.). Therefore it is necessary to check carefully and in depth with the rural communities in which way men and women respond to these outside challenges.
- Triangulation of information is extremely important. The research study was divided in three parts. After each field visit the data were analyzed, a report was prepared and presented in a feedback workshop to the agropastoral community and the stakeholders. On the basis of comments and discussions the next field visit was prepared.
- It is difficult to collect information on local knowledge; people often do not value this knowledge themselves and therefore do not share it.
- Maasai women play an important role in selecting animals for breeding. Due to their daily contact with cows while milking them, Maasai women are able to monitor the animals closely.
- Women have their own criteria according to which they prioritize animals for breeding. This information is regularly shared with their husbands and the other men of the boma.
- Women monitor animals and their health situation closely. Women take care of sick animals; they prepare medicine for their treatment and treat smaller diseases. Women are responsible for new born calves, their mothers, etc.
- Women are responsible for milk management; the income from selling milk products is under the control of women.
- Women and children can possess their own animals. These animals are managed together with the herd of the boma. Women have control over their own animals.
- Outside influences: In search of additional income earning opportunities men leave the bomas from time to time. In these bomas women take over more and more responsibilities for the herd and its management.

### **Factors contributing to success**

- Research team went through different workshops to sensitize team members about gender, participation, local knowledge, etc...
- Different steps of study, after each step an analysis workshop and report writing, then feedback to pastoral community, then planning of next step. The feedback workshops were an important opportunity where the research team presented the collected data to the rural community. The Maasai gave comments, further inputs, identified gaps and discussed with the research team how to continue with the study.

### **Obstacles or problems identified during the project**

- Difficult to destroy prejudices of researchers e.g. how Maasai behave, what they know and what they do. Destroying the myths!
- Confrontation of local and scientific knowledge
- The poor value generally attributed to local knowledge (and especially women's knowledge) and local animal breeds by researchers and agropastorals themselves was a challenging factor in the study and throughout the project.

### **Document/Bibliography**

Study reports are not yet available, will be posted soon on web site of the LinKS project

### **For more information, contact**

LinKS website: [www.fao.org/sd/links](http://www.fao.org/sd/links)

Germana Laswai, Team leader of research study: [laswaig@suanet.ac.tz](mailto:laswaig@suanet.ac.tz)

Sachin Das, National Coordinator of LinKS project in Tanzania: [linkstz@africaonline.co.tz](mailto:linkstz@africaonline.co.tz)

Trust Fund on local knowledge in Tanzania: [linkstz@africaonline.co.tz](mailto:linkstz@africaonline.co.tz)

# INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND IFAD

## GOOD PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED

### *Latin America*

1.

<b>Project title:</b>	<b><u>Rural Development Programme for Las Verapaces (PRODEVER), Guatemala, Latin America</u></b>
<b>Thematic area/programme:</b>	Assistance to indigenous women
<b>Project duration:</b>	2002 – 2010 (8 years)
<b>Location:</b>	Las Verapaces, Guatemala, Latin America
<b>Beneficiaries:</b>	16 000 households
<b>Executing agency/agencies</b>	National Fund for Peace/Government of Guatemala (FONAPAZ)
<b>Implementing agency/agencies:</b>	United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) National Fund for Peace/Government of Guatemala (FONAPAZ)
<b>Source of funds</b>	Total cost: USD 26.00 million IFAD loan: USD 15.00 million Domestic: USD 5.96 million Cofinancing: USD 5.04 million (OPEC Fund)

#### **Overview**

Poverty is extremely high among the rural inhabitants whose livelihoods are based on the extremely fragile natural resources of Las Verapaces Department, in Guatemala, where the Q'eqchies, Pocomchis and Achis peoples live. The IFAD-cofinanced Programme aims to generate direct benefits to 16 000 rural indigenous households. In April-May 2003, shortly after PRODEVER was launched, an evaluation was undertaken to determine the differences between the situations of men and women in the department. It was found that women interested in participating in the development activities supported by PRODEVER would either have to hire someone from outside the family to take care of the children and prepare meals, or take their eldest daughter out of school to take charge of these activities. Women were found to suffer from lower education levels, higher rates of illiteracy (80%), less ability to speak the mainstream language (Spanish), heavier domestic workloads, poorer knowledge of their rights, weaker citizenship in their communities, lower self-esteem, and non-recognition of their contributions to family livelihoods in the male-oriented local culture. The study provided the information needed for detailed planning of the activities to be supported by PRODEVER.

#### **What was planned**

The overall goal of PRODEVER is to reduce poverty among the rural families living in the poorest municipalities of Las Verapaces Department. Its specific objectives are to: (a) increase their incomes by promoting farming and non-farming income-generating activities; (b) promote and consolidate their local organizations as strong community-based institutions; (c) improve their access to rural financial services; (d) introduce a gender-sensitive approach to all programme-financed activities; (e) preserve and strengthen their natural resource base for future generations; and (f) promote their integration into the mainstream of the national economy. The purpose of the Programme's gender sensitive approach is to create conditions for women as well as men to gain access to and exercise equitable control over the services, resources and benefits resulting from the Programme. The gender study of April-May 2003 led to inclusion of the following activities in the Programme's work plans.

- 1- Capacity-building, technical assistance and literacy training at community level. The programme for bilingual education and training is being carried out at community level, in order to make it easier for women also to attend. Through literacy and skills training, women's ability to participate actively in local organizations and even to occupy decision-making positions within them will be strengthened. The curriculum includes training in simple business skills as small-scale entrepreneurs: e.g. cost-benefit analysis, allocating of income, management skills, how to obtain wanted information, etc.
- 2- Sustainable forest management. The promotion both of firewood-efficient stoves and of the planting of fast-growing tree species in community woodlots aims to alleviate women's workload and thereby make it easier for them to undertake development activities. It will also diminish the pressures on natural forest resources and hence preserve the latter for future generations.
- 3- Income-generation. Financial support for women's income-generating activities is associated with training in the skills needed to use their loans profitably, increase their incomes and gain access to knowledge and skills.
- 4- Training for community representatives. Women account for about 30% of the participants in the training programme designed to enable 100 community organizations in formulating and managing their own development projects in a manner that will also reflect the interests and priorities of women.

### **Who was involved**

- United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)
- Central Government: Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, FONAPAZ, National Literacy Committee
- German Technical Cooperation
- Local government: Departmental Council for Development, and Municipalities

### **Specific changes resulting from the project**

- Empowerment: large increase in women's active participation in meetings (attendance, voice, vote); women account for 30% of membership in mixed organizations; 65 mobile day-care centres created: 63 to allow women to attend literacy classes; and 2 for the capacity-building workshops.
- Women's workload alleviated by building 204 fuel-efficient stoves and planting 14 ha of woodlots with 4 080 fast-growing tree seedlings.
- Women's health improved: 6 workshops on reproductive health, maternal care and nutrition (with Ministry of Health); 3 emergency committees in the municipalities of Cahabón and Alta Verapaz, to assist women during and after difficult childbirth.
- Women's economic position enhanced by financing 63 income-generating activities, mostly for livestock husbandry (87%), but also for micro enterprises (8%) and textile crafts (5%).

### **Sustainability**

- 1- Capacity building, technical assistance and alphabetization at the community level. Post-literacy support will focus on improving training processes and capacity building, going beyond the teaching of reading, writing and arithmetic to enable women to better administer their productive activities and increase household income.
- 2- Sustainable forest management. Training on how to make and maintain firewood-efficient stoves, promotion of local nurseries to produce seedlings of fast-growing trees; direct involvement of households both to ensure implementation and enhance ownership.

## **What was learned**

- Capacity-building measures aimed at empowering women must include leadership training and awareness-building on self-esteem.
- Women need their own spaces to exchange experiences, be listened to and brainstorm with other women, with a view to identifying realistic solutions for their priority problems.
- Literacy training must be bilingual in order to broaden women's horizons and enhance their mobility and communication with outsiders.

## **Factors contributing to success**

- Programme support is based on needs identified by the women, themselves.
- Provision of support in the communities.
- Support is associated with capacity-building processes, bilingual literacy training and other measures designed to enable women's active participation, self-esteem and leadership.
- Timetables take account of women's time constraints.

## **Obstacles or problems identified during the project**

- Spouses or family members may block women's active participation in development activities, especially training and capacity building.
- Male resistance to family planning can hamper progress in this respect.

## **Documentation/Bibliography**

For Projects profiles and existing documentation visit: [www.prodever.org](http://www.prodever.org)

## **For more information, contact**

Names: Ronald Ramiro Sierra López –Coordinator (*Coordinador Ejecutivo*)  
Neida Eugenia Mollinedo – Gender Focal Point (*Responsable Unidad de Género*)  
Address: Programa de Desarrollo Rural de las Verapaces – PRODEVER  
1<sup>a</sup>. Calle 13-04 Zona 3,  
Cobán, Alta Verapaz, Guatemala, Central America  
Telephone: (502) 7951 4023  
Email: [prodever@terra.com](mailto:prodever@terra.com)  
Website: [www.prodever.org](http://www.prodever.org)

## 2.

<b>Project title:</b>	<b><u>Programme of Reconstruction and Development for the Quiche (PRODERQUI) Guatemala, Latin America</u></b>
<b>Thematic area/programme:</b>	Support to indigenous women's groups
<b>Project duration:</b>	1998-2007 (9 years)
<b>Location:</b>	Quiche Department, Guatemala
<b>Beneficiaries:</b>	10 000 rural smallholder families
<b>Executing agency/agencies:</b>	National Fund for Peace/Government of Guatemala (FONAPAZ)
<b>Implementing agencies/agencies:</b>	United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS/CI) National Fund for Peace/Government of Guatemala (FONAPAZ)
<b>Source of funds</b>	Total Cost: USD 19.0 million IFAD loan: USD 15.0 million Government: USD 4.0 million

### Overview

At the beginning of the Eighties, a violent conflict erupted in Quiche and Verapaces, two of the poorest departments of Guatemala, where 90% of the population is indigenous. The violence was concentrated in the small towns and remote villages, with particularly devastating effects on the women and children of the K'iche, Pocomchi and K'ekch'i peoples. In addition to enhancing food security, boosting incomes and improving the living conditions of at least 10 000 smallholder families living in ten municipalities of the two departments, the Programme of Reconstruction and Development for the Quiche (PRODERQUI) aims to rebuild the social fabric and contribute to the consolidation of peace by strengthening local indigenous organizations, rebuilding the small productive units of indigenous farmers that were destroyed or abandoned during the years of violence, and promoting the socioeconomic re-integration of the populations most affected by the conflict. The rationale for the Programme's gender-sensitive approach and methodology is based on two reasons: (a) a high percentage of the households in the post-conflict areas are headed by women (30% in Quiche); and (b) women can be excellent mediators in a peace process, often contributing in decisive ways to reconciliation and reconstruction.

### What was planned

The main objective of PRODERQUI is to promote the installation of effective technical support mechanisms and activities that can help both women and men in a broad range of ways: increase their incomes from farming and non-farming income-generating activities; recapitalize their small-scale productive units damaged during the conflict and create new ones; consolidate their local organizations and institutions; enhance the role of rural women in economic and social affairs; contribute to the long-term conservation of natural resources and the environment; and support the rights of indigenous communities over their territory, their natural resources and their cultural values.

### What was the strategy

The strategy is based on the following thrusts:

- 1- Gender as a cross-cutting issue. The original design of the Programme had included a subcomponent specifically designed to promote women's projects. This design was modified in 2000, placing gender equity at the core of all activities to be financed under the Programme. Since then, all personnel and partner organisations have been expected to adopt a gender-sensitive approach that perceives the family as a whole, women as well as men, as the focal point for all their activities. IFAD's cooperating institution, UNOPS also hired two gender specialists - a woman and a man- to guide and supervise implementation of the new gender approach. Under the

terms of reference laid down in their contracts, they are encouraged to make strong recommendations to Programme management on how to push for gender equality and women's empowerment.

- 2- Alleviating women's workload. The strategy emphasises the importance of finding ways to reduce the time spent by women on tasks like fetching water and firewood, preparing meals, etc., so that they will have time to participate in development activities. Relevant aspects include: enabling access to clean water; food security; more profitable women's micro enterprises; silos to store staple cereals, and a food-for-training programme aimed at allowing women to participate in greater numbers.
- 3- Food Security is a major focus in the communities where a majority of the inhabitants are living in extreme poverty. Groups of women, in particular, are being trained in how to improve the productivity of their vegetable gardens and orchards, are receiving egg-laying poultry, and are being assisted in the creation revolving group funds.
- 4- Gender training of social promoters. Trained gender promoters - 14 men and 4 women - are encouraging more women to grow irrigated vegetables for cash sale. Their training on subjects like gender and participation places the family as a whole at the centre of efforts to promote more productive activities.
- 5- Municipal Women's Office. The Programme's general strategy of gender equality, which is based both on the Peace Agreements and the Laws of Social Development Decree 42-2001 and on the decentralization laws, is promoting the active participation of all women - indigenous and non-indigenous - in local development. These laws have enabled the creation of Municipal Women's Offices with the mandate both to undertake advocacy and lobbying in favour of women's views and priorities in participatory planning processes.

### **Who was involved**

- United Nations Office for Project Services as cooperating institution (UNOPS/CI)
- Central Government: National Fund for Peace (FONAPAZ), Ministry of Health,
- Local Governments: Municipalities of Quiche, ASIENS, the Council for development, Quiche Departmental government, SEPREM, SOSEP, PDH, Forum of the Woman, DEMI.

### **Specific changes resulting from the project**

- *Alleviating women's workload.* Enhanced participation of women in community affairs; women have more time for other family and/or community activities, fewer respiratory ailments, illnesses and eye disorders, particularly for children and women; and reduced deforestation.
- *Food Security.* More varied family diet thanks to better knowledge of food value and increased access to supplementary foods; revolving funds as a source of financing for new economic activities.
- *Gender training of social promoters.* Greater awareness of the role women can play in family and community development.
- *Municipal Women's Office.* Opening of three municipal corporations for the creation and strengthening of three Municipal Women's Offices; other municipalities interested in doing so; gender-specific "spaces" for women's participation increased both at municipal and departmental levels; delegates from Municipal Women's Offices participating in meetings of the Women's Commission at CODEDE level; effective lobbying for allocation by Government of financial resources from CODEDE for women's projects.

## **Sustainability**

- Alleviation of women's workload. Women participated more in the different activities of the programme and improved their participation in decision making processes as a result of the introduction of time-saving devices. The sustainable use of forest resources through diminishing the use of firewood for cooking is sustainable in the long run.
- Food security. Revolving funds able to deliver small loans to group members; promotion of livestock husbandry, improved family orchards and vegetable gardens, nutrition education
- Gender training of social promoters: Promoters are local community members identified by the communities themselves.

## **What was learned**

- Women's participation can be increased by reducing the time they spend on domestic and economic tasks.
- Women are reliable borrowers; they repay their loans on time, and administer their revolving funds well after a minimum of organisational strengthening and training.
- Literacy training is crucially important and must be delivered in agreement with the responsible institutions to ensure a higher participation of women.

## **Factors contributing to success**

- Time-saving measures allowed women to participate more actively in Programme-supported activities and training.
- Revolving funds enhanced the cohesion of women's groups, thereby laying the groundwork for long-term sustainability.
- Literacy improved the conditions for greater participation by women in decision-making and improving management of income-generating activities.

## **Obstacles or problems identified during implementation**

- Weak participation by women in decision making due to poor/no education.
- Weak participation by women in training and capacity-building processes due to spouse's refusal of permission.
- Weak participation of adult women in literacy training.

## **Documentation/Bibliography**

Informe de la Misión de Supervisión, UNOPS, Marzo 2002.

Informe de Evaluación de la Misión Ex-Ante, IFAD, Septiembre 1996.

For Projects profiles and existing documentation visit: [www.proderqui.org](http://www.proderqui.org)

## **For more information, contact**

Names: Ing. Carlos Roberto Urizar Méndez –Coordinator (*Coordinador Ejecutivo*)  
Lic. Edmundo Javier López González – Gender Specialist (*Responsable de Género*)  
Address: Programa de Desarrollo y Reconstrucción en el Quiche – PRODERQUI  
7ª. Calle 8-38 zona 5, Santa Cruz de El Quiche, Guatemala, C. A.  
Telephone: (502) 77551304  
Email: [quiche@proderqui.org](mailto:quiche@proderqui.org)  
[carlos.urizar@proderqui.org](mailto:carlos.urizar@proderqui.org)



### 3.

<b>Project title:</b>	<b><u>Sustainable Agricultural Development and Environmental Protection Project for the Darien, Panama, Latin America</u></b>
<b>Thematic area/programme:</b>	Rural Development
<b>Project duration:</b>	1996-2005 (9 years)
<b>Location:</b>	Darien Province, Panama
<b>Beneficiaries:</b>	60 communities (80% indigenous, 20% Afrodariens)
<b>Executing agency/agencies:</b>	IFAD Government of Panama
<b>Implementing agency/agencies:</b>	UNDP – United Nations Development Programme Government of Panama (Ministry of Agricultural Development)
<b>Source of funds</b>	IFAD and the Government of Panama

#### Overview

The Darién region, situated on the border between Panama and the Republic of Colombia, has extraordinary wealth in terms of biodiversity, forests and water sources. It is characterised by a low population density (50 000 inhabitants for 16 800 km<sup>2</sup>), little infrastructure, high levels of poverty and extreme poverty (two thirds of its population), and a low human development index. Life expectancy at birth is only 64 years compared to the national average of 76, and the child mortality rate is three times the national average. The region is inhabited by five ethnic groups, three of which are indigenous (Emberá, Wounaan and Kuna) and two are not (Afro-descendientes and Mestizos). Indigenous territories within the region are self-managed by elected traditional authorities. The main sources of subsistence and income are extractive activities like hunting, fishing and logging, as well as slash-and-burn agriculture. Crafts are an important activity for indigenous women.

#### What was planned

PRODARIEN (Sustainable Agricultural Development and Environmental Protection Project for the Darien) was designed to improve rural living conditions by fostering community organizations and strengthening traditional institutions and governance. Recognising the importance of extractive activities, it includes a training programme on environmental sustainability and promotes replanting of trees. It also aims at improving agriculture by facilitating access to extension, credit and training on marketing skills. It also provides financing for the micro-enterprises of women's groups.

#### Who was involved

- Ministry of Agricultural Development
- The sub-office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Darién,
- Other government institutions (e.g. Institute of Agricultural Markets, National Authority for the Environment, Institute of Agronomic Research of Panama).

#### Specific changes resulting from the project

- Indigenous women's organizations are legally recognized and actively involved in managing resources and implementing their projects.
- Women's organizations are running profitable enterprises (restaurants, bakeries, sale of gasoline, small commodity stores, processing of sugar cane and rice, etc.).
- Women's organizations are marketing agricultural products and crafts.
- Women have access to credit and other services.
- Women participate more actively in community organizations.
- Women are elected to administrative and managerial positions within the organizations.
- Indigenous women are adopting innovative practices as farmers and micro-entrepreneurs.

- In a multicultural region, the women of different ethnic groups interact, exchange experiences and are developing a common agenda.

### **Sustainability**

Networks of organizations as well as a federation of networks have been created to mobilize and offer economic and technical support. Other sources of funding have been mobilised to support the organizations and Project-promoted development processes.

### **Replication/spin-off effects**

Information and experiences are being exchanged with other projects in the country that are combating poverty, especially those that are working with indigenous populations. New donors are becoming involved in the development of the region: e.g. the Global Environment Fund (GEF) approved a Programme of Small Grants that is scheduled to start next year, in Darién region. UNDP is providing funding to support the federation of organizations and other development initiatives. Other national and international organizations, such as Fundación Natura (Nature Foundation) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) have expressed interest in making alliances in the region.

### **What was learned**

- Women's interests and agendas differ from those of men (e.g. women tend to be more interested in family planning and other aspects of reproductive health). Projects must analyze these differences and make provisions for appropriate initiatives also for women.
- There are structural barriers to the participation of the indigenous women. Projects must take account of these in order to be able to promote equality of opportunities. Under PRODARIEN, the following measures were found effective in addressing structural barriers like language and traditional gender roles and responsibilities:
  - Use of native languages and translators: to overcome the fact that women have fewer opportunities than men to learn the mainstream language;
  - Organize activities at village level: to facilitate participation by women;
  - Create temporary child-care centres: to enable women to bring their children with them to meetings and training sessions;
  - Foster non-farm employment or income generating activities: to expand women's economic opportunities and thereby facilitate their social and economic integration;
  - Pay particular attention to households headed by women as they tend to be the poorest;
  - Involve men in efforts to promote the participation of women;
  - Practice positive discrimination where necessary to stimulate participation by women.
  - Income managed by women is allocated mostly to improve housing and living standard, educate the children or as savings;
  - Women are more committed and accept responsibility more readily in the context of development activities;
  - Gender training and awareness-building of all project personnel is critically important to ensuring that gender will become a cross-cutting issue for all components;
  - Constant monitoring of gender indicators is critically important; and
  - Project management must give high priority to gender issues.

### **Factors contributing to success**

- Sensitization and education of project personnel on gender equity issues.
- Cross-cutting application of gender equity issues and use of specific indicators to monitor gender-sensitive performances.
- Women reap significant profits from the economic activities.

- Women's enthusiasm and commitment.
- The project's demand-led approach.

### **Obstacles or problems identified during the project**

- Cultural factors limit the role of indigenous women.
- Male resistance at all levels, from design to implementation (staff and beneficiaries).
- Lengthy period between design and implementation, calling for significant flexibility and willingness of the co-operating and financing agencies to make the necessary adjustments.

### **Documentation / Bibliography**

PRODARIEN, "Voces de la Comunidad (testimonios de beneficiarias)": a collection of beneficiary interviews.

### **For more information, contact**

Name: Hermel Lopez, Executive Director (*Director Ejecutivo*) PRODARIEN  
Telefax: (507) 2994123/4196  
Email: [prodarien@cwpanama.net](mailto:prodarien@cwpanama.net)

## Asia

1.

<b>Project title:</b>	<b><u>Enhancing Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Protecting Intellectual Property Rights in Western Mindanao, The Philippines.</u></b>
<b>Thematic area/programme:</b>	Empowerment
<b>Project duration:</b>	2003-2004
<b>Location:</b>	Lakewood, Western Mindanao, Republic of the Philippines
<b>Beneficiaries:</b>	Subanen Indigenous Communities
<b>Executing agency/agencies:</b>	International Centre for Research in Agro forestry (ICRAF)
<b>Implementing agency/agencies:</b>	International Centre for Research in Agro forestry (ICRAF)
<b>Source of funds:</b>	IFAD through the Western Mindanao Community Initiatives Project (USD 10 500) and through grant to ICRAF (USD 35,000)

### Overview

Since they formulated their ancestral domain management plan, in 1998, the Subanen communities expressed their interest in documenting the flora of their ancestral domain. Between 2003 and 2004, following the 2001 IFAD-financed Western Mindanao Community Initiatives Project (WMCIP) implemented by the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), an IFAD technical assistance grant (TAG No. 486) to the International Centre for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF) made it possible to provide technical assistance to document the ethno-botanical knowledge of the Sunbanen indigenous communities, especially women.

### What was planned

The objectives of the project were fourfold: (a) facilitate local participatory natural resource management planning of ancestral domains; (b) assist indigenous organisations in identifying and documenting all their traditional rice varieties, all wild plants and animals; (c) establish the property rights of local communities over their knowledge systems and practices; and (d) ensure that no biological specimens or genetic resources leave the area without the "free and prior informed consent" (FPIC) of the concerned communities. A fourfold approach to the documentation work was adopted

- 1- *Multidisciplinary documentation:* A team of local researchers, half of them women, explored and documented the expertise of tribal plant experts. The team was supported by a multidisciplinary team of specialists.
- 2- *Participatory documentation:* All the documentation activities focused on consensus-building and converging interests between the indigenous communities and the institutions involved. The communities were empowered by transferring the skills of technical documentation to the women and men making up the team. The Subanen community, especially women, carried out most of the documentation work, with the institutions as facilitators. Members of the community were involved at all stages, from the setting of research priorities to data-gathering, processing and production of knowledge outputs. Illiterate but knowledgeable community elders, especially women, provided the information that was documented by literate younger members of the community.
- 3- *Culturally-sensitive documentation.* The ethno-botanical documentation work was conducted in a manner that was deliberately sensitive to local culture. Outsiders respected the customary rules and behaviour during field work: e.g. ritual offerings before entering a documentation site; a thanksgiving ceremony on leaving it; respect of taboos on matters (guarded secrets) whose public revelation was perceived as likely to compromise the well-being of the entire community, etc. Reliance on community members as documenters simplified the task as they were already familiar with local customs and mores.

- 4- *Documentation sensitive to intellectual property rights.* Conscious of the need to protect the intellectual property rights of the community, technical assistance was provided to help the communities ensure that material guaranteeing their intellectual property rights was produced .

### **What was the strategy**

The strategy was centred on both an informal and formal approach.

- 1- The *informal approach* entailed publishing the scientific name and generic use of medicinal plants but not detailing the recipe, dosage and specific illnesses for which it is used. This approach was adopted to encourage outsiders to seek permission from the community and come to mutually agreed arrangements before obtaining complete ethno-medicinal information for commercial purposes.

- 2- The *formal approach* consisted of four elements:

- A Memorandum of agreement witnessed by the National Commission of Indigenous Peoples and stating that: (a) ownership of documented ethno-botanical knowledge remains with the indigenous community; (b) no biological specimens should leave the community without free and prior informed consent (FPIC); (c) future commercial utilization of ethno-botanical knowledge, if any, would require FPIC; (d) outsiders and participating organizations must observe customary laws in the conduct of documentation.
- Digital encryption of electronic knowledge products and technology.
- Copyright protected information such as books, magazines, electronic albums, registered with the Philippine National Library.
- Recourse to the Plant Variety Protection Act (RA 9168). Under this act, a Certificate of Plant Variety Protection may be granted for plant varieties that are "new, distinct, uniform and stable". The rice varieties developed by generations of Subanen can be considered new and distinct because they are not yet present in the global database of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI).

### **Who was involved**

- International Centre for Research in Agro forestry (ICRAF)
- Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) - (through WMCIP)
- Subanen Tribal Council
- IPIL - Development Foundation Lakewood Consortium (IDF)

### **Specific changes resulting from the project**

- Over 568 plants and their uses (food, medicine, etc.) were identified and catalogued, representing 70% of the plants growing in the ancestral domain of the Subanen indigenous peoples; 400 of the documented plants were stored in a database with digital photographs; and close to 300 specimens were collected, dried and mounted for the Subanen herbarium.
- A large amount of culturally relevant educational material was produced and copyrighted in the name of the Subanen Tribal Council. Publications, including books, magazines and digitally encrypted photo albums, are being reproduced for use in the Subanen literacy programme.
- The technical expertise of the Subanen members of the ethno-botanical documentation team was enhanced significantly as well as of concerned women.
- A Memorandum of Understanding signed by Government, on behalf of the communities and based on their specific requests and directions, secures their intellectual property rights and options for obtaining benefits from any future commercial or beneficial use of their knowledge by requiring that the FPIC of the community is obtained before any knowledge is shared with a third party.
- A body of culturally relevant learning materials was produced with potential for protecting/revitalising traditional culture.

- Reproduction of rice on verge of extinction

### **Sustainability**

The project awakened a strong interest by local women in continuing the reproduction of threatened rice varieties for in situ (on-farm) conservation and documentation. In 2004 and 2005, a total of 82 traditional rice varieties were collected and planted for the first cycle of morphological documentation by groups of women, who are traditional seed-keepers and growers.

### **Replication/spin-off effects**

The Lakewood approach has been adopted for the documentation of plant diversity in the ancestral domain of the Kankanaey peoples in Bakun, Benguet (also in the Philippines). After testing it in Bakun, the regional office of the NCIP in northern Luzon entered into a memorandum of agreement with various government and non-governmental organizations in the region to carry out ethno-botanical documentation jointly in all ancestral domains within the Cordillera Administrative Region.

### **What was learned**

- The project demonstrated that the ethno-botanical knowledge of indigenous women (and men) covers a wide spectrum of plant species (trees, vines, herbs, shrubs, grasses, ferns, edible mushrooms, palms and mosses), most of which have multiple uses. The documented species were used as medicine (62%), food (37%) and construction materials (20%).
- Ethno-botanical knowledge can become an effective development tool for improving the living conditions of indigenous communities without degrading their environment. It can be used to increase and enhance livelihood options, revitalize agriculture, improve food security and health, and promote a sense of cultural pride within the community.

### **Factors contributing to success**

- High beneficiary interest as the project responded to a development thrust that they had identified in a development plan that had already been formulated.
- Collaboration of several organisations towards the same goal channelled through a participatory approach.
- Use of gender-sensitive, multidisciplinary, participatory and culture-sensitive research methods.
- Respect of local culture and community intellectual property rights.

### **Obstacles or problems identified during the project**

- The culturally important plants are heavily utilized without attention for protection or regeneration, and some have already become rare or endangered species.

### **Documentation / Bibliography**

Vel J. Suminguit, "Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Intellectual Property Rights: An Enabling Tool for Development with Identity", 2005 (document prepared for the International Workshop On Traditional Knowledge, Panama City, 21-23 September 2005)

### **For more information, contact**

Name: Sana Jatta, Country Programme Manager for The Philippines  
Address: Via del Serafico 107, 00142 Rome Italy  
Telephone: 39.06.54.591  
Email: [s.jatta@ifad.org](mailto:s.jatta@ifad.org)

## 2.

<b>Project title:</b>	<b><u>Hills Leasehold Forestry and Forage Development Project, Nepal.</u></b>
<b>Thematic area/programme:</b>	Rural Development
<b>Project duration:</b>	1993-2003
<b>Location:</b>	Kingdom of Nepal
<b>Beneficiaries:</b>	11 756 poor households
<b>Executing agency/agencies:</b>	Department of Forests (Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation) Department of Livestock Services (Ministry of Agriculture/Cooperatives) Agricultural Development Bank of Nepal National Agricultural Research Council (NARC)
<b>Implementing agency/agencies:</b>	UNOPS (United Nations Office for Project Services)
<b>Source of funds</b>	Total Cost: USD 12.00 million IFAD Loan: USD 6.00 million Netherlands Grant: USD 4.85 million Government: USD 1.15 million

### Overview

The Hills Leasehold Forestry and Forage Development Project (HLFFDP) sought both to raise the living standards of the poor and to regenerate degraded forestland. Its rationale, perceived as an alternative both to nationalization and the community forestry approaches, was based on giving small groups secure user rights over blocks of degraded forest that they would rehabilitate themselves. The ten districts covered by the project are the traditional lands of several indigenous groups, including the Tamang, the Danuwar, the Praja, the Magar and the Majhi. A total of 7 377 ha of degraded forest was rehabilitated by 1 729 leasehold groups comprising 11 756 poor households. Under a 40-year lease agreement, the leasehold groups have exclusive user rights over the products of the rehabilitated forest in the framework of an agreed management plan.

### What was planned

#### The main activities included:

- 1- Fostering of leasehold groups of 5 to 10 households each, promotion of regular meetings to collect monthly savings, deliver loans and collect repayments.
- 2- Integration of women into mainstream forestry activities (instead of supporting specific women's activities).
- 3- Employment of women as group promoters.

### What was the strategy

- 1- To address the negative effects of "open access" management that was resulting in widespread deforestation and degradation, the project introduced the idea of leasing specific tracts of degraded forestlands to specific groups, mainly women, willing to undertake their rehabilitation in exchange for secure access to the products thereof.
- 2- As women represented the majority of the beneficiaries, women were recruited as group promoters to assist in the fostering of additional groups, e.g. by linking their communities with the line agencies and extension staff.

### Who was involved

- UNOPS (United Nations Office for Project Services)
- FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation)

- Department of Forestry
- Government of The Netherlands

### **Specific changes resulting from the project**

- The project's basic premise, i.e. that poverty alleviation and reforestation can be addressed simultaneously by transferring degraded lands to the very poor, was proven correct.
- Men increasingly accepted women's new status and their right to have agricultural land registered in their name.
- Biodiversity improved on the leasehold lands as a result of improved management (controlled grazing, controlled use of fire, enrichment planting). Populations of plant species in monitored sites increased by 57% to 86% over the period 1994-2000; and, although herd sizes increased, shortages of animal feed actually diminished.
- Women acquired basic literacy skills and both men and women are more aware both of their legal rights and of the importance of adopting new ideas with regard to education, health, sanitation and nutrition for themselves and their families.

### **Sustainability**

- Long-term leasehold arrangement, initially for 40 years but renewable.
- The impressive re-greening of most leasehold sites and the establishment of grasses and forage legumes is likely to encourage leaseholders to maintain grazing bans.
- Groups approach lays the groundwork for eventual withdrawal of line departments and group promoters.
- The creation of 120 inter-group organisations and 18 multi-purpose cooperatives, although unanticipated, is widely regarded as highly promising.

### **Replication/spin-off effects**

The Government of Nepal has decided to extend the leasehold concept to 16 additional districts as the first step towards covering all 75 districts of the country. The project's approach was replicated in the Leasehold Forestry and Livestock Programme (LFLP) approved by the IFAD's Executive Board in December 2004. LFLP is an 8-year programme aimed at reducing the poverty of 44 300 households in 22 districts. Its objectives are to: (a) increase household forage and tree crop production through the environmentally sound management of rehabilitated leasehold plots; (b) improve household incomes from small livestock (goats); (c) foster viable microfinance institutions to deliver financial services to the leaseholders; and (d) strengthen Government's capacity to implement leasehold forestry as a national poverty reduction programme with a strong gender equity focus.

### **What was learned**

- Giving women secure access to land and forestry can transform their lives both economically and socially. Economically, it gives them access to a more secure and stable source of income, and to new ways of making money for their families. Socially, they acquire a new sense of self-confidence and self-esteem; their husbands show growing respect for them and they are increasingly involved in higher levels of responsibility and decision-making. These transformations are weakening the unequal power relations that foster poverty both of their households and in their communities.
- External support should be planned and carried out in a complementary manner.
- The indigenous knowledge and active participation of farmers is crucial in defining and implementing environmentally sound land use options for fodder, forage and livestock. Local practices with regard to the management of the tree canopy and under-storey forage cultivation should be investigated more thoroughly. While the introduction of exotic trees and grasses should not necessarily be halted, greater consideration should be given to the competition between local and introduced species. The key requirement is to establish a lively communication and promote



site-specific packages and appropriate tree-forage models based on indigenous knowledge and market opportunities.

- There is a strong need to assess the demand and market structures for forage and to develop marketing strategies before promoting forage production. Livestock-rearing and the sale of grass seeds should not be over-emphasised during the early stages of a project.
- The provision of training should be demand-led and the preferences of group members should be entirely respected.
- Leasehold groups should be encouraged through training and support to form or join inter-group organisations and eventually create a national federation of groups.

### **Factors contributing to success**

- Flexibility in targeting

### **Obstacles or problems identified during the project**

- Slow rate of disbursement.
- Conditionality for withdrawal by the Crown, legal ambiguities concerning the status of lease certificates and the problem of inheritability of leasehold rights need to be addressed. the present arrangement only recognizes collective rights of groups, without defining the rights of individual members.
- Forgotten "social capital": the original design did not envisage the creation of grassroots institutions other than leasehold groups, nor did it contemplate any attempt to promote savings outside the limited scheme of the Small Farmer development Project.

### **Documentation / Bibliography:**

Interim Evaluation: Hills leasehold Forestry and Forage Development Project, IFAD, 2003

### **For more information, contact:**

Name: Atsuko Toda, Country Portfolio Manager for Nepal  
Address: IFAD, via del Serafico 107, 00142 Rome Italy  
Telephone: 39.06.54.591  
Email: [at.toda@ifad.org](mailto:at.toda@ifad.org)

### 3.

<b>Project title:</b>	<b><u>North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Project for Upland Areas, India.</u></b>	
<b>Thematic area/programme:</b>	Agricultural Development	
<b>Project duration:</b>	1997-2008 (9 years)	
<b>Location:</b>	North Eastern Region (NER)	
<b>Beneficiaries:</b>	39 200 households	
<b>Executing agency/agencies:</b>	State Coordinating Committee for Government Activities (SCCGA)	
<b>Implementing agency/agencies:</b>	United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS).	
<b>Source of funding:</b>	Total Cost:	USD 33.22 million
	IFAD Loan:	USD 22.90 million
	Institutional financing:	USD 1.20 million
	Government:	USD 5.60 million
	Beneficiaries:	USD 3.50 million

#### Overview

Characterized by isolation, insecurity and remoteness in terms both of access and communications, the North Eastern Region (NER) of India has a predominantly tribal population of over 30 million small-scale "*jhum*" (shifting agriculture) farmers with per capita incomes estimated at only 65% of the national average, as well as a long history of inter-ethnic strife. The project area comprising 862 villages and 39 200 households in the states of Manipur, Meghalaya and Hill districts of Assam is characterised by a variety of agro-climatic zones and tribal groups: the Tangkhuls-Nangas in Manipur; the Khasi and the Garo in Meghalaya; and the Karbi and the Dimasa in Assam. Although these districts have experienced protracted conflict linked to local people's quest for freedom and the sovereignty of the Indian state, women had always been agents of peace and dialogue. In 1974, they set up one of the most widely respected welfare-cum-human-rights organizations of the region (*Tangkhul Shanao Long*, TSL). In addition to a host of social activities aimed at uplifting women, TSL assisted the victims of conflict and was an important mediator between the people and Government.

Despite such efforts, women continue to be perceived as second-class members of the household, with few legal rights over and within it. They perform most of the work done by the family, including weaving and agriculture, but it is their husband who owns the family property. Girls are more valued for their work than as individuals. According to IFAD's report on mainstreaming gender in Asia, "A women in the Tangkul society is much like a beast of burden, putting in 14-16 hours of work a day while the average working man does about half."

#### What was planned

The project's overall goal is to improve the livelihood of vulnerable groups in a sustainable manner, by improving the management of their resource base in ways that can protect and regenerate the environment. This goal is pursued by: (a) enhancing the capabilities of local people; (b) increasing family incomes from farm and non-farm sources; (c) fostering environmental awareness and knowledge; (d) establishing effective systems for input delivery and asset management; (e) increasing the participation of women in local institutions and decision-making; (f) enhancing saving capacity and thrift; and (g) providing basic services and social infrastructure. The resulting six components are the following:

- 1- *Capacity-building of communities and participating agencies.* Helping communities to:  
(a) establish viable, equitable and sustainable village institutions; (b) formulate Community

- Resource Management Plans and (c) strengthen their capacity to manage their development initiatives through training, in-country study tours and self-help groups (SHGs).
- 2- *Economic livelihoods.* Enhancing livelihoods by introducing/improving a wide range of on-farm and non-farm activities, including irrigation, improved practices for crops and livestock, modifications to *jhum* plots, input supplies, fish farming, agro-processing and credit.
  - 3- *Community-based biodiversity conservation.* Protecting the region's rich biodiversity resources by protecting sacred groves and introducing buffer zone management; developing alternative livelihood sources for adjacent communities; surveys of biodiversity; creation of a database on local flora; conservation of endangered species; and awareness-raising programmes.
  - 4- *Social sector activities.* Improving access to basic services by building drinking water schemes, training health workers, providing basic medicines and training.
  - 5- *Village roads and rural electrification.* Improving access to markets by upgrading 170 km of village roads and building 20 km of new roads; broadening the base of the rural economy by providing electricity to open up new possibilities for non-farm enterprises.
  - 6- *Project management.* Strengthening the capacity of the implementing agencies; developing and implementing a monitoring and evaluation system.

### **What was the strategy**

The patriarchal socio-cultural and political backdrop prompted a strong focus on gender equality, ecology, participation and sustainability. The aim was to help women improve their position within their households and communities by enhancing their active role in economic and social activities. Instruments like natural resource management groups (NRMGs) and self-help groups (SHGs) were used both to generate meaningful participation by women and to provide them with a chance to rise out of their traditionally subordinate role. The central concept of SHGs is that women do not have to depend on outsiders for the credit they need for their economic activities. Their SHGs, whose guiding principles are thrift and credit, allow them to increase their incomes, exchange experiences with other women and the end-result is greater confidence for addressing their strategic needs. A facilitator in each of the beneficiary villages is responsible for providing the women's SHGs with information and guidance for daily operation and for liaising between them and providers of support (e.g. partner NGOs and project staff at district headquarters).

### **Who was involved**

- United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)
- State Coordinating Committee for Government Activities (SCCGA)

### **Obstacles or problems identified during the project**

The main obstacle to women's empowerment comes from local traditions, including the unequal gender-based division of labour that are deeply entrenched in strong patriarchal societies, the exclusion of women from decision-making and from administration systems. It is necessary, first, to reverse the idea that women are primarily providers of services and, secondly, to address the structural conditions that reinforce their subjugation in society. Gender issues were addressed by encouraging women's involvement in the management and use of community resources through NRMGs and by increasing their access to credit and training through SHGs.

### **Sustainability**

Promotion of SHGs in beneficiary villages has won widespread, deep and tangible changes in the mindset, attitudes and confidence of women. The very fact that women are learning to read and write is empowering them and this is enhancing the chances of sustainability of project efforts. Training in bookkeeping and accounting further increases their self confidence and they seem to have internalised the new habits of savings and thrift introduced by the project. These achievements are likely to enhance their decision-making and financial management capability in the long run and hence

improve their position both within the household and in the community. This said, the weak economic base of the SHGs remains a concern.

### **Specific changes resulting from the project**

- *Poverty reduction:* The category of “poorest households” has shrunk from 9 742 to 6 455 project-wide, and the category of “better-off households” has increased from 172 to 625. In other words, 18% of the poorest households no longer belong to this category and 2% of the once-poor households now belong to the better-off category.
- *Natural resources management:* 825 NRMGs (with a female membership of over 50%) are managing funds for watershed development and natural resource management activities, including conservation and protection; 10 211ha of *jhum* land has been converted to permanent cultivation, including horticulture crops, and community forests for biodiversity management. About 370 ha of new terracing (370 ha) was installed, and 1 530 ha of small-scale irrigation structures were repaired.
- *Economic benefits.* Cash savings are increasingly common thanks to the fostering of 2 071 SHGs with some 33 056 women as members. Total group savings in January 2005 amounted to USD 280 500. Loans financed through savings, which are usually small (USD 4.50 to USD 67.00, depending on the funds availability), are used for income-generating activities (poultry, pigs, maize, potatoes and weaving) as well as for school fees and consumption. Many economic activities are time-saving for women, in addition to generating more income and improving food availability. Forest management and water conservation activities also reduce their drudgery, e.g. by reducing distances to water sources. Home vegetable gardens, previously little known in the area, have been created by 16 322 households adding substantially to household food supply and sales. Animal husbandry has increased markedly, with 8 162 and 12 334 households, adopting pig and poultry rearing, respectively. Ten villages in the West Garo Hills have established a Cooperative Milk Chain and hope to undertake milk processing and packaging in the near future. The number of fish ponds has increased substantially (176ha); and 470 ha in 547 locations are under fish-rice culture in irrigated terraces.
- *Social benefits.* The SHG movement is particularly effective in bringing village women together and thereby enhancing their social and political status. They are being effective in representing and defending their interests. Overall, women are becoming more confident. Many NRMGs and SHGs are conducting adult education programmes for members and promoting the schooling of girls. Significant achievements with regard to water supplies and education include: the construction of 347 water supply schemes, 134 reservoirs, 34 ponds, 30 ring wells, and 22 120 low cost toilets; as well as 16 school buildings; the provision of school funds and infrastructure for 66 schools.
- The road network was greatly enhanced with 181 km of new roads, 126 km of improved roads, 46 culverts/small bridges and 14 hanging bridges. In addition, 80 villages have been connected to the electrical grid and one micro-hydraulic scheme has been financed and built.

### **What was learned**

- As a result of short time horizons and small markets the value of local produce is easily swamped by large-scale production. This reduces prices and discourages farmers. More attention must therefore be given to the downstream activities of harvesting, handling, storage and presentation.
- **N**RMGs and SHGs can play an active and effective role in mitigating ethnic conflict by educating and building awareness of the advantages of reconciliation, co-existence and mutual support, e.g. through a multi-ethnic forum for peace, reconciliation and development in sensitive zones.
- SHGs promote and reinforce women's solidarity. The project's positive experiences confirm their importance as an instrument for fostering a savings mentality leading to self-reliant and self-sustaining development. It is, however, necessary to strengthen the ties between these groups and the formal rural financial institutions.
- The emergence of unanticipated forms of cooperative venture among some members (i.e. collective farming and rearing) must be identified early on and supported.

- To empower women in societies where the major decision-making and official positions remain the prerogative of men, it is necessary that women's rights to land are secure and legally recognised. Women's land should be recorded in their name in order to protect their investments and earnings.

### **Factors contributing to success**

- The key factor in women's empowerment has been the fostering of SHGs allowing them both to increase and control their savings and to generate new sources of income.
- Both NRMGs and SHGs have conducted adult education programmes for their members, including women, and are encouraging the schooling of girls.
- Another important factor was the proactive encouragement of women's participation in the management and use of community resources (NRMGs) and in the creation of SHGs.

### **Documentation / Bibliography**

Appraisal Report, IFAD, September 1997;

Supervision Report, UNOPS, May 2004

Interim Evaluation ("North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Project for Upland Areas (NERCRMP)", Aide-memoir for Regional Wrap-up Meeting, Shillong, Meghalaya, May 2005.

### **For more information, contact**

Name: Mr. Anshuman Saikia, Country Programme Manager for India

Address: IFAD, via del Serafico, 107, 00142 Rome Italy

Telephone: 39.06.54.591

Email: [a.saikia@ifad.org](mailto:a.saikia@ifad.org)

#### 4.

<b>Project title:</b>	<b><u>Oudomxai Community Initiatives Support Project, People's Republic of Lao.</u></b>
<b>Thematic area/programme:</b>	Agricultural Development
<b>Project duration:</b>	2003-2010 (7 years)
<b>Location:</b>	Oudomxai region
<b>Beneficiaries:</b>	29 000 households (117 000 people) in 187 villages
<b>Executing agency/agencies:</b>	Provincial government of Oudomxai
<b>Implementing agency/agencies:</b>	United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)
<b>Source of funds</b>	Total Cost: USD 21.14 million IFAD Loan: USD 13.41 million Luxembourg: USD 1.77 million World Food Programme: USD 1.76 million

#### Overview

Oudomxai is the second poorest province of Laos, with a poverty incidence of 73.2% and widespread dependence on shifting cultivation and opium production, traditionally a major source of income for the farmers living in the mid-hill and upland areas. The area planted to opium by the indigenous peoples in Oudomxai province had doubled from 1992 to 2000, making it the country's largest producer. As a result of Government's efforts to reduce shifting cultivation and eradicate opium cultivation, income and food security is deteriorating in these areas which are inhabited mainly by indigenous peoples.

The IFAD project aims to reverse this trend and improve their livelihoods by adopting a two-pronged approach: (a) diversifying on- and off-farm activities and (b) developing alternative livelihoods. The area it covers comprises seven districts and 728 villages in the province of Oudomxai, situated in the northwest of Laos. The total population of the area was estimated at 236 525 (38 587 households) in 2000, nearly 90% of them living in rural areas. About 75% of the population is made up of indigenous peoples, the majority of whom live below the national poverty line and depend on shifting cultivation and opium. Four main farming systems can be distinguished: i.e. upland rice, upland rice/opium, lowland rice and upland/lowland rice. The upland-rice-based farming system is the most widespread. Rice growing for household consumption is the main crop under shifting cultivation in the mid-hills and uplands.

#### What was planned

The project's main objective is to improve the capability of poor indigenous families and their organizations to make efficient use of their natural resources and of the services available for their own social and economic development. The approach involves a process of community mobilization and participatory development aimed at increasing farm productivities and hence incomes from stabilised agriculture and non-opium production. The five components are: (a) community development; (b) land tenure, agriculture and natural resource management; (c) rural financial services, (d) rural infrastructure and (e) gender.

#### What was the strategy

The project's gender component recognises the major role that women play both in on- and off-farm activities. The women of the indigenous communities are facing an increasingly critical situation with regard to land ownership. Although the traditional kinship and residence patterns of many groups are matrilineal, with matrilineal inheritance systems, land allocation documents normally carry the name of the husband as the household head and he becomes the legal owner of land inherited by his wife. This situation, has serious implications on women's ability to provide land as collateral for credit.

Gender considerations are mainstreamed in all project activities, through the Lao Women's Union, a mass organization mandated to mobilize women. The Union is providing women with training in on- and off-farm income-generating skills (numeracy and literacy, marketing, management of small business and village development funds) as well as health. The project is also building local drinking water systems that alleviate women's burden and improve family health status.

### **Who was involved**

- United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)
- World Food Programme (WFP)
- Provincial government of Oudomxai
- Department of Planning and Cooperation
- Government of Luxembourg

### **Specific changes resulting from the project**

- Substantial numbers of women are employed by the implementing agencies: 24% of the 296 staff of the project; 20 out of the 69 staff (29%) at provincial level and 52 out of 227 staff (23%) at the district level.
- Under the community development component, 683 people, including 411 women attended 103 days of gender training, and 36% of the participants in all trainings are women.

### **What was learned**

- To ensure that project activities respond to the needs of the target group, community-led development and participatory planning as from the village level should be integral parts both of project design and implementation; and a government agency should be made responsible for coordination.
- Project implementation should be as decentralized as possible to the provincial, district and village levels, and phased in accordance with existing institutional capacity at these levels.
- The issuing of land-use certificates in the name both of wife and husband prior to the planning of irrigation schemes enhances beneficiary participation and builds the sense of ownership needed to ensure that the schemes will be appropriately managed and maintained by the communities or water users associations.

### **Factors contributing to success**

- Strong focus on women
- Provision for a broad range of activities, including gender awareness, income generating activities and study tours.

### **Documentation / Bibliography**

Mainstreaming Gender in IFAD projects in Asia, IFAD, 2000.  
Appraisal Report, IFAD, April 2002.  
Executive Board Document, IFAD, April 2002.

### **For more information, contact:**

Name	Youqiong Wang, Country Programme Manager for Laos
Address:	IFAD, Via del Serafico 107, 00100 Rome, Italy
Telephone:	39.06.54.591
Email	<a href="mailto:y.wang@ifad.org">y.wang@ifad.org</a>

## 5.

<b>Project title:</b>	<b><u>Rural Income Diversification Project in Tuyen Quang Province , Viet Nam.</u></b>
<b>Thematic area/programme:</b>	Rural Development
<b>Project duration:</b>	2002-2008 (6 years)
<b>Location:</b>	Tuyen Quang Province, Northern Uplands Region, Viet Nam
<b>Beneficiaries:</b>	49 000 households
<b>Executing agency/agencies:</b>	Provincial People's Committee of Tuyen Quang Province (PPC)
<b>Implementing agency/agencies:</b>	United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)
<b>Source of funds:</b>	Total Cost: USD 30.43 million IFAD Loan: USD 20.90 million SIDA grant: USD 5.00 million Government: USD 2.70 million Beneficiaries: USD 1.80 million

### Overview

The project area is located in Tuyen Quang Province, in the Northern Uplands Region of Viet Nam, where indigenous peoples account for 74% of all households and 83% of the poor. The province is predominantly mountainous, with altitudes of up to 1 400 m above sea level. The project's target group comprises 49 000 households living in 936 villages in the 66 poorest communes of the province. The Committee for Ethnic Minorities and Mountainous Areas has classified 42 of these communes as "most disadvantaged" because of their mountainous, remote locations and poorly developed infrastructure.

Historically, Vietnamese women have played an important role in national development and they traditionally enjoy a higher status than the women in many other Asian countries. The ongoing transition to a market-based economy is, however, generating gender disparities and erosion of the social gains made by women during the Socialist period. The design and implementation of this IFAD-initiated project therefore views women as a special target group for efforts aimed at improving their productive roles.

### What was planned

The project seeks to improve the socio-economic status of poor upland indigenous peoples, women as well as men, by increasing their capacity and roles in decision-making, providing institutional support and services, enhancing food security, promoting sustainable use of natural resources, and integrating forest-based producers into the market. It has adopted a comprehensive empowerment approach that envisages: (a) a deepening of the decentralisation process that recognises an expanded role for Village Development Boards (VDBs) in needs assessment, prioritisation and implementation; (b) the adoption of highly participatory planning processes; and the (c) introduction of a flexible and demand-driven credit scheme. Throughout design and implementation, women are viewed as a special target group for all five components: (a) micro-finance and micro-enterprise development; (b) upland farming systems extension and research; (c) livestock improvement and animal health; (d) forest land management; and (e) gender.

### What was the strategy

The gender component aims to empower women from indigenous upland communities by improving their access to and control over productive resources. A Women's Livelihood Fund (WLF) established in each of the beneficiary communes assists women in carrying out activities that they have identified themselves with a view to improving their living conditions. Each of the beneficiary villages has a WFL-Village Group. The WFL may be used to fund: any activities that will benefit groups of village women; support for destitute households; and support to education (schools and



short-term vocational training). The planning and management of WFL-funded activities follow a highly decentralised and participatory approach.

### **Who was involved**

- United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)
- Provincial People's Committee of Tuyen Quang Province
- Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA)

### **Specific changes resulting from the project:**

- The membership of self-help groups (SHGs) is made up of 71% women and 71% indigenous groups. The women's SHGs fostered in 2002 and 2003 are developing well and eagerly waiting to receive land.
- Nearly 70% of the 3 300 persons trained in farmer field schools were women.
- Land-use certificates in the names of both spouses are still pending due both to ongoing land exchanges and relocation and to new legislation that has altered the format of the "red books".
- The chief accountant of PPCU is a woman, but only seven of the remaining 22 PPCU staff are women. However, women account for 47% of the staff at district level. Three of the eleven Community Organisers are women.
- 202 project staff and 53 village leaders have undergone training on gender awareness enhancement and gender mainstreaming. Discussions with the implementers at project, district, commune and village levels suggest that both the implementing agencies and target population are fully aware of their responsibilities with respect to gender issue and the corresponding project targets.

### **Sustainability**

- According to the Women's Union in Tuyen Quang, the most successful activity is credit. Reflecting on why women are targeted for collateral-free group-based credit, they reported that: "traditionally, women keep the key to the family's savings box"; "women know how to manage family money", "women don't waste money on drinking or gambling"; "women are creditworthy", "the leaders of women's SHGs see that payments are made in time".
- SHGs with access to project support as agricultural extension, irrigation and credit, have recorded enormous success in improving the economic position of women members and in poverty alleviation.

### **Replication/spin-off effects**

- This is a follow up of a previous project called "Participatory Resource Management Project - Tuyen Quang Province" that was launched between 1994 and 2000.

### **What was learned**

- Specific activities must be designed and implemented in order to reach indigenous peoples and women, and the approach must be as participatory as possible. In particular, the emphasis must be placed on improving their farming systems, on facilitating their sustainable access to forest resources; and on developing extension materials that are better suited to their requirements.
- Impact on women and gender relations will be limited so long as the positions of women within the home and the community remain fundamentally unchanged.
- Women often join SHGs in order to gain access to other support, including information, agricultural extension, irrigation and credit.
- Indigenous women having used and handled loans successfully are best able to convey the purpose, procedure and use of loans to other community members.

- Poverty alleviation measures must take account both of income-based and power-based forms of poverty.
- Women need to improve their managerial skills and education beyond basic literacy and numeracy.
- Indigenous women, in particular, need to develop special skills (e.g. language, literacy) that will allow them to articulate their views and make more positive contributions to their society.
- In order to change gender roles and gender relations, greater emphasis must be placed on women's strategic needs: e.g. gender mainstreaming, dedicated funds for needs identified by the women themselves; capacity-building; and land-use certificates in the names of both spouses. It is particularly important to respond to the perceived needs of women themselves.

### **Obstacles or problems identified during the project**

- Language was a problem because most indigenous women are not confident when speaking the mainstream language; they fear that they will not use the correct words.
- Social norms may limit women's ability to express their priority needs in mixed groups, often because their role within the community is perceived as maintaining social harmony by not raising issues.

### **Factors contributing to success**

- The programme was attentive to the needs of the women themselves, and 10% of the base cost was allocated to gender mainstreaming and improving the livelihoods of women.
- All reports are disaggregated by gender and wealth ranking.

### **Documentation / Bibliography**

- Appraisal Report, IFAD, October 2001;
- Report and Recommendation of the President to IFAD's Executive Board, December 2001
- Mainstreaming Gender in IFAD projects in Asia, IFAD, 2000

### **For more information, contact**

Atsuko Toda	Country Programme Manager for Viet Nam
Address	IFAD, Via del Serafico, 107, 00142 Rome Italy
Telephone:	39.06.54.591
Email	<a href="mailto:at.toda@ifad.org">at.toda@ifad.org</a>

## 6.

<b>Project title:</b>	<b><u>Wulin Mountains Minority-Areas Development Project, People's Republic of China.</u></b>
<b>Thematic area/programme:</b>	Agricultural Development
<b>Project duration:</b>	1999-2004 (5 years)
<b>Location:</b>	Eastern part of Guizhou Province and Western part of Hunan Province, People's Republic of China
<b>Beneficiaries:</b>	390 000 families
<b>Executing agency/agencies:</b>	Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) Ministry of Finance (MOF) World Food Programme (WFP)
<b>Implementing agency/agencies:</b>	Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) and Ministry of Finance (MOF)
<b>Source of funds:</b>	Total Cost: USD 107.25 million IFAD Loan: USD 28.00 million WFP grant: USD 18.80 million Government: USD 55.80 million Beneficiaries: USD 4.60 million

### Overview

Some of China's poorest areas are found in the Wulin Mountains, particularly the eastern part of Guizhou Province and the western part of Hunan Province. The project area focused on the steeper, less fertile, less accessible and less developed mountainous area. It covered 92 of the 239 townships in the two provinces. The prime recipients of support for socio-economic activities and food-for-work were ethnic minorities who account for some 60% of the population estimated at 10 million of the two provinces. The best-represented indigenous peoples are: the Miao (28%), the Dong (14%) and the Tujia (19.4%). Although the target group included all rural households living in the project area, about 390 000 families, priority was given to those living in the more remote and hence poorer villages. Indigenous peoples were specially targeted if found to be structurally worse off than mainstream society, and indigenous women in particular were a major target group due to their low literacy resulting from gender discrimination; weak or lack of access to credit as most of their work was unpaid; and weak participation in leadership.

### What was planned

The project had six main thrusts:

- 1- *Food crop production*: a range of land-improvement activities, including: land levelling and terracing, drainage to eliminate water logging, conversion of dry land to paddies; and amendments to improve less fertile clayey and sandy soils.
- 2- *Livestock and fish production*. technical and financial support for livestock, paddy fish farming and carp cage culture.
- 3- *Cash crop production*: rehabilitation and new plantings of tea, bamboo, *shiitake*, mushrooms, elephant-foot yam, *encomia*, hot pepper and a range of fruit trees.
- 4- *Credit*: short and medium-term loans to individuals and groups, particularly the poorer households and women.
- 5- *Women's programme*: functional literacy and numeracy for 150 000 women aged 15 to 49 years, focused on basic agricultural skills, handling credit, improving nutrition and health. Village-level technical training on the husbandry of annual and perennial food and cash crops; grafting; tea processing; livestock husbandry and fish farming; fertiliser and pesticide use, etc. Township-level sessions (10 days) for special skills training in income-generating activities like raising pigs, growing mushrooms, embroidery, and weaving.
- 6- *Rural infrastructure*: irrigation, drinking water, electrification and roads.

## **What was the strategy**

- For this joint IFAD/WFP project, resources provided by WFP were used to support training programmes for poor women and children (literacy, productive activities, health care) while the proceeds of the IFAD loan were used to finance all other activities.
- A strong gender focus was assured by provisions for: the fostering of women's associations at township, county and prefecture levels; the fostering of federated associations at prefecture and national levels; special attention to women's crafts (embroidery), fish farming, livestock and agriculture; and assisting support services aimed at improving women's health.
- The loan agreement between IFAD and Government clearly stated that women were a major target group (Article 35) and part of the allocations for short-term credit was reserved for women's income generating activities (Article 112).
- Special groups made up of village leaders and farmers, including at least two women, were formed at village level to disseminate information and mobilize local communities.

## **Who was involved**

- World Food Programme (WFP)
- Government of China: Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) and Ministry of Finance (MOF)

## **Specific changes resulting from the project**

- Women's workload reduced by 2-3 hours per day due to improved drinking water supply systems and the introduction of labour/time-saving technologies for women's activities.
- Hygiene and health improved due to improved drinking water systems; training on health, hygiene and nutrition; greater attention to widespread gynaecological disorders during medical checkups as the first step for curative protocols.
- Livestock husbandry by women improved through specialised training.
- Incomes increased by incremental livestock husbandry provide additional cash for food, school fees and clothing.
- Women's self-esteem and social position improved due to improved economic performances and entrepreneurial success.
- Over half (55%) the participants in literacy training in Tongren prefecture were women.
- Although 95% of the loans were used for typically women activities, they were signed in men's names. Neither men nor women were aware that women could sign their own contracts.
- Women accounted for 20% of technical staff and 30% of project staff.
- 75% of the 31 490 participants in health and nutrition training were women.

## **What was learned**

- The specificity of the grassroots stakeholders must be taken into account when designing and implementing projects.
- The fact that women were major beneficiaries of the project does not appear in the latter's records because its formal procedures did not envisage a focus on gender-specific responsibilities. Functional literacy training in Mandarin, including the ability to sign, should have been provided to women and the latter should be assisted in obtaining the individual seals allowing them to sign their own loan contracts.
- Emphasis on organic farming of medicinal herbs would have been a good opportunity to valorise local knowledge and resources, promote high-value products and build awareness on environmental issues.
- Credit alone cannot help the poor: it must be associated with training designed to improve their skills and thereby improve their ability to repay loans.

## **Obstacles or problems identified during the project**

- Although the design envisaged that women would participate in the activities, take out loans and undertake training, participation by Miao women was limited because most of them do not speak standard Chinese and are unable to communicate with outsiders, gain access to information and training, etc.
- Land is a very important constraint for women. Property rights are not based on freehold ownership. Although daughters have inheritance rights to a share of their parents land, they lose those rights if they live elsewhere (e.g. with their husband).
- Women attending literacy training reaped some benefits, but the organisation of day-long sessions was a major problem for them; they also found the teaching to be tedious and difficult to follow (only Mandarin was used); the curriculum was not sufficiently relevant to their world.
- Although fully aware of the advantages for proper education for their children, women over 30 were sceptical of their own ability to benefit from literacy training; they appreciated numeracy training more highly.
- Participants in training often regretted the inability of teachers to speak the local language: this was often the reason why women did not ask questions.
- Teaching methods did not take adequate account of women's special constraints, including higher illiteracy and shortage of time due to heavy daily workloads.

## **Factors contributing to success**

- Strong emphasis on empowering the indigenous minorities, recognising their specific poverty position and issues.
- Implementation by a national team of consultants using technical modules designed during a preparatory phase during which prospective beneficiaries were involved in diagnostic and analytical work using participatory rural appraisal (PRA). Implementation was thus guided and decided by the beneficiaries themselves.
- Emphasis on organic farming had the advantage of valorising local natural resources and helped in reducing the need to use costly fertilizers. The warm climate of these mountainous areas provided an ideal niche for organic farming.

## **Documentation / Bibliography:**

Mid Term Review, IFAD, April 2002.

Appraisal Report for Guizhou, IFAD, October 2001.

Mainstreaming Gender in IFAD projects in Asia, IFAD, 2000.

Appraisal Report for Guizhou, IFAD, August 2000,

For more information, contact:

Name: Thomas Rath, Country Programme Manager for PDR China  
Address: IFAD, Via del Serafico 107, 00142 Rome, Italy  
Telephone: 39.06.54.591  
Email: [t.rath@ifad.org](mailto:t.rath@ifad.org)

# INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND ILO:

## GOOD PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED

### *Latin America*

1.

<b>Project titles:</b>	<b><u>Education for work, employment and rights of indigenous peoples -ETEDPI</u></b>
<b>Thematic area/programme:</b>	Indigenous Education
<b>Project duration:</b>	16 June 2004 - 28 February 2006
<b>Location:</b>	Honduras, Nicaragua and Guatemala
<b>Beneficiaries:</b>	A number of indigenous peoples in Honduras, Nicaragua and Guatemala
<b>Executing agency/agencies:</b>	International Labour Organisation (ILO)
<b>Implementing agency/agencies:</b>	ILO
<b>Source of funds:</b>	The Netherlands

#### **Project on Education for work, employment and rights of indigenous peoples**

The ETEDPI Project gives the highest priority to mainstreaming of gender equality, giving priority to the participation of indigenous women in the educational projects and attending their specific necessities in all of the developed processes and activities.

#### **NICARAGUA**

##### **1. Literacy and Basic Education for the Chorotega Indigenous People in Nicaragua**

The ETEDPI Project, through The Programme of Continuous Education for Youth and Adults, of the Ministry of Education Culture and Sports in Nicaragua, is now undertaking a pilot project in the indigenous communities of San José de Cuzmapa, el Carrizal, San Lucas, Santa Barbara, Litlelpaneca, Totogalpa, and San Antonio de Padua in the department of Madriz, and Mozonte, in the department of Nueva Segovia. Two hundred and twelve Chorotega indigenous persons –91 women, and 121 men - are participating in the programme.

##### **2. Rescue of the Historic Memory and Living abilities of the Chorotega Population.**

The beneficiaries of this project are 779 students - 330 women and 449 men, 22 teachers, 400 families, the Youths Clan (made up of 70 indigenous persons: 55 women and 15 men), and the Monimbó Artisans group. The whole community (constituting approximately 6000 beneficiaries of which 52% are women and 48% are men) will benefit indirectly. This exercise will be carried out in coordination with the Municipality and relevant trade unions.

##### **3. Initiative of Adaptation of the Model of Friendly and Healthy Schools to a Model of “Friendly and Healthy Indigenous School” in Nicaragua**

This project is carried out in the Nucleus of Autonomous Rural Schools- NERA, which includes 9 multi-grade schools; and will benefit 844 students and 38 teachers directly. Indirectly, 25 communal leaders will benefit as well – 13 men and 12 women- as well as the schools’ consultative councils

#### **4. Occupational Strengthening Programme in Nicaragua**

- The training of Indigenous women is to be given the highest priority.
- The work is carried out in coordination with the Women's Programme and the Small and Medium Business Enterprise Programme who supervise the courses, together with the traditional indigenous councils, adapting programmes to the special characteristics of the population of young people and adults concerned, and assisting the target group to access the labour market.

#### **5. Initiative to train tourism micro enterprises in Nicaragua**

This initiative will benefit 50 indigenous, 25 men and 25 women, who aspire to the creation of micro enterprises for communal tourism. The indigenous communities benefited will be: Matagalpa, of the Cacaopera People; Sebaco, San Juan de Oriente, Monimbó and Nindiri of the Chorotega People; Nancimi and Salinas de Nagualapa, of the Nahoia people.

#### **6. "The Women's Economic Agenda" in Nicaragua**

The ETEDPI Project has actively participated in the UNIFEM-UNDP Project also denominated "The Women's Economic Agenda", specifically to incorporate the necessities and particular characteristics of indigenous women in matters of education and employment.

### **HONDURAS**

In Honduras, the Project's counterpart is the *Coordinadora Nacional de Mujeres Indígenas de Honduras-CONAMINH*<sup>2</sup> and the *Confederación de Pueblos Autóctonos de Honduras-CONPAH*<sup>3</sup>, that groups the nine Federations representative of the nine indigenous peoples in the country.

#### **1. Methodology of education for work with indigenous populations.**

Communal Development Planning. A process of evaluation of former processes and projects that pilot communities have participated in has been initiated in order to ensure that the planning process is sustained by the communities' own experiences or necessities, which can be immediate or longer-term. Special consideration was given to the handling of the timeframe of the planning process so that it was in accordance with the communities' own timing patterns and their own socio-organisational dynamics. Together with the National Coordinator of the Indigenous Women of Honduras CONAMINH, self-esteem and motivational chats are developed to promote the participation of indigenous women. The participants are in capacity to develop and show aptitudes for collective endeavour. The products obtained, a Communal Development Plan that includes ideas for Productive and Social Projects, for each one of the participating communities.

Help of the National Institute for Women, in order to initiate joined action to benefit more and in a better way the indigenous women.

### **GUATEMALA**

#### **1. Literacy training**

---

<sup>2</sup> Honduran National Indigenous Women's Coordinating Organization

<sup>3</sup> Honduran Autochthonous Peoples Confederation

The literacy training process benefits 9 communities from 5 Departments in the country, belonging to the two most numerous peoples in the country: Q'eqchi' and K'iche'. Even though it was expected that 75% of the beneficiaries would be women, the data indicates that female participation is approximately 60% of the total, out of a population of 180 persons. Access to literacy training in remote communities is essential for them to obtain an educational level that will allow them to access other capacity-building courses in tourism and to be able to comprehend basic aspects of administration and to carry out their projects, in order to become sustainable.

**2. Support through *Ak' Tenamit* for the development of tourist services through a career as an expert in sustainable tourism.**

Beneficiaries are students from 10 Q'eqchi' communities in the Departments of Izabal, Alta Verapaz, and Petén. Forty-seven percent of these are women.

**3. Creation of the National Federation of Communal Tourism in Guatemala (FENATUCGUA)**

The FENATUCGUA has adopted a policy of mainstreaming of Decent Work, especially its aspects which concern gender equity and a definite support to the prevention of child labour in the participating projects on communal tourism.

***ACHIEVEMENTS***

- An active participation of indigenous women in education processes and in the productive projects was achieved.
- The Project has involved and benefited the indigenous population of the full spectrum of different ages

***CHALLENGES***

- Systematic, long-term action is required to achieve the results we seek with regard to the participation of indigenous women.

***FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO SUCCESS***

Consultation with the representative indigenous organizations.

A relationship based on trust, mutual respect and the reciprocity of the indigenous beneficiaries was the basis for the implementation of the activities. Visions, priorities and interests were reconciled, for example a requirement in the evaluation of our project is the measurement of incidence, an aspect not seen as a priority by the beneficiaries, as well as observations on the gender relationships, which can be viewed as interference in the indigenous communities.

**For more information, contact:**

Gabriela Olguín Martínez, Coordinator

[olguin@sj.oit.or.cr](mailto:olguin@sj.oit.or.cr)



2.

<b><i>Project title:</i></b>	<b><u>Legal Empowerment of the Indigenous Peoples in Central America</u></b>
<b><i>Thematic area/program:</i></b>	Rights Promotion
<b><i>Project duration:</i></b>	
<b><i>Location:</i></b>	Central America
<b><i>Beneficiaries:</i></b>	Indigenous women in Central America
<b><i>Executing agency/agencies:</i></b>	ILO Sub-Regional Office in San José, Costa Rica
<b><i>Implementing agency/agencies:</i></b>	Enlace Continental de Mujeres Indígenas (Continental Network of Indigenous Women), Proyecto “Mujer y Acuerdo de Paz” (Project “Woman and Peace Agreement”) of UNDP Guatemala
<b><i>Source of funds</i></b>	The United Nations Fund for International Partnerships (UNFIP)

## **Overview**

There still exists considerable need to build the awareness and capacity of indigenous peoples to learn and protect their rights as outlined in various international treaties, most significantly ILO Convention No. 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, 1989’.

A further challenge is the tension that exists for indigenous women seeking to claim both collective rights as indigenous peoples and also individual rights as women. By pressing for separate rights and equal treatment by gender, indigenous women activists are often accused of undermining the unity of indigenous movements advocating for collective rights. Furthermore, there is uncertainty as to the extent to which the right to gender equality infringes upon indigenous cultural traditions and customs. Hence there is also a need to translate the rights of women as outlined in international treaties into culturally relevant concepts and priorities.

## **What was planned**

The ILO project “Legal Empowerment of the Indigenous Peoples in Central America” was created to improve the capacity of indigenous peoples and their organizations to learn about and defend their legitimate rights at the national and international levels. It was also intended to stimulate discussion regarding the specific challenges to indigenous women and resolving the above-mentioned tensions between their collective and individual rights.

- The project grants the maximum importance to the full and equitable participation of indigenous women in all due activities. Special and constant efforts will be made to insure that this target will be achieved.
- Indigenous women will identify the need to develop contexts such as indigenous persons and women; they could explore and define their peculiarities inherent in this dual identity. The project will help them to specify this aspiration, especially in relation to the fundamental principle defined at the Convention 169, which gives the priority to recognized international human rights.

Workshops / meetings / demonstrations carried out  
Didactic material especially addressed to indigenous women

Regional training program  
Negotiation process led by indigenous women

- Public entities such as the Ombudsman Offices (Attorneys, Commissioners, or Ombudsman) will incorporate in a more effective way, the most important topics for indigenous women in their specific programs on gender and training.

**Workshops / meetings / demonstrations carried out**

***The Third Continental Meeting of Indigenous Women.*** The project aided and financially supported this space where 72 indigenous women from 17 countries of the American continent participated in the Continental Network of the Americas. The overall objectives of the meeting were: Empowering the participation of indigenous women at community, national and international levels, providing at each level the unique perspective of indigenous women.

*Objectives:* Strengthening organizational and leadership know-how among the indigenous women; and strengthening the communications within the Continental Network of Indigenous Women.

*The issues that were discussed were:* The declaration and Beijing Platform of Action, facing Beijing + 5, and the 2000 World March of Women. Nevertheless and due to the interest expressed by the participants themselves, a space was dedicated to the discussion of the ILO Convention 169.

***The Continental Demonstration of Indigenous Women.*** At the end of this event the indigenous women marched through the principal streets of Panama protesting against poverty and the violence inflicted on indigenous women and indigenous peoples, as well as demanding the ratification of ILO Convention 169 by the countries that have not yet done so.

*Among the achievements we find:*

In the Third Meeting the women expressed the difficulties to carry out a Commission for Training of the Continental Network of Indigenous Women. That was the first step that concluded with the Regional Training Program, which was the direct outcome in answer to this request.

***Workshop “Negociando nuestra autonomía” (“Negotiating our Autonomy”).*** It took place in Coronado, San José, Costa Rica aimed at indigenous women of the Ngöbe Buglé people, organized by the ACONAMIC -Asociación Coordinadora Nacional de Mujeres Indígenas y Campesinas (National Association of Indigenous Peoples and Rural Women).

*Among the achievements we find:*

26 trained women that represent the communities of Alto San Antonio, Río Claro, Punta Burica, Alto Abrojo Montezuma, Compe Burica, and Guatuso, who will replicate the workshop experience sharing the acquired knowledge with their communities.

Photographs: Women’s Workshops. Ngöbe Women

***Workshop “Pregnancy among Adolescents and Convention 169”.*** It took place in the community of Narasgandup Bipi, in the Autonomous Territory of Kuna Yala, Panama, within the context of the Encuentro Sectorial de Mujeres Kunas “OLOWAILP” (Regional Meeting of the Kuna Women).

*Among the achievements we find:*

44 indigenous women from the Kunas attended the workshop. They analyzed the social problem of the high incidence of adolescent pregnancy in their state (comarca) from their own cultural and political cosmovision establishing a relationship to the lack of acknowledgment of their legal rights as part of an indigenous group of people and rallied for a quick ratification of the ILO Convention 169.

***The Workshop on Legal Training intended for indigenous women belonging to the Tolupan people in Honduras.*** It took place in the community of El Siriano, in the department of Yoro, Honduras from May 16<sup>th</sup> 18, 2000. The workshop was co-organized by AKISTIMIURA KEP, Unidad de la Mujer Tolupan de Yoro (Unit of the Tolupan Woman of Yoro) and Francisco Morazán, and AKTY-FM (the leading organizer of the Tolupan women). The training centered on the following subjects: (i) The

rights of indigenous peoples. ILO (International Labor Organization) and the indigenous peoples: its competence, past record, and the rights proclaimed by Convention 169 and the mechanisms for its implementation. (ii) The rights of indigenous women. a) The uses and customs and our rights as indigenous women; b) The human rights of indigenous women; c) The law on domestic violence and equal opportunity in Honduras, and d) The Beijing platform for Action especially in regards to indigenous women.

*Among the Achievements we find:*

56 trained women from 24 indigenous peoples, who will be multipliers of this acquired knowledge within their communities.

Photo: Tolupana women, Honduras

**Legal Workshop “Conozcamos nuestros derechos” (“Let’s Know our Rights)** aimed at indigenous women. It took place in the city of Bilwi, in the Autonomous Region of the North Atlantic, with the objective of training indigenous women from the Miskito people from the communities Sandy Bay, Pahra, Awastara, Krukira, Tuapi, Wawa Bar, Karata and Haulover.

*The issues that were addressed were:* Awareness on the issue of gender and gender violence; Psychosocial analysis of gender violence; Socio-legal analysis of gender violence and; Analysis of ILO Convention 169. The workshop was carried out with simultaneous translation to the Miskito language, learning materials about indigenous women’s rights were distributed and also translated into Miskito: “Nosotras y nuestras identidades” (“We Women and Our Identities), “Nosotras y nuestros liderazgos” (“We Women and Our Leadership”), and the text and explanation of Law No. 230, Reforms and Additions made to criminal law to prevent and punish violence within the family.

*Among the Achievements are:*

86 community leaders and women organized into the Asociación de Mujeres Indígenas de la Costa Atlántica (Indigenous Women’s Association of the Atlantic Coast) -AMICA, who will replicate the experience and share the acquired knowledge within their 43 communities.

Photo: women’s workshop, Nicaraguan women.

**Workshop on Discrimination toward Indigenous Women.** It took place in Guatemala in the four linguistic regions.

*Among the Achievements are:*

- As a result of the workshops a popular notebook was produced: Using the Maya Dress is a Right. Available on the Internet at: [www.oit.or.cr/unfip](http://www.oit.or.cr/unfip)

**A Workshop with Indigenous Organizations.** Emphasis on the Indigenous Woman’s Rights, organized by the Ministry of Labor.

*Among the Achievements are:*

- 30 women from the Patzún community are now informed on a series of laws that recognize the rights of women.
- Technical Assistance for the Specialization Course for Women and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples within the Inter-American System. Organized by the Centro de Estudios e Información de la Mujer Multiétnica (Center for Studies and Information on the Multiethnic Woman) of the Universidad de las Regiones Autónomas de la Costa Caribe Nicaragüense-CEIMM-URACCAN (University of the Autonomous Regions of the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua).

*Among the achievements are:*

45 indigenous women from 12 Latin American countries knowledgeable on the Inter-American System for the Protection of Human Rights, as well as the Control Mechanisms and Applications of the Conventions and the Recommendations of the ILO Agreements.

### **Learning Materials that Specifically Target Indigenous Women**

The project carried out in accordance with the indigenous women themselves has been developing its own conceptualization on the specific rights of indigenous women. Furthermore, aware of the inequalities that occur in exercising the individual rights that indigenous women have –especially the economic, social and cultural rights – it has created guides, manuals and videos specially aimed at women who are not organized, who live in communities and do not have access to the information on the rights that are duly their own.

Video "Here I am , Here We Are"-Specific Rights of Indigenous Women-

*Gabriela Olguín*

A Learning Guide for the Workshops for Training of Indigenous Women and Understanding the Video.

*Gabriela Olguín*

I Am an Indigenous Woman and I Know my Rights.

*Doris Bill y Gabriela Olguín.*

Using the Maya Costume Is a Right.

*Lina Barrios*

## Regional Training Program



This is the outcome of an important synergy between the UNDP/Guatemala and the culmination of some consultancies, validations, meetings, etc. that took place over a period of approximately 32 months, for the creation of the Regional Program. This program was created to support the commitment of the subregional commission for training of indigenous women -Enlace Continental (Continental Network) - and as part of the agreements committed to during the Tercera Reunión Inter-Institucional (Third Interagency Meeting).

Following is a chronological outline of the process developed for the creation of the program mentioned above.

**March 2000:** The III Continental Summit of Indigenous Women that took place in Panama City. The Enlace Continental de Mujeres Indígenas (Continental Network of Indigenous Women) is a space for dialogue and exchange, deliberation and the opportunity for indigenous women to put forth their own proposals; it is organized by three sub-networks corresponding to northern, central and southern and works through the commissions. These are: the Commission for Training, Commission of Commercialization/Marketing and Copyrights, the Commission of International Instruments and the Commission of Communications.

During this meeting Honduras and Guatemala are selected to implement the Training Commission of the central subregion of the network.

**May 2000:** The Third Interagency Meeting on Indigenous People takes place in San José, Costa Rica. Among the agreements made at this meeting is one on the exchange of information between the agencies regarding gender and on the work with the regional networks of indigenous women. A follow-up committee is created with UNDP-Guatemala, ILO Project, IICA, GTZ and Fondo Indígena (Indigenous Fund), maintaining the ILO project as the link.

**2000:** UNDP-Guatemala and the ILO Project initiate conversations with the Enlace Continental de Mujeres Indígenas (Continental Network of Indigenous Women) to assist in the implementation of a training program for indigenous women of the region.

**September-October 2000:** Indigenous women organizations of the region that belong to Enlace Continental (Continental Network) are initially consulted and others regarding their needs in terms of training.

**November 2000:** The UNDP-Guatemala and the ILO Project hire a consultant for the systematization of the data results and the production of a proposal from the Regional Training Program for Indigenous Women.

**December 2000:** The validation Workshop is held: "Pensando el Futuro del Liderazgo de la Mujer Indígena: una Invitación al diálogo y propuesta" (Thinking about the Future of Indigenous Women's Leadership: an Invitation to a Dialogue and a Proposal), in Guatemala City to discuss and facilitate input for the Regional Plan for Training of Indigenous Women. The meeting was sponsored by the ILO Project and UNDP/Guatemala. The workshop made use of an entertaining dynamics that gave way for the attendees to envision future scenes as indigenous women and as well as belonging to an indigenous peoples. Some 30 women from Central American countries and Mexico attended, belonging to indigenous organizations that in turn are part of the Continental Network, as well as other indigenous organizations. Mexico becomes part of the subregional network as it does not have a commission for training of the northern region.

**June 2001:** After receiving the input given by the women themselves at the Workshop the final

proposal of the Regional Program for Training of indigenous women.

**March 2002:** There is now an educational guide for the training workshops and a video to go along with it on the specific rights of the indigenous women, which is the result of the December 2000 workshop.

**October 2002:** The official presentation of the Regional Program for Training, to the Continental Network of Indigenous Women.

### **Negotiation Processes Lead by Indigenous Women**

In Costa Rica, in the indigenous territory of Rey Curré, the “Mujeres con espíritu de lucha” (“Women with Spirit to Fight”) is the organization created to tackle the threat of the construction of the Hydroelectric Reservoir in their territory and is an example of the negotiation processes supported by the Project, that presently have women as their leaders.

The “Mujeres con espíritu de lucha” (“Women with Spirit to Fight”) have defined the premises of their political process in opposition to the hydroelectric Project. The negotiating team in Rey Curré (Objective 1), is made up primarily of women.

### **Ombudsman Office for Indigenous Woman in Guatemala**

The only country that has an ombudsman office for indigenous woman is Guatemala. The agreement to create a ombudsman office was subscribed in the Agreement on Identity and Rights of the Indigenous Peoples, in which the national government promised to promote the dissemination and faithfully abide by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and other legal instruments relating to the rights of indigenous peoples, ratified by the government of Guatemala, creating an indigenous ombudsman office in which women who are represented should participate and this ombudsman office should include among other services that of Legal Aid and Social Services.

The project offered technical assistance to the above-mentioned ombudsman office in the execution of the project “Promotion of the Rights of Indigenous Women” in the 24 linguistic communities, sponsored by UNICEF/Guatemala. The technical assistance given was to develop the strategy for consulting on the specific rights of indigenous women within the 24 linguistic communities of Guatemala, and for this purpose the following activities took place:

- Training on women’s human rights, the rights of indigenous peoples and specific rights of indigenous women, for those facilitators in charge of the process of consultation and training.
- Producing a workbook for consulting and training on the specific rights of indigenous women (rights that are inherent to indigenous women because they belong to a people that are differentiated from the rest of the national society), and an evaluation on the existing inaccessibility for indigenous women to exercise certain of their human rights which are considered universal; as well as a workbook to systematize the data from the mentioned consultation-training.

*Among the achievements are:*

The conclusions arrived at were useful to the Ombudsman Office of indigenous women of Guatemala in obtaining an analysis of the real situation of indigenous women in their communities, aimed at taking care of situations where the indigenous woman is particularly vulnerable, defenseless and discriminated in this country.

**What was the strategy?**

- To develop a systematic program to promote: analysis and reform of existing legislation, legal training, and broad-based interaction involving indigenous organizations, public authorities and other social actors in the legal field.
- One of the outputs to promote awareness of indigenous rights, especially indigenous women's rights was the development of an illustrated guide to be used by indigenous peoples.
- Another output of this project was a forum for a number of indigenous women's organisations in Central America and Mexico, including a conference held in December 2000 in Guatemala called "*Pensando el futuro del liderazgo de la mujer indígena, una invitación al diálogo y la propuesta*" ("Thinking about the Future Leadership of the Indigenous Woman, an Invitation for dialogue and a proposal") and a resulting video.
- The video is intended to contribute to local discussions on the topic of indigenous women's rights and facilitate the collective search for solutions.

### **Who was involved**

ILO Sub-Regional Office in San José, Enlace Continental de Mujeres Indígenas (Continental Network of Indigenous Women), Proyecto "Mujer y Acuerdo de Paz" (Project "Woman and the Peace Agreement") of UNDP Guatemala

Specific changes resulting from the project (outputs and impact)

The project in its 46 months of promoting activities has obtained important and interesting results, among which we can highlight:

1. The working capital we have is one of confidence and faith that stems from the indigenous peoples and organizations of the Subregion.
2. Numerous indigenous organizations of the Subregion have been able to benefit from the training workshops offered by the project.
3. We have shortened the distance between discourse and action in the exercise of the rights of indigenous people.
4. Some of the trained legal groups have initiated actions in the National Courts to expound the cases they have been confided with by the indigenous organizations and/or communities as are the cases of Panama and Costa Rica that presently await the resolutions of the Courts in their countries. They have presented the case for the defense of indigenous territory from the construction of the Hydroelectric Reservoir of Tabasará II and the demarcation and the transfer of the land register and of the indigenous territories of Boruca and Terraba respectively.
5. Other groups have opted for an activist strategy and/or negotiation. This is the case of the Equipo Legal de Guatemala y Costa Rica (Legal Group of Guatemala and Costa Rica), the Defensa del Bosque Comunal de Totonicapán (Defense of the Comunal Forest of Totonicapán) and the approval of the Ley del Desarrollo Autónomo de los Pueblos Indígenas (Law for the Autonomous Development of Indigenous People) respectively.
6. Nevertheless, we have already concluded a lawsuit aided by the Project, with a successful outcome. The case in point is the appeal to the Constitutional Court, promoted by the organized group and the communities affected by the oil concessions in the Costa Rican Caribbean. The Constitutional Court of this country in the court decision 2000-08019, of September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2000, annuls the allocation to MKL XPLORATION INC. (Resolution R-702 of the Ministry of Environment and Energy– MINAE) and rules that the government should proceed to consult with the indigenous peoples concerned, according to Convention No. 169. Furthermore there is a request to the government for compensation of possible damages.
7. The production of educational materials is noteworthy. Among them there is the Serie Guías Legales (Series of Legal Guides), Serie Normativa (Normative Series) and Jurisprudencia Indígena (Indigenous Jurisprudence), the teaching materials to create awareness on the rights of indigenous women and/or aimed specifically at them, as well as other specialized studies

that were produced in support of particular demands, as is the case of the Study: “Condiciones Laborales de los Buzos Miskitos de Nicaragua” (“Working Conditions of the Miskito Divers of Nicaragua”), and the Condiciones de las Comunidades Indígenas de El Salvador (Conditions of the Indigenous Communities of El Salvador), after the earthquake of 2001.

8. The educational material has been distributed to the indigenous peoples and organizations of the Subregion, and on many occasions has been distributed also to indigenous organizations and peoples of Mexico and South America, who have requested copies.
9. Initial steps have been taken for the establishment of alliances to bring indigenous organizations and labor organizations closer together for the use of the ILO, Control Mechanisms and Application of the Conventions and Resolutions in the defense of indigenous peoples rights.
10. Efforts were made to train and create awareness to public authorities in the countries covered by the project, attaining significant breakthroughs. A ruling was obtained from the Attorney General of Panama, recommending a discussion on Convention No. 169 at a plenary session of the Legislative Assembly.
11. The Executive Power in Panama, has agreed with the Indigenous Congresses that it will submit Convention No. 169 to the consideration of the Legislative Assembly at a plenary.
12. Another achievement was the full support of the Indigenous Parliament of the legislative lawsuits of the indigenous peoples of Nicaragua.
13. Due to the work that has been accomplished the Legislative Assemblies of different countries regularly consult the Project, regarding the congruence of the different Laws and the Legal Instruments that can be applied to indigenous affairs.
14. Indigenous peoples and organizations of the Subregion, regularly consult the Project regarding the relevance of their legal strategies. This situation often surpasses the subregion since on various occasions indigenous organizations or state organisms of Mexico and South America have been given legal advice.
15. The work that the Project has carried out in empowering indigenous women’s organizations and attending their specific needs is remarkable.
16. Numerous workshops for training and dissemination aimed at indigenous women have been organized.
17. A Regional Training Program for the Continental Network of Indigenous Women has been developed to support the Commission for Training- Central American Region of the Continental Network of Indigenous Women.
18. An interesting discussion and analysis has been initiated on the specific rights of indigenous women.
19. Educational material on the rights of indigenous women has been developed for or aimed directly at them.
20. Also there has been technical support and advice to state organisms that were designated to attend to particular situations where indigenous women’s rights may be vulnerable, defenseless or discriminated, as is the case of the Ombudsmen Office of Indigenous Women of Guatemala).
21. Dissemination of indigenous peoples’ rights and laws has been encouraged through educational material, videos, and public announcements through radio to attain a higher involvement of the society at a national level in recognizing and respecting these rights.
22. People and organizations of the Subregion, regularly consult the website of the project. This situation often surpasses the subregion since on various occasions indigenous organizations or state organisms of Mexico and South America have been given legal advice or educational materials.
23. The creation of important synergies with other Agencies of the United Nations, especially with UNDP, UNICEF, and the OHCHR in Guatemala, and the International Institute of Human Rights of the University of DePaul.
24. A minimum Agenda for the Defense of Indigenous Peoples Rights was developed to support organizations and indigenous peoples in their strategies for the defense, respect and fulfillment of the rights as individuals and collectivities, even after the Project was concluded.



## **Replication/spin effects**

We are confident that the knowledge passed on to the legal teams and indigenous leaders who participated in the various workshops and general meetings of the project will be repeated to other groups and persons, in such a way that each time there is a greater number of indirect beneficiaries of the Project.

We believe that the legal teams will continue advising the indigenous peoples and organizations and will conclude in a satisfactory manner their legal proceedings.

**The educational materials generated by the Project are lasting products that will continue being useful to the indigenous peoples and their advisors in the creation of effective strategies and are powerful tools in protecting and safeguarding their rights.**

The labor union organizations represent essential spokespersons in the ILO's Mechanisms for Control and Implementation of the Norms and Recommendations, and therefore the synergies between these and the indigenous organizations are vital. The project initiated a reconciliation to bring them closer; it would be very advantageous to continue this unification process which would really be novel and would contribute to the fulfillment of its fundamental objectives, through powerful strategies between them.

This is a unique experience in the subregion and it would be highly desirable for the ILO with headquarters in San José – the one which has generated noticeable visibility and credibility on the subject- to continue its support of the indigenous peoples and organizations. Consequently there is a need for concerted efforts to consolidate and expand the activities in this field, and meet the challenge of mainstreaming these legal provisions so that they will reap tangible benefits in the everyday life of the indigenous peoples.

The experience accumulated by the project has demonstrated to us that it is necessary to have a more integral strategy that will take into consideration the aspects of generating income and economic empowerment, together with the recognition and exercise of the rights of indigenous peoples.

The principles and fundamental rights are vested with a special importance and meaning in the work sphere for the members of indigenous peoples, due to the fact that they face social exclusion and discrimination. The project has made efforts to apply the new integral perspective for the launch of International Labor Standards, and their use by the members of the indigenous peoples, especially the fundamental conventions strategically linked to the indigenous affairs. It would be of utmost relevance to continue with this strategy and be able to focus the different actions of the office within this vision.

## **What was learned**

The prominent use of graphics and simple format highlight the importance of adapting the means of conveying information according to the intended audience. In this case, the high illiteracy rate amongst indigenous peoples requires a more graphic format.

## **For more information, contact:**

Gabriela Olguín Martínez, Coordinator  
[olguin@sjo.oit.or.cr](mailto:olguin@sjo.oit.or.cr)

# INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND UNFPA: GOOD PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED

## *Latin America*

1.

<b>Project titles:</b>	<b><u>Strengthening of the Ngöbe Indigenous People family and improvement of its Sexual and Reproductive Health. PAN/00/P01</u></b> (Fortalecimiento de la Familia y Mejoramiento de Salud Sexual y Reproductiva del Pueblo Ngöbe)
<b>Thematic area/programme:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sexual and Reproductive Health.</li><li>• Gender equality and empowerment of Women.</li><li>• Interactions between population dynamics, sustainable development and poverty.</li></ul>
<b>Project duration:</b>	2000-2005
<b>Location:</b>	Ngöbe Indigenous People Territory, Panama
<b>Beneficiaries:</b>	32 communities in the Districts of Nole Duima and Mirono, Indigenous People Territory, Panama.
<b>Executing agency/agencies:</b>	Ministry of Health Panama, Regional Direction, Ngöbe Indigenous People Territory
<b>Implementing agency/agencies:</b>	Ministry of Health Panama The Ngöbe Women Association (ASMUNG)
<b>Source of funds:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• MOH: 394,548.00 USD</li><li>• ASMUNG 23, 025.00 USD</li><li>• UNFPA 299, 460.00 USD</li><li>• UNV: 50, 940.00 USD</li><li>• Fondo Canada Panama: 32,018.00 USD</li><li>• Budget planned: \$ 799,991.00</li><li>• Budget executed: \$ 1. 321 416.13</li></ul>

### Overview

Following the 1990 demographic census, the indigenous people of Panama represent 8.3% of the total population. The Ngöbe People are the larger group with roughly 110, 080 people (Contraloria 2005) living in the Ngöbe Territory. In the year 1997, it was estimated that 95 % of the Indigenous population was poor and 86% of these were extremely poor. This situation will worsen in the following years and in 2003 it was considered that 98.4 % of the indigenous people were poor and 90% were extremely poor.

The maternal mortality in rural areas including indigenous areas was in the year 2000 estimated to be 90/100,000 live born compared to 30/100,000 live born in urban areas. This situation will worsen in following years with ratios as high as 130/100 000 live born in rural areas while staying stable in urban areas. In the Ngöbe territory in 2003 maternal mortality ratio was 283/100 000 live born.

Other great inequities were observed in indigenous territories, for example:

<b>Indicator 1997 (Ministry of Economy and finance, Census, 1997)</b>	<b>Total country</b>	<b>Urban</b>	<b>Rural Indigenous</b>
Average time needed to reach a health service	33 minutes	25 minutes	59 minutes
Birth attended by medical doctor	82, 3 %	95, 2 %	24, 9 %
Birth attended by traditional birth attendant	4, 7 %	0, 6 %	21, 8 %
Birth attendant by nurse or auxiliary nurse	4, 1 %	2, 7 %	6, 5 %
Birth attended by family members	8, 1 %	1, 1 %	44, 6 %
Birth attended by others	0, 8 %	0, 3 %	2, 2 %
Birth attended in health institution public or private	86, 4 %	98, 5 %	32, 2 %
Birth attended at home	13, 2 %	1, 4 %	67, 9 %
Birth attended other place	0, 3 %	0, 2 %	0, 0 %

Fecundity rates in the Indigenous populations were as high as 5, 4 % as compared to the national average of 2,7 % (World Bank 2000).

The literacy rate among the Ngöbe population is 21 % while the average number of schooling years is 3. This situation is worse for Ngöbe girls whom are expected to marry and bear children soon after their puberty.

### **What was planned ?**

*Goal:* To contribute to advance the quality of life of the Ngöbe women, couples, families improving Sexual and Reproductive Health, reducing gender inequalities in the family and the community and promoting a reduction in maternal mortality ratios.

*Objective:* To contribute to improve Sexual and Reproductive Health with emphasis on preventing maternal mortality in 1000 families in 32 communities of the Nole Duima, Mirono districts, in the Ngöbe territory.

#### *Intermediary results:*

A network of health agents is strengthened to support the Primary Health Care system and to promote Family, Community, Sexual and Reproductive Health, and Gender themes in the area.

The access to and quality of the health services in the area has improved

Government institutions, national and local actors are committed to develop and implement policies and actions with the objective to improve health services for the indigenous populations.

### **What was the strategy?**

- To adopt a participatory approach
- To develop alliances with local authorities
- To follow an integrated approach to Sexual and Reproductive Health
- To work through the Ngöbe Women Association to promote the project among the communities
- To prepare the Ngöbe Women Association to sustain the project when it is over.
- To implement Information Communication and Education activities
- To produce IEC material in Family and Community, Sexual and Reproductive Health , Gender themes

- To train 60 health agents/promoters in Family and Community, Sexual and Reproductive Health, Gender themes (traditional birth attendants, teachers, traditional practitioners, young people...).
- To improve the delivery of health services through:
  - The equipment of the primary health care network
  - The training of health workers in Family and Community, Sexual and Reproductive Health, Gender themes
  - The improvement of the information registration
  - The promotion of the expansion of the primary health care network
  - The strengthening of the referral system to the secondary level

### Who was involved?

MOH	IFARHU ( Instituto de Formación y Aprovechamiento de Recursos Humanos)
ASMUNG	INAFOR (Instituto Nacional de Formación Profesional)
UNFPA	Ministry of Youth and the Family (Now Ministry of Social Development)
UNV	Ministry of Education
Fondo Canada Panama	ANCEC (Asociación Nacional Contra el Cáncer)
German Technical Cooperation	Medical Association of Panama
Universidad Latina	University McGill
FEPSEM (Federación Panameña de Estudiantes de Medicina)	University of Chiriqui
APLAF(A Asociación Panameña para el Planeamiento de la Familia)	Secondary level referral Hospital San Felix
FORTUNA S:A. (Private Hydroelectric Canadian Company)	Tertiary level referral Hospital Jose Domingo De Obaldia
ACDI	University McGill

### Specific changes resulting from the project

- An Information Communication and Education Program on themes such as Family and Community, Sexual and Reproductive Health, Gender adapted for the Ngöbe indigenous population.
- Significant technical, administrative and personal empowerment of the Ngöbe Women Association.
- Strengthening of a number of Primary Health Care Health Units ( more staff, more resources, better equipment , more knowledge, more activities, development of a basic obstetric emergency center )
- Contribution to the formulation of the National Plan to Reduce Maternal and Neonatal Mortality (2004-5).
- Building of national and international alliances to promote Sexual and Reproductive Health among Indigenous People
- Improved Sexual and Reproductive Health in the areas of the project.

### Sustainability

Vulnerability to:

- Changes in government and government priorities
- Lack of a General Development Plan for the Ngöbe Indigenous territory which articulates Sexual and Reproductive Health themes to Poverty reduction themes.
- High rotation of health staff and weak leadership from the Ministry of Health

## Replication/spin effects

The project continues under IFAD –UNFPA -funds to strengthen its basis and expand the population covered. At the end of the second phase, a culturally sensitive, civil society- government co-managed evidence based and strong model to address Sexual and Reproductive Health issues for the Ngöbe, indigenous populations, in difficult to reach areas will be available. National Health authorities in Panama will possess tools to orient public policies and to expand experiences to improve Sexual and Reproductive Health for indigenous populations in difficult to reach areas. The project will contribute to improve access to quality Sexual and Reproductive Health Services and to strengthen the demand for Sexual and Reproductive Health for indigenous populations in difficult to reach areas. The ultimate goal is that all indigenous couples and individuals in difficult to reach areas, enjoy good reproductive health including FP and sexual health throughout life

## What was learned?

- Need to take into account large distances, difficult terrain, rainy weather and poor communication, as well as seasonal migration of indigenous people for farming purposes, in the planning of the project activities
- Need to supervise systematically all project activities
- Need more project **personal to work at community level in** such a difficult terrain
- Need permanent and systematic advocacy on sexual and reproductive themes to meet larger acceptance
- Men need to be targeted in the project activities.
- Sexual and Reproductive Health issues need to be articulated to general development programs in indigenous population's areas.
- Better results are achieved when Community and Health Services work together.
- Better results are achieved when the commitment of all authorities, at all levels is secured. Sexual and Reproductive Health should be a National Priority.

## Factors contributing to success?

The project developed a model with a human face in which the Ngöbe Women Association played an outstanding role, supported by the UNFPA, health, community, and project staff. The perseverance and commitment of these individuals and organizations to change the alarming sexual and reproductive health situation of the Ngöbe indigenous population contributed to sustain the project through difficult periods.

The Coordination among interested partners about sexual and reproductive health specifically on the Traditional Birth attendant training.

## Obstacles or problems identified during the project?

- Sexual and Reproductive Health of the indigenous people only transmitted from the occidental point of view. Limited number of facilitators with the knowledge of indigenous people sexual and reproductive health practices or cosmo-vision.
- No intercultural model of attention in health has being developed nor is being taught in schools, medical /nursing training institutions
- Despite the empowerment and strengthening of the Ngöbe Women Association, expansion of its membership and decentralization of its management is needed to foster future growth and sustainability.
- Insufficient incentives for health agents/promoters.
- Traditional birth attendants not fully accepted due to cultural and institutional factors
- Incipient social organization and audit capacity in the areas of sexual and reproductive health
- Weak information and record systems at the project and health services levels

- Weak coordination between the Regional Health Directions
- **Poor reference** and articulation between the different levels of attention in the health system.
- Insufficient Health Budget for the Ngöbe Indigenous territory
- Insufficient budget for Sexual and Reproductive Health Programs
- Discrimination of indigenous populations
- Very limited access to information on sexual and reproductive health reaches the youth.

#### **Documentation / Bibliography:**

Documento de Proyecto PAN/00/P01 entre el Gobierno de Panamá y el Fondo de Población de las Naciones Unidas, 2000

Evaluación del Proyecto PAN/00/P01 Noviembre-Diciembre 2002

Acta de la reunión tripartita final Abril 2005

Informe de sistematización del Proyecto PAN/00/P01 Junio 2005

Primero y segundo informes sobre los Objetivos del Milenio. Panama.

#### **For more information, contact:**

**Name:** Martha Icaza, Program Officer UNFPA Panama

**Address:** Casa de las Naciones Unidas, Ciudad Del Saber, Edificio # 155, Apartado 6314 Panama 5, Panama

**Telephone:** (507)-302-46 85

**Fax:** (507) 302-46 86

**Electronic address:** [micaza@unfpa.org](mailto:micaza@unfpa.org)

NB1: the Traditional Birth Attendants (TBA) were trained to:

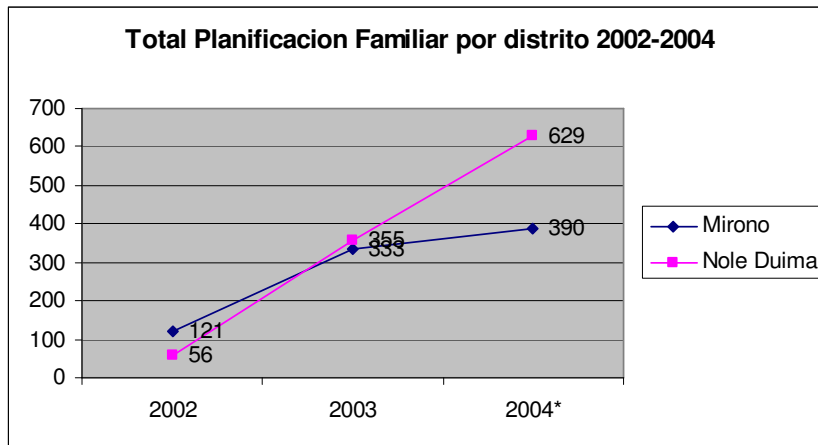
- Understand Human Reproduction
- **Attend** prenatal consultations following MOH norms
- Attend normal deliveries when there is no accessible health unit
- Identify and refer high risk pregnancies.
- Identify risk deliveries (bleeding for example)
- Offer perinatal care.
- Record information for a reproductive health surveillance system.
- Advice and inform on Family Planning.
- Advice on breast feeding

NB2: The health promoters were trained on the following themes:

- Our community and its resources.
- Our relation with Mother Earth.
- Conversations on gender.
- Power in our lives
- Violence in our lives
- Legislation and domestic violence.
- Women and Men, human relations and sexuality
- My family.
- Caring for our sexual and reproductive health
- Legislation in our communities.
- Facilitation techniques,
- Utilization of a rotafolio
- Indicators and follow up of IEC activities

NB3: Family Planning is not accepted by all Ngöbe yet women understand the need to plan their families more than the men and there is a great demand for injectable contraceptives which are

considered more discreet and more practical. Unfortunately the health services do provide mostly oral contraceptives and condoms which are not so popular.



NB4: teachers were trained on the following themes:

- Gender and the prevention of domestic violence
- Cairo and its relation with the project PAN/00/01.
- Human sexuality, Expression of sexuality through different stages of life
- Knowledge and attitudes to talk about feelings and sexuality with teenagers
- Conversations about feelings and sexuality in the community
- Sexuality in the Ngöbe culture.
- Myths and reality on sexuality.
- Use of IEC tools such as the rotafolio; Informaté!
- Situation and needs of adolescents on sexual and reproductive health

## 2.

<b>Project title:</b>	<b><u>Jambi Huasi- health clinic</u></b>
<b>Thematic area/programme:</b>	Reproductive and sexual health
<b>Project duration:</b>	2003-2005
<b>Location:</b>	Otavalo - Ecuador
<b>Beneficiaries:</b>	Indigenous population
<b>Executing agency/agencies:</b>	Jambi Huasi
<b>Implementing agency/agencies:</b>	UNFPA
<b>Source of funds:</b>	UNFPA

### Overview

As part of its national strategy to address the needs of the poorest, underserved communities, UNFPA's Ecuador country programme has financed an innovative project in Otavalo to improve the quality and scope of reproductive health care provided to Quechua-speaking communities, in particular. This support allowed the Jambi Huasi health clinic, which was established in 1994, to expand and upgrade its services, initiate an outreach programme, provide reproductive health education and information to women, men and adolescents and introduce a referral system for obstetric complications. Jambi Huasi, which means Health House in English, provides both modern and traditional medical treatment, as well as family planning advice and services. The traditional healers draw from a “pharmacy” of over 3,600 native plants used for medicinal purposes.

Jambi Huasi has a staff of 14 people, including two indigenous medical doctors and two community volunteers, who help with outreach. About half of Jambi Huasi's clients use the services of traditional healers. The unique combination of services has made Jambi Huasi a very popular clinic. Although it was initially set up to serve some 4,000 people a year, by 2005 over 1,000 people per month were using the clinic's services, some coming from as far away as 50 kilometres.

### What was planned

- To provide a full constellation of reproductive health and family planning services in a culturally sensitive manner, taking into account the special needs and concerns of indigenous people
- To revalue the traditional healing methods and provide evidence for the application of the knowledge of the indigenous medicine,
- To strengthen cultural comprehension of the causes of sickness through an affective doctor/patient relationship and the accurate cosmologic to the cultural reality of the indigenous and mestizos populations.
- Broadening the level of problem solution by complementing the indigenous medicine with the occidental medicine; through a system of internal reference and if needed by establishing a reference to a health center of greater complexity.

### What was the strategy

While trying to combine the two systems of obstetric attention, Jambi Huasi searches on the one hand to respect confidence which indigenous women have in the traditional birth attendants due to the role which they play in the community and on the other hand offer an institutional service technically capable to resolve complication and a system of reference in case of obstetrical emergency.

As an outreach reproductive health strategy targeting indigenous women, Jambi Huasi organized a number of community and home visits to promote a better knowledge of health issues in women, families and communities. By offering direct, customized information in their proper language, these



community visits built confidence and motivated people to visit and consults the services of Jambi Huasi.

From the beginning the focus of UNFPA's work was respectful of the cosmovision, recognizing that one can not approach the indigenous population in the same way as a population 'mestizo'. The support of UNFPA aimed at strengthening the capacity to develop and lead an intercultural proposal for health.

### **Who was involved**

From the beginning Jambi Huasi took the initiative and asked UNFPA for technical and financial support. During these 10 years, Jambi Huasi has established links and networks, particularly with local government, the Ministry of Health, other UN agencies such as UNICEF, OPS, Universities and NGOs.

Jambi Huasi organized an international seminar on the intercultural approach to maternal health in November 2005, which was supported by UNFPA, *UNIFEM*, *UNICEF*, *FCL*, *QAP*, *Municipio de Otavalo*, *CONAMU*, *MSP Universidad Andina Simon Bolívar*

### **Specific changes resulting from the project**

1. As Quechua communities learn more about reproductive health issues and how to take better care of their children and newborns, the contraceptive prevalence rate has risen from 10 to 40 per cent in areas served by Jambi Huasi.
2. Jambi Huasi changed the way health services are offered in traditional communities by making them totally community-based, which fostered rapid and lasting improvements in the reproductive health of women, adolescents and men
3. Jambi Huasi changed the perspective of health towards a combination of traditional and occidental medicine. At the moment, mestizo and indigenous populations are using the services of Jambi Huasi.
4. An Gender focus in a cultural perspective was incorporated. At the beginning gender was absent of Jambi Huasi consideration. Now violence against women is also an issue which is tackled in the center.
5. Jambi Huasi contributed to the empowerment of indigenous people. Indigenous organization and particularly women took in their hands sexual and reproductive health and learned how to take decision on their own lives, on the community level and how to influence public policies.
6. Jambi Huasi is moving from a "pilot" project to public policies, influencing the Ministry of Health for an inclusion of cultural perspectives in their work.

### **Sustainability**

One remarkable feature of Jambi Huasi is that it is a self-sufficient operation. Cost recovery is an important aspect in the work of the center, which applies client fees which account for all of their budget. However, respectful of the value of reciprocity- of great importance in the indigenous culture - the centre applies differentiated tariffs to take into account the individual situation of each patient.

### **Replication/spin effects**

Jambi Huasi is an example of grassroots organization, political will and technical capacity. It is hardly conceivable that this experience could be replicated as a "model". However, the principles applied in Jambi Huasi could be replicated. These are:

- Grassroots participation and empowerment
- Commitment of indigenous leaders women and men

- Political will of local and national authorities
- Combination of different perspectives to health. There is no one single approach, there are different knowledge and beliefs related to culture. Success is linked to the recognition and respect of different approaches.

### **What was learned**

- An intercultural service must consider the heterogeneity of the population, the beliefs, the culture and the cosmovision, accepting the resulting differences. It can not only be concerned about the physical adaptation of the services, such as changing the childbirth position but work to overcome the more profound gaps based on long-lasting racist prejudice such as language difficulties, disrespectful management of indigenous beliefs and the lack of welcoming, respectful and private attention.
- The knowledge of the occidental and indigenous medicine do not affront each other but are complementary and need to be promoted in the training of the health professionals in universities and training centers. This implies an attitude of respect and acknowledgment of the values of the other cultures.
- An intercultural approximation of reproductive health needs to start with the acknowledgement of the cosmovision, proper to the indigenous world. The conception regarding sexuality, the body, health, sickness, communitarian participation, and physical environment among other are important in reshaping health services in order to comply with the cultural differences. The reference and conter-reference of an occidental health system towards a service including indigenous medicine and vice-versa is only possible if based on confidence, acknowledgement and valorization of the different types of knowledge.
- Cultural identity is a reinforcing element to reach personal, family, communitarian and social wellbeing.
- Jambi Huasi illustrates how – through the striving for intercultural access to health which respects the equity of indigenous women, indigenous people in general and ‘mestizos’ – citizenship based on equity of rights and duties without gender racial, ethnical or generational discrimination can be build.

### **Factors contributing to success**

The presence of women doctors of indigenous descent trained in western medicine, yet carrying a strong identity and cosmovision legacy, was an important factor leading to the definition of the service as intercultural.

### **Obstacles or problems identified during the project**

Some resistance has been felt towards the fact that an NGO like Jambi Huasi leads a process of articulating intercultural medicine, while a specific division exists in the Ministry, called to deal with these issues.

### **For more information, contact:**

Lily Rodriguez, UNFPA Ecuador  
[Lily.rodriquez@undp.org](mailto:Lily.rodriquez@undp.org)

# INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND UNIFEM: GOOD PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED

## *Latin America*

### 1.

<b>Project titles:</b>	<b><u>Prevention of gender violence toward young women or teenagers in situation or at high risk of violent relationships</u></b>
<b>Thematic area/programme:</b>	Violence against Women
<b>Project duration:</b>	2 years and five months: June 2002- February 2005
<b>Location:</b>	El Alto, Bolivia
<b>Beneficiaries:</b>	Young women and teenagers in El Alto
<b>Executing Agency/agencies:</b>	UNIFEM Andean Region
<b>Implementing agency/agencies:</b>	Centro de Promoción de la Mujer Gregoria Apaza, CPMGA
<b>Source of funds:</b>	Trust Fund for the Elimination of Violence against Women, New York.

### Overview

Since 1995, the Gregoria Apaza Center has been developing activities to raise awareness and prevent violence against adult women. In 2002, after a process of institutional reflection and participative consultation with adolescents and young women, the problem of violent relationships was identified as another manifestation of violence against women. This type of behavior sets a negative precedent for the role of women in relationships, naturalizes violence and contributes to the perpetuation of discriminatory stereotypes against women.

Adolescents—young women in particular-- recognize sexual violence as a part of romantic relationships. It goes unrecognized as a violent act and is instead learned and experienced as something inherent to a woman's role within a relationship.

In Bolivia, Law 1674 against Violence within the Family and a National Plan for the Eradication of Gender Violence exist. Both the law and the Plan refer to relationships between married people or couples living together but there is no legal instrument to denounce and punish violent behaviors that take place during the period prior to marriage. Violent relationships before marriage is a topic that has not been identified, discussed or treated although the number of adolescents that suffer violence in their relationships increases.

### What was planned

#### Objectives:

General objective: decrease the incidence of violence in the relationships among adolescents and teenagers in El Alto through actions of prevention and assistance, contributing this way to build a society in gender equality;

Provide quality assistance to adolescents and young women in violent relationships;

Contribute to education processes oriented to transform the situation of violence against women;  
Generate a public opinion on the issue and introduce in the public agenda the topic and the lack of public policies addressing this issue.

Activities:

Installation of a Psychological Service
Institutionalization of workshops (based upon the book “In love or in danger?) with information about the topic in high schools
Implementation of training courses and education for adolescent and youth leaders
Training of teachers
Diffusion activities through radio stations
Other diffusion activities
Introduction of the theme through networks in El Alto
Research carried out about the theme in El Alto

### What was the strategy

The strategy had three aspects:

1. Prevention:
  - developing more knowledge and greater skills against gender violence within schools and for teenagers;
  - distributing information about human rights and gender violence training adolescents in schools and teenagers as leaders for the promotion of gender equity;
  - creating greater public consciousness about gender violence and specifically against adolescents and young women.
2. Assistance:
  - offering assistance to adolescents and women suffering from gender violence with adequate methodologies;
  - providing information to the adolescents and teenagers about how to transform gender stereotypes in their relationships
3. Research:
  - developing research that shows the importance of the phenomenon in el Alto

### Who was involved

UNIFEM Andean Region as the executing agency and Centro de Promoción de la Mujer Gregoria Apaza as the implementing organization with the support of CARITAS.

### Specific changes resulting from the project

180 youths attended the consultation service 70% of which were women and 30% men (36% of the planned numbers)
1508 youths were informed about the service and the results of the research
294 youths participated as activists, approximately half of which were men (59% of the number hoped for)
1 participating teacher (of the 24 teachers hoped for)
26 programs were broadcast
8 fairs promoting anti-violence in relationships, 3 theatre productions and 2 discussion panels
14 meetings which brought 19 organizations that work with youth together to create the RIDJEA (the Inter-institutional network of youth in El Alto)
Research presented and used as a base for debates in workshops in high schools

## **Sustainability**

The organization maintains its commitment to continue its support for the problem. This commitment comes in large part from the statistics generated by legal services for women which report that almost 80% of the cases that come before them mention sexual violence by their partner even prior to their marriages which is to say, since their initial courting. In 2005, a family psychologist and an educator were contracted to insure the quality in the training portion of the project. The Center has developed levels of sustainability for the project:

- Technical: creation and maintenance of institutional training facilities
- Social: provision of a space for intervention and discussion with the main actors of the project such as the youth to include them in Local and National public policy agenda
- Financial: Allocation of \$10,000 for 2005 until new financing sources are found with the objective of sustaining the service of integrated attention such as training activities and political participation.

## **Replication/spin effects**

The organization keeps on working on the issue of violent relationships among adolescents and teenagers and they are currently looking for funding based on their experience.

## **What was learned**

- Even for organizations that work in the area of violence against women, this theme is relatively recent. It is recognized and almost naturalized in a large part of society.
- In respect to the participation of young men and women, we have confirmed that in contrast to the discrimination experienced by adult women in relationships, the discrimination experienced by young women in relationships exists but is minimized and undermined in their first romantic relationships. In order to effectively work with young women, instead of dividing the work groups by gender, integrating young men into the process has proven to be less isolating and more productive as it generates an interchange of experiences and a cooperative effort to address the problem of gendered violence.
- Project plan must be flexible enough to respond to changing situations since sometimes results can not be achieved due to circumstances impossible to predict or to control by the implementing organization.

## **Factors contributing to success**

- The method of working in focal groups achieving great impact and obtaining high quality data;
- The spread of information about the center and its project thanks to communication one to one and being reinforced by the radio program in Radio Pachamama
- The motivation of the beneficiaries who were happy to receive information about sexuality, ITS and HIV/AIDS and violence.

## **Obstacles or problems identified during the project**

- Quantitatively, the projects objectives were not achieved 100% as indicated in the above grid due to the following:
- Since 2000, there has been an intensification of protests from social and grassroots organizations regarding access (or lack there of) to property and natural resources. These themes are a priority on policy agendas of these organizations and for this the issue of violence against women is treated differently.
- There have been changes in the management of the implementing organization which has interrupted some of the activities.

**Documentation / Bibliography:**

- two DVDs documenting the experience
- 8 advertisements and 3 radio programs broadcasted by radio Pachamama
- 4 publications used in the training sessions for the leaders against gender violence

**For more information, contact:**

UNIFEM Andean Region: [Unifem.Ecuador@undp.org](mailto:Unifem.Ecuador@undp.org)

CPMGA: [gregoria@caoba.entelnet.bo](mailto:gregoria@caoba.entelnet.bo)

## 2.

<b>Project titles:</b>	<b><u>Indigenous Women: Local Development and Leadership Building</u></b> (Mujeres Indigenas: Desarrollo Local y Construcción de Liderazgos)
<b>Thematic area/programme:</b>	Engendering Leadership and Governance
<b>Project Duration:</b>	2 years (2000-2002)
<b>Location:</b>	Saraguro, Ecuador
<b>Beneficiaries:</b>	Indigenous women of Saraguro, Technical Staff of Corporación Mujer a Mujer. Council members and Saraguro Municipal Staff
<b>Executing agency/agencies:</b>	Corporación Mujer a Mujer
<b>Implementing agency/agencies:</b>	Corporación Mujer a Mujer
<b>Source of funds:</b>	ECU-96-WO1

### Overview

The democratic system in Ecuador was characterized by institutional frailty and weak political participation. Moreover, the State's construction excluded the majority of Ecuadorians, particularly, women and indigenous peoples. To overcome this exclusion, the indigenous movement outlined the construction of democratic and participatory power, starting with the conquest of local power spaces (municipalities and territories), as a strategy.

In the wave of democratic consolidation in Ecuador, members of the judiciary branch of government, in particular, sought to establish legitimacy by signaling their autonomy. Judges used gender quota laws, to demonstrate their independence. This provided an opportunity for quota law supporters to gain leverage. Thus, in 1997, in Ecuador, a gender quota law was passed as a means of boosting the presence of women in politics. The "Ley de Amparo Laboral" (Labor Protection Law) set the level of the quota at 20%.

In Ecuador, generally, it was expected that women fill up political positions so that the quota was reached but women were not expected to make decisions or enter into negotiations. This was especially been the case within the indigenous movement. Characteristics associated with a good leader, such as public speaking, being articulate and taking initiative are not qualities taught to indigenous women. As a result, on many occasions these women excluded themselves by not acting like leaders.

As a result of the replicas' success, UNIFEM-AR expanded the Saraguro project in an attempt to meet increasing and new demands. UNIFEM's project Indigenous Women: Local Development and Leadership building was designed to address the need for a new generation of capable indigenous women leaders with experience in the local scene who would become models to follow for future generations of women leaders.

### What was planned

The project consisted of four components:

1. Facilitating the development of gender-sensitive municipal policies and projects through seven workshops on: Municipal Law, Conflict Resolution, Citizen Participation and Alliance building, Decision making and Organization, Gender and Development, Gender and Public Policy, Decentralization.
2. A study of indigenous peoples' access to justice in Saraguro;

3. Institutionalizing the Leadership School for Indigenous Women Leaders of Saraguro through eight workshops on: self-esteem, gender violence, leadership and participation Gender and ethnicity, Economic and Social Rights, Cultural Rights, Women's Rights, and Relationships; and
4. Communication and dissemination (radio program and bulletin) via eight programs covering the following topics: Migrations, Domestic Violence, Human Rights and Discrimination, Indigenous Women's Rights, Access to Justice, The role of the Family in Saraguro and Women's Roles, Elections.

### **What was the strategy**

In the context of the invisibilization of ethnic and gender demands and proposals this project aimed toward: gaining a better understanding of the conditions that prevent indigenous women from participating in the public sphere, constructing leadership based on ethical, democratic, participatory, and gender-conscious, ethnic-conscious values and increasing indigenous women and indigenous organizations' participation levels within the decision-making arena.

Furthermore, the project aimed at developing strategies to integrate engendered leadership and governance more fully into the VAW and ESR programmes. This is in accordance with UNIFEM's belief that women as leaders in all aspects of their lives, both individually and collectively, will engender governance and demand adequate responses to gender inequalities and differences.

### **Who was involved**

- Interprovincial Federation of Indigenous People of Saraguro (FIIS)
- Corporación Mujer a Mujer (our counterpart in the project)
- Indigenous councilwoman, Angelita Chalan and several municipal departmental heads
- ASOMIS
- ACIS
- ACUS
- Casa de la Mujer

### **Specific changes resulting from the project (outputs and impact)**

1. Saraguro Indigenous Women's Agenda For Action was Developed
2. A Municipal Commission on Gender was established
3. 25 indigenous women leaders from different communities of the locality became advocates of indigenous and rural women's rights

### **Others**

Some men expressed their interest and desire in participating in more workshops to learn more about gender, ethnicity, human rights etc.

The local radio broadcast program sensitizing their audience on women's rights and ways to prevent violence against women.

### **Sustainability**

The 25 indigenous women leaders who were trained (along with the 130 women previously trained) have trained another 930 people, with about 1300 indirect beneficiaries.

The president of the Interprovincial Federation of Indigenous People of Saraguro (FIIS) and Corporación Mujer a Mujer have institutionalized the school so as to make it a permanent part of the organization



## **Replication/spin Effects**

Participants in the original pilot project were able to observe the replicas and develop a proposal for further replicas, which incited interest and have been approved for funding by the German Cooperation Service (DED).

## **What was learned**

Prior to the project, Indigenous women often denied the existence of violence against women within their communities. They feared that bringing about changes to the nature of their relationships with their partners and within their communities would be detrimental to their desire to be strong as an ethnic group. As the project progressed these women came to realize that fighting against the abuses they endure will not weaken their community, but will actually serve to strengthen it. Thus throughout the project it was learned that violence is not a natural part of relationships and that a strong community is one in which no members suffer from any forms of abuse.

## **Obstacles or problems identified during the project.**

Despite an encouraging amount of openness from the mayor and the council, the indigenous councilwoman (Angelita Chalan) and several departmental heads were the only ones with consistent attendance. Part of the problem involved a political split within the council, and another part was the prevailing conception that “gender” only refers to women. Our counterpart, Corporación Mujer a Mujer, attempted to maintain a dialogue especially with the mayor, but they were often not able to meet with him.

## **For more information, contact:**

UNIFEM Andean Region, Quito-Ecuador

[unifem.ecuador@undp.org](mailto:unifem.ecuador@undp.org)

Phone: (593 2) 2460 – 329

