



Gender as cross-cutting issue within WECF's work

WECF's overall goal of "Achieving a healthy environment and sustainable development for all" can only be reached by integrating human rights and gender perspectives into all policies. Principle 20 of the Rio Declaration of 1992 is still valid: "Women have a vital role in environmental management and development. Their full participation is therefore essential to achieve sustainable development."

Women's concerns and priorities on the issues of poverty elimination, a healthy environment and sustainable development set the agenda. Therefore, WECF works on following priorities of local women organisations in countries in transition and developing countries: a sustainable economy and women's equal access to resources and finances, the challenge of climate change and sustainable mitigation solutions, especially access for women to safe and sustainable energy issues, the impacts of climate change on women and men and adaptation solutions, the gender issues related to the right of water and sanitation and also protecting women's health from hazardous chemicals in daily products, waste, fuel and pesticides.

Women's empowerment, – both their economic and political empowerment, – are needed to achieve the aim of gender equality. Through its work on women's empowerment, WECF contributes to the Millennium Development Goal 3 ("Gender Equality") as well as MDGs 1, 4, 5 and 7. Gender equality means that women and men enjoy the same rights, resources and opportunities. On the basis of the human rights framework there are two main mechanisms to promote and implement gender equality. Activities targeting women and girls to compensate for past discrimination are called "affirmative action". "Gender mainstreaming" is a concept that promotes integrating gender issues into mainstream policies, programmes and projects, institutional structures and procedures in order to ensure gender equality. WECF follows both approaches in its work to tackle gender inequalities.

Economic empowerment of women is addressed by WECF by 2 strategies

Women's Livelihood Strategy - creating sustainable and affordable access to livelihood resources. This strategy aims to reduce women's time spent in fetching water and fuel, reducing time and cost, and reduction of diseases, and to increase their access to land, safe water, energy and sanitation.

Women's Income Generation Strategy - increasing women's participation in the (green) economy and income from economic activities. WECF aims to train women on professional skills, – for women small farmers, crafts-women and entrepreneurs, – develop improved technologies based on

women's skills, and increase women's access to markets and finance. The differences in the allocation of resources between women and men, including the gender pay gap and the restricted access and ownership of women to land and other assets, is a main reason for gender inequality. WECF combats the causes for this by promoting green jobs, training women, and providing funding opportunities for women to create their own income.

In the period 2012-2015 WECF aims to strengthen economic empowerment of 50,000 women and men, of which 70% are women.

Political empowerment of women is addressed by WECF by 2 strategies

Women's Participation – increase women's public participation and leadership role in policy and the (green) economy. WECF aims at reducing customary inequality between men and women through gender awareness raising campaigns and increasing women's participation in local and national decision-making, from local water boards, to national parliaments.

Gender Advocacy – strengthening policies and legal frameworks for gender equality and women's access to resources. WECF works on this through experience sharing and policy advocacy. WECF trains and raises awareness with women and men on the social, economic and environmental benefits of the full participation of women in decision-making, implementation and monitoring, and provides support for women's organisations to implement actions for the improvement of the environment and health (based on based on the principles of the Aarhus Convention, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and other legal instruments).

WECF facilitates public participation of women representatives in national, EU and international policy processes and builds their capacity so that they are able to effectively contribute to decision-making. WECF was conceived after the Earth Summit in Rio 1992 to give a voice to the newly established "women's major group" – one of the 9 recognised groups representing civil society in sustainable development policy processes and programmes. WECF represents the women's major group in preparation of the Rio + 20 conference in June 2012, as well as the women's major group at the United Nations Environment Programme, and is part of the organisers of the "women and gender constituency" at UNFCCC.

In the period 2012-2015 WECF aims to reach 1000 policy makers and 20 million general public.



TECHNICAL AND BUSINESS TRAININGS WITH GENDER FOCUS (GEORGIA AND UKRAINE: EU-funded PROJECT "SWITCH TO SUN – LIVE IN COMFORT")

The activities of this project contribute to an improved health, reduced poverty and increased energy access through domestic solar heating, solar hot water and passive-solar insulation of houses. A key part is the training of local people, equally women and men on solar technologies and their maintenance and use, creating job opportunities. In addition the participants are trained on financial instruments, such as microfinance products, saving groups and revolving funds, as well as on business plans and bookkeeping.

PARTICIPATORY GENDER TOOL KIT (KYRGYZSTAN: EU-funded PROJECT "HOME COMFORTS")

The project aims at creating local capacity for improved rural living standards via sustainable energy and sanitation in rural areas of Kyrgyzstan. The Health Environment Facilitation (HEF) tool has an environmental focus mainstreaming gender issues. The tool is participatory enabling women and youth to discover by themselves the importance of the link of a healthy environment and gender issues by collecting data in the village and thus raising awareness on gender, health, environmental and governance issues. The prime target group is teachers who conduct the training with young people. The tool aims at:

- 1) creating awareness for a healthy environment and its link to gender issues;
- 2) creating awareness for gender issues, rights and democratic principles;
- 3) providing support for the full involvement of all stakeholders in decision-making processes;
- 4) collecting baseline data for the project implementation and for further use.

The project trains women and men on resource-efficient and low-cost sustainable energy and sanitation technologies, including solar fruit driers to added value to produce and obtain better prices in the market. Other technologies include dry urine-diverting sanitation, assuring increased hygiene, more comfort for women in particular, and allowing re-use of nutrients in agriculture. Solar-heated bathrooms and passive-solar insulation are also part of the technologies on which training modules exist. The 'resource centres' of local water and energy user groups are used as training centres where the solar technologies are demonstrated and tested.

ESTABLISHMENT OF WOMEN-RUN FOOD GARDENS (SOUTH AFRICA: "EMPOWERING WOMEN BENEFITS ALL")

The EWA project financed by the Dutch government's FLOW programme, supports amongst others a women-run food garden initiative in the low-income townships around Durban and Cape Town. Through 100-year leases from the local authorities, women obtain land for food gardens near their homes. A food garden training centre trains women on vegetable growing, composting and links the women to potential buyers of surplus harvests such as restaurants downtown. 50 individual small food gardens will be established in the period between 2012 and 2014. Furthermore, 2 food kitchens are planned which will be fuelled by biogas from the garden waste. Apart from creating income the project aims at finding solutions for other issues, such as food insecurity, poverty, waste management, social degradation and unsustainable environmental practices.



AFRICAN WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN UNITED NATIONS RIO+20 POLICY PROCESS

This GIZ funded project assures participation of women organisations from French and Arabic-speaking Africa, in the global women's preparations for the Sustainable Development Summit Rio+20. So far the French and Arabic speaking women have had little opportunity to contribute, as all preparations were taking place in English. Women's environment and development organisations from 5 countries translated the women's position papers into French and Arabic, and are now organising in their countries awareness raising events and meetings with their government delegations to assure that the specific priorities of women are taking into consideration. WECF as main organiser of the global women's organisations in the preparations of the Rio+20 process, coordinates the project.

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