

Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Indigenous Women and the United Nations System

Good Practices and Lessons Learned

*Compiled by the Secretariat of the
Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues for the
Task Force on Indigenous Women/Inter-Agency
Network on Women and Gender Equality*



United Nations
New York, 2007

DESA

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ST/ESA/307

United Nations publication

Sales No. E.06.I.9

ISBN 978-92-1-130254-7

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Printed in United Nations, New York

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Preface

Indigenous women have always been actively involved in the struggles for the rights of indigenous peoples at the local, national and international levels. In recognition of this role, the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues¹ devoted its third session (2004)² to a discourse on the unique contributions made by indigenous women within their families, communities and nations.

While lauding their contributions, the Forum did express concern at the multiple forms of discrimination that indigenous women faced, based on their gender, race, ethnicity and low socio-economic status. This, the Forum noted, had led to a complex web of problems that must be tackled.

For example, globalization has presented new challenges and problems for indigenous women in many parts of the world. Indigenous women's roles are often eroded as their livelihood built on accessibility to natural resources disappears, ecosystems are depleted and others are transformed into cash economies. This has produced profound changes not only at the local level and within social and decision-making structures but within their families as well.

It is important, however, to recognize that indigenous women, like women everywhere else, are not a homogeneous group. They in fact represent a wide variety of cultures with different needs and concerns. Their particular concerns should therefore be central to the design of any policy or programme.

The Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, at its February 2004 session, decided to establish a Task Force on Indigenous Women as a follow-up to recommendations emanating from the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues at its third session. The Task Force is chaired by the Forum secretariat. The members of the Task Force are the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Economic Commission for Africa, the International Labour Organi-

¹ Established by Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/22 of 28 July 2000.

² The report of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues on its third session is contained in *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2004, Supplement No. 23 (E/2004/43)*.

zation, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the World Health Organization and the Inter-Agency Task Force on Gender and Water of the Division for Sustainable Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

The main purpose of the Task Force on Indigenous Women is to integrate and strengthen gender mainstreaming in the work of the United Nations system that affects indigenous people, while highlighting the roles of indigenous women and the urgent need to address all the forms of discrimination that they face. This is an important challenge for the United Nations as well as for Member States.

The Task Force adopted a three-year programme of work. As part of its programme of activities, the Task Force has collected a series of good practices in addressing the problems that indigenous women face. On behalf of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, I am very pleased to share these case studies with you. I want to thank the United Nations organizations that submitted the case studies, namely, the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the United Nations Development Programme.

The case studies that have been drawn from Africa, Asia and Latin America show how important it is to strengthen local initiatives by systematically building solidarity, alliances and partnerships within and across borders while respecting the point of view of the poor and the underserved. The case studies show that indigenous women have succeeded in building on the victories of other human rights movements and are moving forward with the conviction that development can be theirs without sacrificing dignity, human rights and justice. The case studies further demonstrate that through gender mainstreaming as well as through programmes targeting women, much can be accomplished to improve the livelihoods of the very poor, to reduce gender discrimination and to contribute to the realization of the Millennium Development Goals.

I thank the secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United

Nations Secretariat for the compilation of these case studies, which are both informative and highly educative.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Rachel Mayanga". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'R' and 'M'.

Rachel MAYANGA

Chairperson

Inter-Agency Network on
Women and Gender Equality
*Special Adviser on Gender Issues
and Advancement of Women*

Indigenous women and the Convention on Biological Diversity

Work of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity with indigenous women (2000-2005)

The Convention on Biological Diversity¹ in its preamble, recognizes “the vital role that women play in the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity” and affirms “the need for the full participation of women at all levels of policymaking and implementation for biological diversity conservation”.

A specific framework for the participation of indigenous women is found in the programme of work on the implementation of article 8 (*j*) and related provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity² regarding participatory mechanisms for indigenous and local communities. In this regard, task 4 of the first phase of the programme of work urged:

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 which to document and preserve women’s knowledge of biological diversity

In order to ensure the full involvement and participation of indigenous women in the work being carried out under the Convention on Biological Diversity with regard to traditional knowledge, the Secretariat

¹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1760, No. 30619.

² Contained in the annex to decision V/16, adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention at its fifth meeting, held in Nairobi from 15 to 26 May 2000 (see document UNEP/CBD/COP/5/23, annex III).

takes into account gender considerations when selecting participants for meetings, when undertaking research work, when creating experts groups and, in general, when engaging in all activities related to policy-creation and implementation of the provisions of the Convention. In addition, given that traditional knowledge is a cross-cutting issue within the Convention, the promotion of the participation of indigenous women is applicable to meetings regarding each work programme and decision of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention.

In light of the recognition of the role of women in the Convention of Biological Diversity and, in particular, in the work programme on the implementation of 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 at a workshop for indigenous women on biodiversity and traditional knowledge held in New York, on 6 May 2004. The workshop was organized by the Indigenous Women's Biodiversity Network (IWBN), an open network of indigenous women interested in environmental issues, initiated in May 1998 at the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, held in Bratislava.

Finally, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity 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 taken into account in the work being done under the Convention with regard to traditional knowledge.

Documentation/bibliography

The programme of work on the implementation of article 8 (*j*) and related provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity is available from:
www.biodiv.org/decisions/default.aspx?m=COP-05&id=7158&lg=0

For more information, contact:

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Indigenous women and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Africa

Gender, Biodiversity and Local Knowledge Systems to Strengthen Agricultural and Rural Development (LinKS): United Republic of Tanzania, Mozambique and Swaziland

Project title	Gender, Biodiversity and Local Knowledge Systems to Strengthen Agricultural and Rural Development (LinKS)
Thematic area/programme	Gender, agrobiodiversity and local knowledge
Project duration	Seven years (1988-2005)
Location	United Republic of Tanzania, Mozambique and Swaziland
Beneficiaries	Researchers and development workers from governmental and non-governmental institutions
Executing agency/agencies	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
Implementing agency/agencies	FAO together with numerous partner institutions in each project country, such as national research institutions, universities, ministries of agriculture and livestock, extension service, seed units, non-governmental organizations etc.
Source of funds	Government of Norway

Overview

The project focused not 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. In the United Republic of Tanzania, the project supported one research study that explored local knowledge of the 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 of 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 determine whether changes in the local knowledge system occurred when the Maasai migrated to different agro-ecological zones. The specific objectives were to explore preferences and criteria for the breeding and selection of cattle, sheep and goats of the Maasai in two different regions, one in Simanjiro (in the northern part of the United Republic of Tanzania and presumed to be the area in which the Maasai had originated) and the other in Mbarali (in the southern part of the United Republic of Tanzania, a preferred migration area for the Maasai for the last 30-50 years). The local knowledge systems of the Maasai from these two regions were specifically verified in relation to:

- Gender and age
- Roles and responsibilities
- Decision-making
- Goals and food security and herd survival

What the strategy was

The research team was a multidisciplinary group of scientists and extension staff who 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, using tools and gender analysis tools specific to this approach. 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 meetings providing feedback to the rural communities. After the feedback meetings, the next field visit was planned.

The study was conducted in three phases. Phase one focused on the Maasai in Simanjiro; phase two focused on the Maasai who had migrated to Mbarali; and phase three entailed the organization of visits between the Maasai of the two regions so as to give them the opportunity to exchange experiences, and to enable each group to understand how the other had responded to conditions in different agro-ecological zones. The exchange visits offered an excellent opportunity for all of the participants to learn from each other.

Who was involved

The participants comprised a multidisciplinary team of seven researchers, consisting of social scientists, animal scientists, breeders and veterinarians from the Ministry of Water and Livestock Development, the University of Dar es Salaam and Sokoine University of Agriculture, district extension staff and pastoral/agropastoral communities.

Sustainability

Some members of the research team understood that the Maasai were true livestock specialists and that they practised animal breeding for specific purposes. Furthermore, they understood very well that Maasai women had in-depth knowledge and understanding of livestock, that they knew the animals they milked very well and that they played important roles in monitoring the animals, giving advice to their husbands about breeding and treating sick animals. The research study led to much-increased awareness of the importance for the Maasai of local knowledge in livestock breeding.

Awareness-raising material will soon be available for extension staff, researchers and policymakers.

Replication/spin-off effects

All of the members of the research team went through an intensive on-the-job learning process. Their understanding of the Maasai and their local knowledge systems was increased and new insights were derived from their experiences. Hopefully, the research team members will apply this knowledge and experience to their future work and to the dissemination of the research results.

What was learned

- It is important to work with a multidisciplinary team to achieve a better and an 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 by the research team of the concepts of “gender, local knowledge and biodiversity” were necessary before entry to the field.
- During data collection, it was important to collect information separately from men and women groups of the Maasai. This gender disaggregation was important with respect to understanding 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

conduct a careful, in-depth examination in the rural communities of the ways in which men and women respond to these outside challenges.

- Triangulation of information is extremely important. The research study was divided into three parts. After each field visit, the data were analysed, a report was prepared and the results were presented, in a feedback workshop, to the agro-pastoral community and the stakeholders. The preparation of the next field visit reflected the comments and discussions.
- 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. Owing to their daily contact with cows while milking them, Maasai women are able to monitor the animals closely.
- In respect of the breeding of animals, women have their own prioritizing criteria. 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 and prepare medicine for their treatment and also treat less serious diseases. Women are responsible for newborn calves, their mothers etc.
- Women are responsible for milk management; the income from selling milk products is controlled by women.
- Women and children may possess their own animals, which are managed together with the herd of the boma. Women have control over their own animals.
- Outside influences: when men, from time to time, leave the boma in search of additional income earning opportunities, women assume greater and greater responsibility for the herd and its management.

Factors contributing to success

- The research team participated in various workshops conducted to sensitize them regarding gender, participation, local knowledge etc.
- Each of the different steps of the study was followed by a workshop focused on analysis, report writing, feedback to the pastoral community, and planning of the next step. The feedback workshops provided an important opportunity for the research team to present the data collected to the rural community. The Maasai made comments, provided further inputs, identified gaps, and discussed with the research team how the study was to be continued.



UN Photo/Wolff

Obstacles or problems identified during the project

- It is difficult to destroy prejudices of researchers, for example, with respect to how the Maasai behave, and what they know and what they do. Destroying the myths is a definite challenge!
- The confrontation of local knowledge and scientific knowledge.
- Local knowledge (and especially women's knowledge) was thought to have little value. Local animal breeds and the local knowledge associated with them were not valued very highly either by researchers or by the agropastoralists themselves. This lack of esteem for local traditions was a challenging factor in the study and throughout the project.

Document/bibliography

Study reports are not yet available but will be posted soon on the website of the LinKS project.

For more information, contact:

LinKS website: www.fao.org/sd/links

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Indigenous women and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

Latin America

Rural Development Programme for Las Verapaces (PRODEVER), Guatemala

Project title	Rural Development Programme for Las Verapaces (PRODEVER), Guatemala
Thematic area/programme	Assistance to indigenous women
Project duration	2002-2010 (eight years)
Location	Las Verapaces, Guatemala, Latin America
Beneficiaries	16,000 households
Executing agency/agencies	National Fund for Peace/Government of Guatemala (FONAPAZ)
Implementing agency/agencies	United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) National Fund for Peace/Government of Guatemala
Source of funds	Total cost: US\$ 26.00 million IFAD loan: US\$ 15.00 million Domestic: US\$ 5.96 million Co-financing: US\$ 5.04 million (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC); Fund for International Development of Guatemala (OFID))

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 International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) co-financed 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 situation of men and that of women in the Department. It was found that women interested in participating in the development activities

supported by PRODEVER would have to either hire someone from outside the family to take care of the children and prepare meals, or take their eldest daughter out of school and have her take charge of these activities. Women were found to suffer from lower education levels, higher rates of illiteracy (80 per cent), 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 the conditions necessary 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 workplans:

(a) *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 the simple business skills required of small-scale entrepreneurs, for example, cost-benefit analysis, allocating of income, management skills, how to obtain desired information etc.;

(b) *Sustainable forest management.* The promotion both of firewood-efficient stoves and of the planting of fast-growing tree species in community wood lots 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 those resources for future generations;

(c) *Income-generation.* Financial support for women's income-generating activities is associated with training in the skills needed to use



UN Photo

their loans profitably, increase their incomes and gain access to knowledge and skills;

(d) *Training for community representatives.* Women account for about 30 per cent of the participants in the training programme designed to enable 100 community organizations in respect of 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 per cent 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 through the building of 204 fuel-efficient stoves and planting 14 hectares of wood lots with 4,080 fast-growing tree seedlings
- Women's health improved: six workshops on reproductive health, maternal care and nutrition (with Ministry of Health); three emergency committees in the municipalities of Cahabón and Alta Verapaz, to assist women during and after difficult childbirth
- Women's economic position enhanced by the financing of 63 income-generating activities, mostly for livestock husbandry (87 per cent), but also for microenterprises (8 per cent) and textile crafts (5 per cent)

Sustainability

- 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
- Sustainable forest management. Training on how to make and maintain firewood-efficient stoves, promotion of local nurseries with a view to their producing seedlings of fast-growing trees; direct involvement of households both to ensure implementation and to 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 within which 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.
- Support is provided 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 project profiles and existing documentation, visit www.prodever.org

For more information, contact:

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Programme of Reconstruction and Development for the Quiche and Proderqui Departments (PRODERQUI), Guatemala

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

Overview

At the beginning of the 1980s, a violent conflict erupted in two of the poorest Departments of Guatemala, Quiche and Verapaces, where 90 per cent 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 10 municipalities of the two Departments, the Programme of Reconstruction and Development for the Quiche and Proderqui Departments (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 socio-economic reintegration of the populations most affected by the conflict. The rationale for the Programme's gender-sensitive approach and methodology is the fact that: (a) a high proportion of the households in the post-conflict areas are headed by women (30 per cent 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 within a broad range of areas that can help both women and men to: 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 with respect to their territory, their natural resources and their cultural values.

What the strategy was

The thrusts of the strategy encompass:

(a) *Gender as a cross-cutting issue.* The original design of the Programme had included a sub-component 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 organizations have been expected to adopt a gender-sensitive approach that perceives the family as a whole, including women as well as men, as the focal point for all their activities. The institution cooperating with IFAD, namely, the United Nations Office for Project Services, 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;

(b) *Alleviating women's workload.* The strategy emphasizes 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;

(c) *Food security.* This 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 on how to improve the productivity of their vegetable gardens and orchards, are receiving egg-laying poultry and are being assisted in the creation of revolving group funds;

(d) *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;

(e) *Municipal women's offices.* 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 to undertake both advocacy and lobbying in favour of women's views and priorities in participatory planning processes.

Who was involved

- United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) as co-operating institution
- Central Government: National Fund for Peace (FONAPAZ), Ministry of Health
- Local governments: municipalities of Quiche, Association for Research and Social Studies (ASIES), Council for Development, Quiche departmental government, Presidential Secretariat for Women's Affairs of Guatemala, Secretariat of Social Works of the First Lady of Guatemala, Human Rights Ombudsman's Office of Guatemala, Forum of the Woman, and Office of Defence for Indigenous Women of Guatemala

Specific changes resulting from the project

- *Alleviating women's workload.* Enhanced participation of women in community affairs; more time available to women for other family and/or community activities; fewer respiratory ailments, illnesses and eye disorders, particularly among children and women; and reduced deforestation
- *Food security.* More varied family diet thanks to better knowledge of food values 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 offices.* Opening of three municipal corporations for the creation and strengthening of three municipal women's offices; interest of other municipalities in such undertakings; increases in gender-specific "spaces" for women's participation both at municipal and at departmental levels; participation of delegates from municipal women's offices in meetings of the Women's Commission at the level of the Departmental



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Council for Development of Guatemala (CODEDE); effective lobbying for allocation by the Government of financial resources from the Departmental Council for women's projects

Sustainability

- *Alleviation of women's workload.* Women showed greater participation 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.* This encompassed revolving funds able to deliver small loans to group members; and promotion of livestock husbandry, improved family orchards and vegetable gardens, and 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 organizational strengthening and training.

- Literacy training is crucial and must be delivered with the agreement of the responsible institutions to ensure a higher level of 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 owing to poor or no education
- Weak participation by women in training and capacity-building processes owing to spouse's refusal of permission
- Weak participation of adult women in literacy training

Documentation/bibliography

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For project profiles and existing documentation, www.proderqui.org

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Sustainable Agricultural Development and Environmental Protection Project for the Darién (PRODARIEN), Panama

Project title	Sustainable Agricultural Development and Environmental Protection Project for the Darién (PRODARIEN), Panama
Thematic area/programme	Rural development
Project duration	1996-2005 (nine years)
Location	Darién Province, Panama
Beneficiaries	60 communities (80 per cent indigenous, 20 per cent Afrodariens)
Executing agency/agencies	IFAD Government of Panama
Implementing agency/agencies	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Government of Panama (Ministry of Agricultural Development)
Source of funds	IFAD and Government of Panama

Overview

The Darién region, situated on the border between Panama and Colombia, has extraordinary wealth in terms of biodiversity, forests and water sources. It is characterized by a low population density (50,000 inhabitants per 16,800 square kilometres), little infrastructure, high levels of poverty and of extreme poverty (two thirds of its population), and a low human development index. Life expectancy at birth is only 64 years compared with the national average of 76, and the child mortality rate is three times the national average. The region is inhabited by five ethnic groups, of which three (Emberá, Wounaan and Kuna) are indigenous and two (Afro-descendientes and Mestizos) are non-indigenous. 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

The Sustainable Agricultural Development and Environmental Protection Project for the Darién (PRODARIEN) was designed to improve rural living conditions by fostering community organizations and strengthening traditional institutions and governance. Recognizing the importance of extractive activities, it includes a training programme on environmental sustainability and promotes replanting of trees. It also aims at improv-

ing agriculture by facilitating access to extension, credit and training on marketing skills. It also provides financing for the microenterprises of women's groups.

Who was involved

- Ministry of Agricultural Development
- Sub-office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Darién
- Other government institutions (for example, Institute of Agricultural Markets, National Authority for the Environment, and 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, small commodity stores) and undertaking profitable activities (sale of gasoline, 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 microentrepreneurs
- 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 mobilized 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 peoples. New donors are becoming involved in the



Ebinia Santos

development of the region: for example, the Global Environment Fund approved a Programme of Small Grants that is scheduled to start next year in the 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 creating alliances in the region.

What was learned

- Women's interests and agendas differ from those of men (for example, women tend to be more interested in family planning and other aspects of reproductive health). Projects must analyse these differences and make provisions for appropriate initiatives also for women.
- There are structural barriers to the participation of indigenous women. Projects must take account of these barriers so as to be able to promote equality of opportunities. Under PRODARIEN, the following measures were found effective in addressing structural barriers such as those arising from language and traditional gender roles and responsibilities:
 - ♦ Using native languages and translators to overcome the fact that women had fewer opportunities than men to learn the mainstream language;

- ◆ Organizing activities at village level to facilitate participation by women;
 - ◆ Creating temporary childcare centres to enable women to bring their children with them to meetings and training sessions;
 - ◆ Fostering non-farm employment or income-generating activities to expand women's economic opportunities and thereby facilitate their social and economic integration;
 - ◆ Paying particular attention to households headed by women, as they tended to be the poorest;
 - ◆ Involving men in efforts to promote the participation of women;
 - ◆ Practising positive discrimination where necessary to stimulate participation by women.
- Income managed by women is mostly allocated to improving housing and living standards or educating children or retained 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.
 - 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 inclusion of gender equity issues and use of specific indicators to monitor gender-sensitive performances
- The significant profits reaped by women from economic activities
- Women's enthusiasm and commitment
- The project's demand-led approach

Obstacles or problems identified during the project

- The role of cultural factors in limiting 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 cooperating and financing agencies to make the necessary adjustments

Documentation/bibliography

PRODARIEN, “Voces de la comunidad (testimonios de beneficiarias)”, a collection of beneficiaries’ interviews

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Asia

Enhancing Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Protecting Intellectual Property Rights in Western Mindanao, Philippines

Project title	Enhancing Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Protecting Intellectual Property Rights in Western Mindanao, Philippines
Thematic area/programme	Empowerment
Project duration	2003-2004
Location	Lakewood, Western Mindanao, Philippines
Beneficiaries	Subanen Indigenous Communities
Executing agency/agencies	International Centre for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF)
Implementing agency/agencies	International Centre for Research in Agroforestry
Source of funds	IFAD, through the Western Mindanao Community Initiatives Project (US\$ 10,500) and through a grant to ICRAF (US\$ 35,000)

Overview

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

What was planned

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

(a) *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;

(b) *Participatory documentation.* All the documentation activities focused on consensus-building and the convergence of the interests of the indigenous communities and the institutions involved. The communities were empowered by the transferring of the skills in 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 that of the setting of research priorities through the stages of data gathering and processing, and the production of knowledge outputs. Illiterate but knowledgeable community elders, especially women, provided the information which was documented by literate younger members of the community;

(c) *Culturally sensitive documentation.* The ethno-botanical documentation work was conducted in a manner that was deliberately sensitive to local culture. Outsiders respected customary rules and behaviour during fieldwork: for example, ritual offerings before entering a documentation site; a thanksgiving ceremony upon leaving it; respect for 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;

(d) *Documentation sensitive to the issue of intellectual property rights.* As there was consciousness of the need to protect the intellectual property rights of the community, technical assistance was provided in helping the communities ensure that material was produced that guaranteed their intellectual property rights.

What the strategy was

The strategy comprised both an informal and a formal approach.

- The *informal approach* entailed publishing the scientific name and generic use of medicinal plants but not detailing the recipes, dosages and specific illnesses for which they are used. This approach was adopted to encourage outsiders to seek permission from the community and come to mutually agreed arrangements before procuring complete ethno-medicinal information for commercial purposes.
- The *formal approach* consisted of four elements:
 - ♦ A memorandum of agreement witnessed by the National Commission for Indigenous Peoples stating that: (a) owner-

ship of documented ethno-botanical knowledge remained with the indigenous community; (b) no biological specimens should leave the community without free and prior informed consent; (c) future commercial utilization of ethno-botanical knowledge, if any, would require free and prior informed consent; (d) outsiders and participating organizations must observe customary laws in the conduct of documentation;

- ♦ Digital encryption of electronic knowledge products and technology;
- ♦ Registration of copyright-protected information such as that in books, magazines and electronic albums 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 may 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 Agroforestry (ICRAF)
- Department of Agrarian Reform (through the Western Mindanao Community Initiative Project)
- Subanen Tribal Council
- Ipil—Development Foundation Lakewood Consortium (IDF)

Specific changes resulting from the project

- Over 568 plants, representing 70 per cent of the plants growing in the ancestral domain of the Subanen indigenous peoples, and their uses (food, medicine etc.) were identified and catalogued; 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.



UN Photo

- The technical expertise of the Subanen members of the ethnobotanical documentation team, as well as of concerned women, was enhanced significantly.
- A Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Government on behalf of the communities and based on their specific requests and stipulations secures their intellectual property rights and options for obtaining benefits from any future commercial or beneficial use of their knowledge, by requiring that the free and prior informed consent of the community be obtained before any knowledge is shared with a third party.
- A body of culturally relevant learning materials was produced with the potential for protecting/revitalizing traditional culture.
- There was reproduction of rice that was on the verge of extinction.

Sustainability

The project awakened in local women a strong interest 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 morphologic documentation by groups of women, who are traditional seed-keepers and seed-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 the approach in Bakun, the regional office of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (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 per cent), food (37 per cent) and construction materials (20 per cent).
- 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 level of interest on the part of the beneficiaries, as the project responded to a development thrust that had been identified by them in an already formulated development plan
- Collaboration of several organizations towards achieving the same goal channelled through a participatory approach
- Use of gender-sensitive, multidisciplinary, participatory and culture-sensitive research methods
- Respect for local culture and community intellectual property rights

Obstacles or problems identified during the project

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

Documentation/bibliography

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Hills Leasehold Forestry and Forage Development Project (HLFFDP), Nepal

Project title	Hills Leasehold Forestry and Forage Development Project (HLFFDP), Nepal
Thematic area/programme	Rural development
Project duration	1993-2003
Location	Nepal
Beneficiaries	11,756 poor households
Executing agency/agencies	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)
Implementing agency/agencies	United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)
Source of funds	Total cost: US\$ 12.00 million IFAD loan: US\$ 6.00 million Netherlands grant: US\$ 4.85 million Government: US\$ 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 forest land. Its rationale, perceived as an alternative both to nationalization and to the community forestry approaches, was based on giving to small groups secure user rights over blocks of degraded forest which they would rehabilitate themselves. The 10 districts covered by the project were the traditional lands of several indigenous groups, including the Tamang, the Danuwar, the Praja, the Magar and the Majhi. A total of 7,377 hectares of degraded forest were 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 within the framework of an agreed management plan.

What was planned

The main activities included:

- (a) Fostering the creation of leasehold groups of 5 to 10 households each, and promotion of regular meetings to collect monthly savings, deliver loans and collect repayments;

- (b) Integration of women into mainstream forestry activities (instead of supporting specific women's activities);
- (c) Employment of women as group promoters.

What the strategy was

- In order to address the negative effects of “open access” management which had been resulting in widespread deforestation and degradation, the project introduced the idea of leasing specific tracts of degraded forest lands to specific groups, mainly women, willing to undertake their rehabilitation in exchange for secure access to the products thereof.
- As women represented the majority of the beneficiaries, women were recruited as group promoters to assist in fostering the activity of additional groups, for example, by linking their communities with the line agencies and extension staff.

Who was involved

- United Nations Office for Project Services
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
- Department of Forestry
- Government of the Netherlands

Specific changes resulting from the project

- The project's basic premise, namely, that poverty alleviation and reforestation could be addressed simultaneously by transferring degraded lands to the very poor, was proved 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 57-86 per cent 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 for themselves and their families of adopting new ideas with regard to education, health, sanitation and nutrition.

Sustainability

- The long-term leasehold arrangement, though initially for 40 years, is renewable.

- The impressive re-greening of most leasehold sites and the establishment of grasses and forage legumes are likely to encourage leaseholders to maintain grazing bans.
- The groups approach lays the groundwork for eventual withdrawal of line departments and group promoters.
- The creation of 120 inter-group organizations and 18 multi-purpose cooperatives, although unanticipated, has been 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 Executive Board of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in December 2004. LFLP is an eight-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 the delivery by viable microfinance institutions of financial services to the leaseholders; and (d) strengthen the 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, this 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 are 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 understorey forage cultivation should be investigated



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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 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 overemphasized 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 organizations 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, issues that need to be addressed
- The present arrangement recognizes only collective rights of groups, without defining the rights of individual members
- Forgotten “social capital”: the original design did not envisage the creation of grass-roots 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

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North-eastern Region Community Resource Management Project for Upland Areas (NERCRMP), India

Project title	North-eastern Region Community Resource Management Project for Upland Areas (NERCRMP), India	
Thematic area/programme	Agricultural development	
Project duration	1997-2008 (nine years)	
Location	North-eastern region	
Beneficiaries	39,200 households	
Executing agency/agencies	State Coordinating Committee for Government Activities (SCCGA)	
Implementing agency/agencies	United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)	
Source of funds	Total cost:	US\$ 33.22 million
	IFAD loan:	US\$ 22.90 million
	Institutional financing:	US\$ 1.20 million
	Government:	US\$ 5.60 million
	Beneficiaries:	US\$ 3.50 million

Overview

Characterized by isolation, insecurity and remoteness in terms of both access and communication, the North-eastern region 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 per cent 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 Assam (Hill districts), is characterized by a variety of agro-climatic zones and tribal groups: the Tangkhuls and 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 peoples' quest for freedom and the sovereignty of the Indian State, women were always 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 undertaking a host of social activities aimed at uplifting women, TSL assisted the victims of conflict and was an important mediator between the people and the 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 husbands who own the family property. Girls are



IFAD/Hollingworth

valued more for their work than for their status as individuals. According to the IFAD report on mainstreaming gender in Asia: “A woman in the Tangkhul 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:

(a) *Capacity-building of communities and participating agencies.* Helping communities to (i) establish viable, equitable and sustainable village institutions, (ii) formulate community resource management plans and (iii) strengthen their capacity to manage their development initiatives through training, in-country study tours and self-help groups;

(b) *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;

(c) *Community-based biodiversity conservation*. Protecting the region's rich biodiversity resources through 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;

(d) *Social sector activities*. Improving access to basic services by building drinking-water schemes, training health workers, and providing basic medicines and training;

(e) *Village roads and rural electrification*. Improving access to markets by upgrading 170 kilometres of village roads and building 20 kilometres of new roads, and broadening the base of the rural economy by providing electricity so as to open up new possibilities for non-farm enterprises;

(f) *Project management*. Strengthening the capacity of the implementing agencies, and developing and implementing a monitoring and evaluation system.

What the strategy was

The patriarchal sociocultural 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 and self-help groups were used both to generate meaningful participation by women and to provide them with a chance to move beyond their traditionally subordinate role. The central principle of self-help groups is that women do not have to depend on outsiders for the credit they need for their economic activities. Their self-help groups, whose guiding principles are thrift and credit, allow them to increase their incomes and exchange experiences with other women. The end result is greater confidence in addressing their strategic needs. A facilitator in each of the beneficiary villages is responsible for providing the women's self-help groups with the information and guidance needed in their daily operation and for liaising between them and providers of support (for example, partner non-governmental organizations 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 arises from local traditions, including the unequal, gender-based division of labour, that are deeply entrenched in strong patriarchal societies, and 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, second, to confront 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 natural resource management groups and by increasing their access to credit and training through self-help groups.

Sustainability

Promotion of self-help groups in beneficiary villages has led to deep changes in the mindset, attitudes and confidence level of women that are widespread and tangible. The very act of learning to read and write is empowering women, and this, in turn, is enhancing the chances of the sustainability of project efforts. Training in bookkeeping and accounting further increases their self-confidence and they seem to have internalized the new habits of saving 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 self-help groups 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 per cent of the poorest households no longer belong to the poorest households category and 2 per cent of the once-poor households now belong to the better-off category.
- *Natural resources management.* Eight hundred and twenty-five natural resource management groups (with a female membership of over 50 per cent) are managing funds for watershed development and natural resource management activities, including conservation and protection; 10,211 hectares of *jhum* land have been turned over to permanent cultivation, including horticultural crops, and community forests for biodiversity management. About 370 hectares of new terracing were installed and 1,530 hectares of small-scale irrigation structures were repaired.



IFAD/Hollingworth

- *Economic benefits.* Cash savings are increasingly common thanks to the fostering of 2,071 self-help groups with some 33,056 women as members. Total group savings in January 2005 amounted to 280,500 United States dollars. Loans financed through savings, which are usually small (US\$ 4.50–US\$ 67.00, depending on the availability of funds), are used for income-generating activities (cultivation of poultry, pigs, maize and potatoes and weaving) as well as 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, for example, by reducing distances to water sources. Home vegetable gardens, previously little known in the area, have been created by 16,322 households and have added substantially to household food supply and sales. Animal husbandry has increased markedly, with 8,162 and 12,334 households, having adopted 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 (176 hectares); and 470 hectares in 547 locations are under fish-rice culture in irrigated terraces.
- *Social benefits.* The self-help group movement is particularly effective in bringing village women together and thereby en-

hancing their social and political status. They are and have been effective in representing and defending their interests. Overall, women are becoming more confident. Many natural resource management groups and self-help groups 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, and the provision of school funds and infrastructure for 66 schools.

- The road network was greatly enhanced with 181 kilometres of new roads, 126 kilometres 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 directed towards the downstream activities of harvesting, handling, storage and presentation.
- Natural resource management groups and self-help groups can play an active and effective role in mitigating ethnic conflict by educating and building awareness of the advantages of reconciliation, coexistence and mutual support, through, for example, a multi-ethnic forum for peace, reconciliation and development in sensitive zones.
- Self-help groups 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 necessary, however, to strengthen the ties between these groups and the formal rural financial institutions.
- The emergence of unanticipated forms of cooperative ventures among some members (that is to say, collective farming and rearing) must be identified early on and supported.
- If women are to be empowered in societies where the major decision-making and official positions remain the prerogative of men, it is necessary that women's rights to land be secure and legally recognized. 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 self-help groups allowing them both to increase and control their savings and to generate new sources of income.
- Both natural resource management groups and self-help groups 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 (natural resource management groups) and in the creation of self-help groups.

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Oudomxai Community Initiatives Support Project, Lao People's Democratic Republic

Project title	Oudomxai Community Initiatives Support Project, Lao People's Democratic Republic	
Thematic area/ programme	Agricultural development	
Project duration	2003-2010 (seven years)	
Location	Oudomxai region	
Beneficiaries	29,000 households (117,000 people) in 187 villages	
Executing agency/ agencies	Provincial government of Oudomxai	
Implementing agency/ agencies	United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)	
Source of funds	Total cost:	US\$ 21.14 million
	IFAD loan:	US\$ 13.41 million
	Luxembourg:	US\$ 1.77 million
	World Food Programme:	US\$ 1.76 million

Overview

Oudomxai is the second poorest province of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, with a poverty incidence of 73.2 per cent 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 doubled from 1992 to 2000, making Oudomxai the country's largest producer; and as a result of the 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 project aims to reverse this trend and improve the livelihoods of these peoples by adopting a two-pronged approach encompassing: (a) diversifying on- and off-farm activities and (b) developing alternative livelihoods. The area covered comprises seven districts and 728 villages in the province of Oudomxai, situated in the north-western part of the Lao People's Democratic Republic. In 2000, the total population of the area was estimated at 236,525; the total number of households was 38,587 with nearly 90 per cent of this population living in rural areas. About 75 per cent 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:



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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 the incomes from stabilized 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 the strategy was

The project's gender component recognizes the major role that women play in both 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 for 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, and 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 per cent of the 296 staff of the project; 20 out of the 69 staff (29 per cent) at provincial level; and 52 out of the 227 staff (23 per cent) at the district level.
- Under the community development component, 683 people, including 411 women, attended 103 days of gender training, and 36 per cent of the participants in all training activities are women.

What was learned

- To ensure that project activities respond to the needs of the target group, community-led development and participatory planning from the village level should be integral parts of both 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 in accordance with existing institutional capacity at these levels.
- The issuing of land-use certificates in the name both of wife and of 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



UN Photo/Robotón

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

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Rural Income Diversification Project in Tuyen Quang Province, Viet Nam

Project title	Rural Income Diversification Project in Tuyen Quang Province, Viet Nam	
Thematic area/programme	Rural development	
Project duration	2002-2008 (six years)	
Location	Tuyen Quang Province, Northern Uplands region, Viet Nam	
Beneficiaries	49,000 households	
Executing agency/agencies	Provincial People's Committee of Tuyen Quang Province	
Implementing agency/agencies	United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)	
Source of funds	Total cost:	US\$ 30.43 million
	IFAD loan:	US\$ 20.90 million
	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency:	US\$ 5.00 million
	Government:	US\$ 2.70 million
	Beneficiaries:	US\$ 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 per cent of all households and 83 per cent of the poor. The Province is predominantly mountainous, with altitudes of up to 1,400 metres 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 traditionally enjoy a higher status than that of the women in many other Asian countries. The ongoing transition to a market-based economy, however, is generating gender disparities and erosion of the social gains made by women during the socialist period. This IFAD-initiated project, as reflected in its design and implementation, therefore views women as constituting a special target group for efforts aimed at improving 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 capacities and roles



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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 decentralization process that recognizes an expanded role for village development boards in needs assessment, prioritization and implementation; (b) the adoption of highly participatory planning processes; and (c) the 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 of the project, namely: (a) microfinance and microenterprise development; (b) upland farming systems extension and research; (c) livestock improvement and animal health; (d) forest land management; and (e) gender.

What the strategy was

The gender component aims at empowering 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 themselves have identified with a view to improving their living conditions. Each of the beneficiary villages has a WLF Village Group. The Women's Livelihood Fund 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 Women's Livelihood Fund-funded activities follow a highly decentralized and participatory approach.

Who was involved

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

Specific changes resulting from the project

- The membership of self-help groups is 71 per cent women and 71 per cent indigenous groups. The women's self-help groups fostered in 2002 and 2003 are developing well and are waiting eagerly to receive land.
- Nearly 70 per cent of the 3,300 persons trained in farmer field schools were women.
- Land-use certificates in the names of both spouses are still pending owing both to ongoing land exchanges and relocation and to new legislation that has altered the format of the "red books".
- The chief accountant of the Provincial Project Coordination Unit is a woman, but only 7 of the remaining 22 Coordination Unit staff are women. However, women account for 47 per cent of the staff at district level. Three of the 11 community organizers are women.
- Two hundred and two 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 the target population are fully aware of their responsibilities with respect to gender issues 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, it 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".
- Self-help groups with access to project support in the form of 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 the follow-up of a previous project entitled "Participatory resource management project: Tuyen Quang Province", which was launched between 1994 and 2000.



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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 self-help groups in order to gain access to other support, including information, agricultural extension, irrigation and credit.
- Indigenous women who have 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 of both income-based and power-based forms of poverty.
- Women need to expand the improvement of their managerial skills and education beyond basic literacy and numeracy.
- Indigenous women, in particular, need to develop special skills (for example, language and 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, for example, 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 being one of maintaining social harmony by not raising issues.

Factors contributing to success

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

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Wulin Mountains Minority Areas Development Project, China

Project title	Wulin Mountains Minority Areas Development Project, China
Thematic area/programme	Agricultural development
Project duration	1999-2004 (five years)
Location	Eastern part of Guizhou Province and western part of Hunan Province, China
Beneficiaries	390,000 families
Executing agency/agencies	Ministry of Agriculture of China Ministry of Finance of China World Food Programme (WFP)
Implementing agency/agencies	Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Finance
Source of funds	Total cost: US\$ 107.25 million IFAD loan: US\$ 28.00 million WFP grant: US\$ 18.80 million Government: US\$ 55.80 million Beneficiaries: US\$ 4.60 million

Overview

Some of China's poorest areas are found in the Wulin Mountains, particularly in 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 per cent of the population, estimated at 10 million, of the two Provinces. The best-represented indigenous peoples are: the Miao (28 per cent), the Dong (14 per cent) and the Tujia (19.4 per cent). Although the target group included all rural households living in the project area, consisting of 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 owing to their low literacy resulting from gender discrimination, weak or a 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:

- *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
- *Livestock and fish production.* Technical and financial support for livestock, paddy fish farming and carp cage culture
- *Cash crop production.* Rehabilitation and new planting of tea, bamboo, shiitake and other mushrooms, elephant-foot yam, encomia, hot pepper and a range of fruit trees
- *Credit.* Short- and medium-term loans to individuals and groups, particularly the poorer households and women
- *Women's programme.* Functional literacy and numeracy for 150,000 women aged 15-49 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; fertilizer 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
- *Rural infrastructure.* Irrigation, drinking water, electrification and roads

What the strategy was

- 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, country 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 the 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 and Ministry of Finance

Specific changes resulting from the project

- Women's workload was reduced by two to three hours per day owing to improved drinking-water supply systems and the introduction of labour-time-saving technologies for women's activities.
- Hygiene and health improved owing to improved drinking-water systems; training on health, hygiene and nutrition; and greater attention to widespread gynaecologic disorders during medical check-ups as the first step towards curative protocols.
- Livestock husbandry undertaken by women improved through specialized training.
- Incomes increased by incremental livestock husbandry provided additional cash for food, school fees and clothing.
- Women's self-esteem and social position improved owing to improved economic performances and entrepreneurial success.
- Over half (55 per cent) of the participants in literacy training in Tongren prefecture were women.
- Although 95 per cent of the loans were used for typical women's 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 per cent of technical staff and 30 per cent of project staff.
- Seventy-five per cent of the 31,490 participants in health and nutrition training were women.

What was learned

- The specificity of the grass-roots stakeholders must be taken into account when designing and implementing projects.
- The fact that women were major beneficiaries of the project was not reflected in the records of the project because its formal procedures did not envisage a focus on gender-specific responsibilities. Functional literacy training in Mandarin, including the ability to sign, ought to have been provided to women, who 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 resulted in a good opportunity to valorize local knowledge and



UNDP-RIPP

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 (for example, with their husband).
- Women attending literacy training reaped some benefits, but the organization 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 of proper education for their children, women over age 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, and recognizing their specific poverty position and issues
- Implementation by a national team of consultants using technical modules designed at a preparatory phase during which prospective beneficiaries were involved in diagnostic and analytical work using participatory rural appraisal. Implementation was thus guided and decided by the beneficiaries themselves
- Emphasis on organic farming, which had the advantage of valorizing 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

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Indigenous women and the International Labour Organization (ILO)

Latin America

Education for Work, Employment and Rights of Indigenous Peoples (ETEDPI): Honduras, Nicaragua and Guatemala

Project title	Education for Work, Employment and Rights of Indigenous Peoples (ETEDPI)
Thematic area/programme	Indigenous education
Project duration	16 June 2004–28 February 2006
Location	Honduras, Nicaragua and Guatemala
Beneficiaries	A number of indigenous peoples in Honduras, Nicaragua and Guatemala
Executing agency/agencies	International Labour Organization (ILO)
Implementing agency/agencies	ILO
Source of funds	Netherlands

The ETEDPI project places the greatest importance on the mainstreaming of gender equality, giving priority to the participation of indigenous women in educational projects and addressing their specific needs in all of the processes and activities that have been developed.

Nicaragua

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 hun-

dred and twelve Chorotega indigenous persons—91 women and 121 men—are participating in the project.

*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 6,000 beneficiaries of whom 52 per cent are women and 48 per cent are men) will benefit indirectly. This exercise will be carried out in coordination with the municipality and relevant trade unions.

*Initiative of the adaptation of the model of friendly
and healthy schools to a model of a
“Friendly and healthy indigenous school” in Nicaragua*

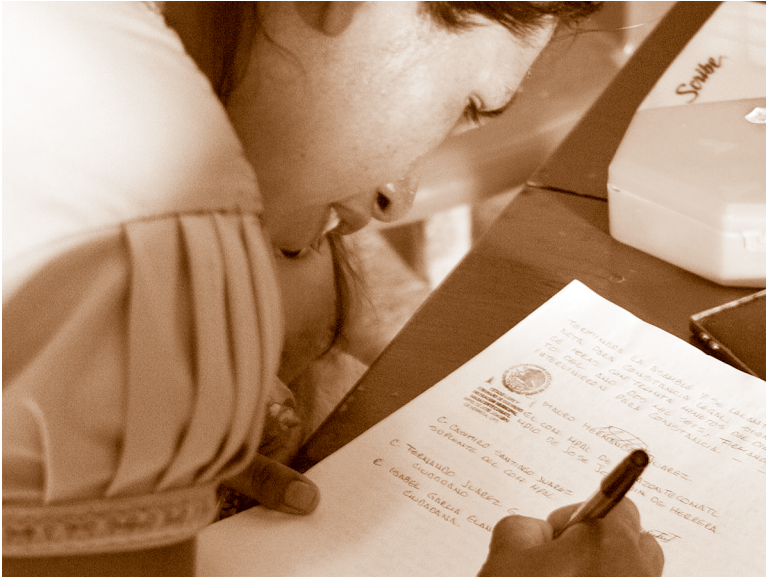
This project is carried out in the Nucleus of Autonomous Rural Schools (NERA), which includes nine multigrade schools and will benefit 844 students and 38 teachers directly. Indirectly, 25 communal leaders will benefit as well—13 men and 12 women—as well as the schools’ consultative councils.

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 which 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 in accessing the labour market.

*Initiative to train for the creation of tourism
microenterprises in Nicaragua*

This initiative will benefit 50 indigenous people, 25 men and 25 women, who aspire to the creation of microenterprises for communal tourism. The indigenous communities benefited will be: Matagalpa, of the Caacopera people; Sebaco, San Juan de Oriente, Monimbó and Nindirí, of the Chorotega people; and Nancimi and Salinas de Nagualapa, of the Nahoa people.



Emmanuel Audelo

“The women’s economic agenda” in Nicaragua

The ETEDPI project has actively participated in the United Nations Development Fund for Women–United Nations Development Programme (UNIFEM-UNDP) project entitled “The women’s economic agenda”, specifically to incorporate consideration of the needs and particular characteristics of indigenous women in matters of education and employment.

Honduras

In Honduras, the project’s representatives are the Honduran National Indigenous Women’s Coordinating Organization (Coordinadora Nacional de Mujeres Indígenas de Honduras (CONAMINH)) and the Honduran Indigenous Peoples Federation (Confederación de Pueblos Autóctonos de Honduras (CONPAH)), which groups the nine federations representing the nine indigenous peoples in the country.

Methodology of education for working with indigenous peoples

Communal development planning. A process of evaluation of former processes and projects in which pilot communities had participated was initiated in order to ensure that the planning process would be sustained by the communities’ own experiences and needs, which can be immediate or longer term. Special consideration was given to the handling of the time frame of the planning process so that it would be in accordance with the

communities' own timing patterns and their own socio-organizational dynamics. The Honduran National Indigenous Women's Coordinating Organization has also participated in developing self-esteem and motivational dialogues to promote the participation of indigenous women. The participants have the capacity to develop and demonstrate aptitude for collective endeavour. The outcome has been a communal development plan that includes ideas for productive and social projects for each of the participating communities.

The National Institute for Women has helped initiate joint action to benefit a greater number of indigenous women more effectively.

Guatemala

Literacy training

The literacy training process benefits nine communities from five Departments in the country, inhabited by the two most numerous peoples in the country: the Q'eqchi' and the K'iche'. Even though it had been expected that 75 per cent of the beneficiaries would be women, the data indicate that female participation was approximately 60 per cent of a total population of 180 persons. Access to literacy training in remote communities is essential if they are to attain an educational level that will allow them to access other capacity-building courses in tourism, comprehend basic aspects of administration, and ultimately carry out their projects in order to become sustainable.

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 per cent of these students are women.

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

The National Federation of Communal Tourism in Guatemala has adopted a policy of mainstreaming decent work, especially its aspects that concern gender equity and specific support to the prevention of child labour, into the participating projects on communal tourism.

Achievements

- Active participation of indigenous women in education processes and in the productive projects was achieved.
- The project has involved and benefited indigenous peoples across the full spectrum of age groups.

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 reciprocity among the indigenous beneficiaries was the basis for the implementation of the activities.

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Legal Empowerment of the Indigenous Peoples in Central America

Project title	Legal Empowerment of the Indigenous Peoples in Central America
Thematic area/programme	Rights promotion
Location	Central America
Beneficiaries	Indigenous women in Central America
Executing agency/agencies	International Labour Organization Subregional Office in San José, Costa Rica
Implementing agency/agencies	Enlace Continental de Mujeres Indígenas (Continental Network of Indigenous Women), Proyecto "Mujer y Acuerdo de Paz" (Project "Woman and Peace Agreement"), of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Guatemala
Source of funds	United Nations Fund for International Partnerships (UNFIP)

Overview

There still exists a considerable need to build the awareness and capacity of indigenous peoples with respect to learning about and protecting their rights as outlined in various international instruments, most significantly ILO Convention No. 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries, 1989.

A further challenge entails the tensions that arise as indigenous women seek to claim both their collective rights as indigenous peoples and their 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 that are advocating for collective rights. Furthermore, there is uncertainty over 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 entitled "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 the resolution of the above-mentioned tensions arising from their efforts to claim both their collective and their individual rights.

- The project grants maximum importance to the full and equitable participation of indigenous women in all due activities. Special and constant efforts will be made to ensure that this target is achieved.
- Indigenous women will need to identify and develop contexts such as those of indigenous persons and women, within which to define and explore the characteristic features peculiar to and inherent in this dual identity. The project will help them to define their aspirations, especially in relation to the fundamental principle defined by Convention No. 169, which gives priority to recognized international human rights.
- Public entities such as ombudsman's offices (involving attorneys, commissioners or ombudsmen) will incorporate more effectively in their specific programmes on gender and training the most important topics for indigenous women.

Workshops/meetings/demonstrations conducted

Third Continental Meeting of Indigenous Women

The project aided and financially supported this event, where 72 indigenous women from 17 countries on the American continent participated in the Continental Network of the Americas. The overall objectives of the meeting encompassed empowering the participation of indigenous women at community, national and international levels, and providing at each level the unique perspective of indigenous women.

Further objectives were strengthening organizational and leadership know-how among indigenous women and strengthening communications within the Continental Network of Indigenous Women.

The issues that were discussed were the Beijing Declaration¹ and Platform for Action,² confronting the outcome of the five-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2000 World March of Women. Owing to the interest expressed by the participants themselves, a space was dedicated to a discussion on ILO Convention No. 169.

The Continental Demonstration of Indigenous Women was held at the end of this event. 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 No. 169 by the countries that had not yet done so.

¹ *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

² *Ibid.*, annex.

Achievements

At the Third Continental Meeting of Indigenous Women, the participants spoke of the difficulties involved in carrying out the mandate of the Commission for Training of the Continental Network of Indigenous Women. This first step concluded with the Regional Training Programme, which was the direct outcome of a response to the request.

Workshop entitled "Negociando nuestra autonomía" ("Negotiating our autonomy")

The Workshop, held in Coronado, San José, Costa Rica, and organized by the National Association of Indigenous Peoples and Rural Women (Asociación Coordinadora Nacional de Mujeres Indígenas y Campesinas (ACONAMIC)), was aimed at indigenous women of the Ngöbe Buglé people.

Achievements

Twenty-six women, representing the communities of Alto San Antonio, Río Claro, Punta Burica, Alto Abrojo Montezuma, Compte Burica and Guatuso, were trained and will replicate the workshop experience through sharing the knowledge acquired with their communities.

Workshop entitled "Pregnancy among Adolescents and Convention 169"

The Workshop was held in the community of Narasgandup Bipi, in the Autonomous Territory of Kuna Yala, Panama, within the context of the Regional Meeting of the Kuna Women (Encuentro Sectorial de Mujeres Kunas (OLOWAILI)).

Achievements

Forty-four indigenous women from the Kunas attended the Workshop. They analysed the social problem of the high incidence of adolescent pregnancy in their State (*comarca*) from their own cultural and political cosmovision, establishing a relationship with the lack of acknowledgement of their legal rights as part of an indigenous group of people, and rallied for a quick ratification of ILO Convention No. 169.

Workshop on Legal Training intended for indigenous women belonging to the Tolupan people in Honduras

The Workshop, held in the community of El Siriano, in the department of Yoro, Honduras, from 16 to 18 May 2000, was co-organized by Akistimiura kep and the Unidad de la Mujer Tolupán de Yoro Francisco Morazán–AKTYFM (Unit of the Tolupan Woman of Yoro and Francisco Morazán). The training centred on the following subjects:



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- (a) The rights of indigenous peoples: ILO and indigenous peoples: its competence, past record and the rights proclaimed by Convention No. 169 and the mechanisms for its implementation;
- (b) The rights of indigenous women:
 - (i) Traditions and customs and our rights as indigenous women;
 - (ii) The human rights of indigenous women;
 - (iii) The law on domestic violence and equal opportunity in Honduras;
 - (iv) The Beijing Platform for Action, especially in regard to indigenous women.

Achievements

Fifty-six women from 24 indigenous peoples were trained. They will be multipliers of the knowledge acquired within their communities.

Legal Workshop entitled "Conozcamos nuestros derechos" ("Let's know our rights")

The Workshop, aimed at indigenous women, was held in the city of Bilwi, in the Autonomous Region of the North Atlantic, with the objective of training indigenous women of the Miskito people from the communities of Sandy Bay, Pahra, Awastara, Krukira, Tuapi, Wawa Bar, Karata and Haulover.

Issues 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 No. 169. The Workshop was carried out with simultaneous translation into the Miskito language. Distributed and also translated into Miskito were learning materials about indigenous women's rights, namely, "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, on reforms and additions made to criminal law to prevent and punish violence within the family.

Achievements

Eighty-six community leaders and women were organized as the Indigenous Women's Association of the Atlantic Coast (Asociación de Mujeres Indígenas de la Costa Atlántica (AMICA)) and will replicate the experience and share the knowledge acquired within their 43 communities.

Workshop on Discrimination towards Indigenous Women

The Workshop was held in Guatemala in the four linguistic regions.

Achievements

As a result of the Workshop, a popular notebook was produced entitled "Using the Maya dress is a right", available on the Internet from www.oit.or.cr/unfip.

Workshop with Indigenous Organizations

The Workshop, with its emphasis on the indigenous woman's rights, was organized by the Ministry of Labour.

Achievements

Thirty women from the Patzún community are now informed with regard to a series of laws that recognize the rights of women.

Specialization Course for Women and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples within the Inter-American System

Technical assistance for the course was organized by the Centro de Estudios e Información de la Mujer Multiétnica (CEIMM) (Centre for Studies and Information on the Multi-ethnic Woman) of the Universidad de las Regiones Autónomas de la Costa Caribe Nicaragüense (URACCAN) (University of the Autonomous Regions of the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua) (CEIMM-URACCAN).

Achievements

Forty-five indigenous women from 12 Latin American countries are now knowledgeable on the Inter-American System for the Protection of Human Rights, as well as existing ILO mechanisms, conventions and recommendations.



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Learning materials that specifically target indigenous women

The project, carried out in conjunction with indigenous women themselves, has been developing its own conceptualization of the specific rights of indigenous women.

Furthermore, aware of the inequalities that occur in respect of the exercise by indigenous women of their individual rights, especially economic, social and cultural rights, the project has created guides, manuals and videos, especially aimed at women who are not organized and who live in communities where they do not have access to the information, on their own due rights. These materials include:

- Gabriela Olguín, video entitled *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”
- Doris Bill and Gabriela Olguín, “I am an indigenous woman and I know my rights”
- Lina Barrios, “Using the Maya costume is a right”

Regional Training Programme

The Programme is the outcome of an important synergy between UNDP/ Guatemala and the culmination of several consultancies, ratifications, meetings etc. that were held over a period of approximately 32 months,

for the purpose of creating the Regional Training Programme. This Programme was created to support the commitment of the subregional commission for the training of indigenous women (Enlace Continental (Continental Network)) and was an outcome of agreements committed to during the Tercera Reunión Inter-Institucional (Third Inter-agency Meeting). The following is a chronological outline of the process developed for the creation of the Programme.

March 2000

The Third Continental Meeting of Indigenous Women was held in Panama City. The Enlace Continental de Mujeres Indígenas (Continental Network of Indigenous Women) offers a space for dialogue and exchange and deliberations and provides the opportunity for indigenous women to put forth their own proposals. It is organized into three sub-networks corresponding to the northern, central and southern regions and works through the following Commissions: the Commission for Training, the Commission for Commercialization/Marketing and Copyrights, the Commission for International Instruments and the Commission for Communications.

During this meeting, Honduras and Guatemala were selected to implement the programme of the Commission for Training for the central subregion of the Network.

May 2000

The Third Inter-agency Meeting on Indigenous Peoples was held in San José, Costa Rica. Among the agreements reached at this Meeting was one on the exchange of information between the agencies regarding gender and on work with the regional networks of indigenous women. A follow-up committee was created with UNDP/Guatemala, the ILO Project, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) and the Fondo para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas de América Latina y El Caribe—Fondo Indígena (Indigenous Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples in Latin America and the Caribbean), maintaining the ILO Project as the link.

2000

UNDP/Guatemala and the ILO Project initiated conversations with the Continental Network of Indigenous Women to assist in the implementation of a training programme for indigenous women of the region.

September-October 2000

Indigenous women organizations of the region that belonged to the Continental Network of Indigenous Women were initially consulted regarding their needs in terms of training.

November 2000

UNDP/Guatemala and the ILO Project hired a consultant to carry out the systematization of the data results and the production of a proposal from the Regional Training Programme for Indigenous Women.

December 2000

The validation workshop, entitled “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”), was held in Guatemala City to discuss and facilitate input for the Regional Training Programme for Indigenous Women. The meeting was sponsored by the ILO Project and UNDP/Guatemala. The Workshop made use of an entertainment dynamic that permitted the attendees to envision future scenes as indigenous women and as persons belonging to indigenous peoples. In attendance were some 30 women from Central American countries and Mexico belonging to indigenous organizations that were part of the Continental Network of Indigenous Women, as well as other indigenous organizations. Mexico became part of the subregional network, as it did not have a commission for training in the northern region.

June 2001

After the input had been received at the workshop of the women themselves, the final proposal for the Regional Training Programme for Indigenous Women was put forth.

March 2002

There was now an educational guide on the specific rights of indigenous women for the training workshops and an accompanying video. These were the outcomes of the December 2000 workshop.

October 2002

There was an official presentation by the Regional Training Programme to the Continental Network of Indigenous Women.

Negotiation processes led by indigenous women

In the indigenous territory of Rey Curré, Costa Rica, the organization *Mujeres con espíritu de lucha* (Women with struggling spirit) has been created to tackle the threat of the construction of the hydroelectric dam in their territory. This is an example where engagement in the negotiation processes supported by the project have been led by women.

Ombudsman's Office for Indigenous Women in Guatemala

Guatemala is the only country to have an ombudsman's office for indigenous women. The agreement to create an ombudsman office was included in the Agreement on Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples, in which the national Government promised to promote the dissemination of, and faithfully abide by, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women³ and other legal instruments relating to the rights of indigenous peoples that had been ratified by the Government of Guatemala, creating an indigenous ombudsman office. It was determined that women should participate in its operation and that the ombudsman office should offer legal aid and social services, among others.

The project offered technical assistance to the ombudsman's office in the execution of the project entitled "Promotion of the Rights of Indigenous Women" which was sponsored by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)/Guatemala. The technical assistance given was in developing the strategy for consulting on the specific rights of indigenous women within the 24 linguistic communities of Guatemala. For this purpose, the following activities were conducted:

- 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 intrinsic to indigenous women because they belong to a people that is separated from the rest of the national society) and an evaluation of the existing inability of indigenous women to exercise certain of those human rights considered to be universal, as well as a workbook designed to systematize the data from the consultation and training

Achievements

The conclusions arrived at were useful to the Ombudsman's Office for Indigenous Women in Guatemala in respect of its having access to an analysis of the real situation of indigenous women in their communities. This would be aimed at addressing situations where the indigenous woman in the country was particularly vulnerable, defenceless and discriminated against.

What the strategy was

- To develop a systematic programme aimed at promoting: analysis and reform of existing legislation, legal training, and broad-

³ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1249, No. 20378.

based interaction involving indigenous organizations, public authorities and other social actors in the legal field

- To promote awareness of indigenous people's rights, especially indigenous women's rights, as reflected in one of the outputs, the development of an illustrated guide to be used by indigenous peoples
- To provide a forum for a number of indigenous women's organizations in Central America and Mexico, as reflected in another output of the project which included a conference held in December 2000 in Guatemala entitled "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") and the resulting video
- To contribute to local discussions on the topic of indigenous women's rights and facilitate the collective search for solutions, which was the intention of the video

Who was involved

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

Specific changes resulting from the project

The project, in its 46 months of promoting activities, has achieved important and noteworthy results, among which the following may be highlighted:

1. Our working capital encompasses the confidence and faith that emanates 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 peoples.
4. Some of the trained legal teams have initiated actions in the national courts to present the cases with which they have been entrusted by indigenous organizations and/or communities. For example, cases in Panama and Costa Rica currently await final resolution in the courts of those countries. The cases are in defence of the indigenous territories as regards the construction

of the Tabasará II Hydroelectric Dam, and the delimitation and transfer of land registration of Boruca and Terraba indigenous territories, respectively.

5. Other legal teams have opted for an activist strategy and/or negotiation. This is the case for the legal team of Guatemala, which has undertaken the defence of the Communal Forest of Totonicapán. The legal team of Costa Rica is negotiating for the approval of the *Ley del Desarrollo Autónomo de los Pueblos Indígenas* (Law for the Autonomous Development of Indigenous Peoples).
6. On the other hand, a lawsuit has already been successfully concluded, aided by the project. The case in point concerns an appeal to the Constitutional Court, promoted by the legal teams and the communities affected by the oil concessions on Costa Rica's Caribbean coast. The Supreme Constitutional Court of Costa Rica, in 2000-08019 of 8 September 2000, annulled the allocation to MKL-XPSLORATION (resolution R-702 of the Ministry of Environment and Energy (MINAE)) and urged that the Government should promote consultations with the indigenous peoples concerned, according to ILO Convention No. 169. Furthermore, there has been a request made to the Government for compensation for possible damages.
7. The production of educational materials has been noteworthy. These include the *Serie Guías Legales* (Series of Legal Guides), *Serie Normativa* (Normative Series) and *Jurisprudencia Indígena* (Indigenous Jurisprudence), teaching materials designed to create awareness of 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 was the case for the studies entitled "Condiciones laborales de los Buzos Miskitos de Nicaragua" (Working conditions of the Miskito Divers of Nicaragua) and "Condiciones de las comunidades indígenas de El Salvador" (Conditions of the indigenous communities of El Salvador) issued after the earthquake of 2001.
8. The educational material has been distributed to the indigenous peoples and organizations of the subregion and also, on many occasions, to indigenous organizations and peoples of Mexico and South America that have requested copies.
9. Initial steps have been taken for the establishment of alliances to bring indigenous organizations and labour organizations closer together to ensure the effective use of existing ILO mechanisms, conventions and recommendations for the defence of indigenous people's rights.

10. Efforts were made to train and create awareness among public authorities in the countries covered by the project, resulting in the attainment of significant breakthroughs. A ruling was obtained from the Attorney General of Panama, recommending a discussion on ILO Convention No. 169 at a plenary session of the Legislative Assembly.
11. The Executive Power of Panama has reached an agreement with the Indigenous Congresses to submit ILO Convention No. 169 for the consideration of the Legislative Assembly at a plenary.
12. Another achievement was the full support for the Indigenous Parliament in respect of the legislative lawsuits of the indigenous peoples of Nicaragua.
13. Owing 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 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. The use of this mechanism often extends beyond the subregion, since on various occasions indigenous organizations and 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 to their specific needs has been remarkable.
16. Numerous workshops for training and dissemination aimed at indigenous women have been organized.
17. A Regional Training Programme 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 have 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 given to State organisms that were designated as responsible for examining particular situations where indigenous women might have been vulnerable, defenceless or discriminated against, as is the case for the Ombudsman's Office for Indigenous Women in Guatemala.
21. Dissemination of information on indigenous peoples' rights and laws has been encouraged through educational material, videos and public announcements via radio, with a view to se-

- curing a greater involvement of society at the national level in recognizing and respecting those rights.
22. People and organizations of the subregion regularly consult the website of the project. Such involvement has often extended beyond the subregion, since on various occasions indigenous organizations or State organisms of Mexico and South America were given legal advice or educational materials.
 23. Important synergies have been created with other organizations of the United Nations system especially UNDP, UNICEF and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Guatemala, and with the International Human Rights Law Institute of DePaul University College of Law (Chicago, Illinois).
 24. A minimum Agenda for the Defence of Indigenous Peoples' Rights was developed to support organizations and indigenous peoples in their strategies for the defence, respect and fulfilment of their rights as individuals and collectives after the project was concluded.

Replication/spin-off 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 transmitted to other groups and persons in such a way as to ensure that at each transmission there will be an ever-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 both lasting products that will continue to be useful to indigenous peoples and their advisers in the creation of effective strategies and powerful tools for protecting and safeguarding their rights.

The labour union organizations constitute essential spokespersons on existing ILO mechanisms for implementation of the norms and recommendations; therefore, the synergies between these organizations and the indigenous organizations are vital. The project initiated a process of reconciliation to bring them closer. It would be highly advantageous for this truly innovative unification process to continue, as it would contribute, through the powerful strategies shared by both groups of organizations, to the fulfilment of the project's fundamental objectives.

The project has provided a unique experience to the subregion and it would be highly desirable for ILO through its headquarters in San José, which has generated high visibility and credibility in this regard, to continue its support of 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 the aforementioned legal provisions, so that they will yield tangible benefits to indigenous peoples in their everyday life.

The experience derived from the project has demonstrated the need for a more integral strategy that will take into consideration the aspects of income-generation and economic empowerment within a framework encompassing the recognition and exercise of the rights of indigenous peoples.

The above-mentioned fundamental principles and rights are invested with a special importance and meaning in the work sphere for the members of indigenous peoples owing to the fact that they face social exclusion and discrimination. The project has made efforts to apply the new integral perspective to the launch of international labour standards and their use by the members of indigenous peoples, especially the fundamental conventions strategically linked to indigenous issues. It would be of the utmost relevance to continue this strategy and to be able to focus the different activities of the ILO Subregional Office in accordance with this vision.

What was learned

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

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Indigenous women and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

Latin America

Strengthening of the Family and Improvement of the Sexual and Reproductive Health of the Ngöbe Indigenous People, Ngöbe Indigenous People Territory, Panama

Project title	Strengthening of the Family and Improvement of the Sexual and Reproductive Health of the Ngöbe Indigenous People (PAN/00/P01) (Fortalecimiento de la Familia y Mejoramiento de Salud Sexual y Reproductiva del Pueblo Ngöbe)	
Thematic area/programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual and reproductive health • Gender equality and empowerment of women • Interactions among population dynamics, sustainable development and poverty 	
Project duration	2000–2005	
Location	Ngöbe Indigenous People Territory, Panama	
Beneficiaries	32 communities in the districts of Nole Duima and Mirono, Indigenous People Territory, Panama	
Executing agency/agencies	Ministry of Health Panama, Regional Direction, Ngöbe Indigenous People Territory	
Implementing agency/agencies	Ministry of Health Panama (MOH) Ngöbe Women's Association (ASMUNG)	
Source of funds	Ministry of Health:	US\$ 394,548.00
	ASMUNG:	US\$ 23,025.00
	UNFPA:	US\$ 299,460.00
	United Nations Volunteers Programme:	US\$ 50,940.00
	Fondo Canada Panama:	US\$ 32,018.00
	Budget planned:	US\$ 799,991.00
	Budget executed:	US\$ 1,321,416.13

Overview

According to the 1990 demographic census, the indigenous peoples of Panama represent 8.3 per cent of the total population. The Ngöbe people are the largest group, with roughly 110,080 people (Dirección de Estadís-

tica y Censos de la Contraloría General de la República, 2005) living in the Ngöbe Territory. In 1997, it was estimated that 95 per cent of the indigenous population were poor and of these 86 per cent were extremely poor. This situation seems to have worsened since then: in 2003 it was estimated that 98.4 per cent of the indigenous people were poor and that 90 per cent lived in extreme poverty.

The maternal mortality rate in rural areas including indigenous areas was estimated in 2000 to be 90 per 100,000 live births compared with 30 per 100,000 live births in urban areas. This situation would worsen in succeeding years, with ratios as high as 130 per 100,000 live births in rural areas, while the ratios would remain stable in urban areas. In the Ngöbe Territory in 2003, the maternal mortality ratio was 283 per 100,000 live births.

Other large inequities were observed in indigenous territories, as shown in the table below.

Indicator 1997 (Ministry of Economy and Finance, 1997 census)	Total country	Urban	Rural indigenous
Average time needed to reach a health service (<i>minutes</i>)	33	25	59
<i>Percentage</i>			
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 public or private health institution	86.4	98.5	32.2
Birth attended at home	13.2	1.4	67.9
Birth attended at other place	0.3	0.2	0.0

Fecundity rates in the indigenous population were as high as 5.4 per cent, compared with the national average of 2.7 per cent (Informe del Banco Mundial, 2000).

The literacy rate among the Ngöbe population is 21 per cent, while the average number of years of schooling is three. The situation is worse for Ngöbe girls, who are expected to marry and bear children soon after puberty.

What was planned

The goal was to contribute to the advancement of the quality of life of Ngöbe women, couples and families by improving sexual and reproductive health, reducing gender inequalities in the family and the community, and promoting a reduction in maternal mortality ratios.

The objective was to contribute to the improvement of sexual and reproductive health, with an emphasis on preventing maternal mortality in 1,000 families in 32 communities of the Nole Duima and Mirono districts in the Ngöbe Territory.

Intermediary results

- A network of health agents has been strengthened to support the primary health-care system and to promote family and 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 and national and local actors are committed to developing and implementing policies and actions with the objective of improving health services for indigenous peoples

What the strategy was

- 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's Association to promote the project among the communities
- To prepare the Ngöbe Women's Association for sustaining the project when it is completed
- To implement information, education and communication activities
- To carry out information, education and communication (IEC) strategies among families and communities pertaining to sexual and reproductive health and gender equality
- To train 60 health agents/promoters on family and community, sexual and reproductive health and gender themes (traditional birth attendants, teachers, traditional practitioners, including young people, etc.)

- To improve the delivery of health services through:
 - ♦ The machinery of the primary health-care network
 - ♦ Training of health workers on family and community, sexual and reproductive health and gender themes
 - ♦ Improvement of information registration
 - ♦ Promotion of the expansion of the primary health-care network
 - ♦ Strengthening of the referral system to encompass the secondary level

Who was involved

- Canadian International Development Agency (ACDI)
- Asociación Nacional Contra el Cáncer (ANCEC)
- Asociación Panameña para el Planeamiento de la Familia (APLAFA)
- Ngöbe Women's Association (ASMUNG)
- Ministry of Health, Panama
- United Nations Population Fund
- United Nations Volunteers Programme
- Fondo Canadá Panamá
- German Technical Cooperation
- Universidad Latina
- Instituto de Formación y Aprovechamiento de Recursos Humanos (IFARHU)
- Instituto Nacional de Formación Profesional (INAFOR)
- Federación Panameña de Estudiantes de Medicina (FEPSEM)
- FORTUNA, S.A. (a Canadian private hydroelectric company)
- Medical Association of Panama
- Ministry of Youth and the Family (now Ministry of Social Development)
- Ministry of Education
- Secondary level referral Hospital San Félix
- Tertiary level referral Hospital José Domingo de Obaldía
- McGill University
- University of Chiriqui

Specific changes resulting from the project

- An information, education and communication programme on themes such as family and community, sexual and reproductive health and gender, adapted for the Ngöbe indigenous population



Ebinia Santos

- Significant technical, administrative and personal empowerment of the Ngöbe Women's Association
- Strengthening of a number of primary health-care health units (more staff, more resources, better equipment, greater knowledge, more activities, development of a Basic Obstetric Emergency Centre in the Indigenous Community of Hato Chami)
- Contribution to the formulation of the National Plan to Reduce Maternal and Neonatal Mortality (2004-2005)
- 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

There exists vulnerability with respect to:

- Changes in government and government priorities
- Lack of a general development plan for the Ngöbe indigenous territory that combines sexual and reproductive health themes with poverty reduction themes
- High rotation of health staff and weak leadership from the Ministry of Health

Replication/spin-off effects

The project continues through IFAD/UNFPA funding to strengthen its basis and expand the population covered. At the end of the second phase, a civil society–Government co-managed model through which to address sexual and reproductive health issues affecting the Ngöbe indigenous peoples in difficult-to-reach areas—one that is culturally sensitive, evidence-based and strong—will be available. National health authorities in Panama will possess tools with which to orient public policies and to expand efforts to improve the sexual and reproductive health of indigenous peoples in difficult-to-reach areas. The project will contribute to improving access to quality sexual and reproductive health services and to strengthening the demand for those services for indigenous peoples in difficult-to-reach areas. The ultimate goal is to ensure that all indigenous couples and individuals in difficult-to-reach areas enjoy good reproductive health including the right to make voluntary informed choices regarding the size of their families and to enjoy sexual health throughout life.

What was learned

- There is a need to take into account, in the planning of the project activities, large distances, difficult terrain, rainy weather and poor communication, as well as seasonal migration of indigenous people for farming purposes.
- There is a need to supervise systematically all project activities.
- There is a need for more project personnel to work at the community level in difficult terrain.
- There is a need for permanent and systematic advocacy on sexual and reproductive themes to achieve a wider acceptance.
- Men need to be targeted in the project activities.
- Sexual and reproductive health issues need to be joined to general development programmes in areas of indigenous populations.
- 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's Association played an outstanding role, supported by UNFPA, health, community and project staff. The perseverance of these individuals and organizations and their

commitment to changing the alarming sexual and reproductive health situation of the Ngöbe indigenous peoples contributed to sustaining the project through difficult periods.

- Coordination existed among interested partners with respect to sexual and reproductive health, specifically regarding training of traditional birth attendants.

Obstacles or problems identified during the project

- Sexual and reproductive health of the indigenous people is presented only from an occidental point of view; there is a limited number of facilitators with knowledge of the sexual and reproductive health practices or the cosmovision of indigenous people.
- There is no intercultural service provision model that has been institutionalized or that is being taught in schools and medical/nursing training institutions.
- Despite the empowerment and strengthening of the Ngöbe Women's Association, expansion of its membership and decentralization of its management are needed to foster future growth and sustainability.
- There are insufficient incentives for health agents/promoters.
- Traditional birth attendants are not fully accepted owing to cultural and institutional factors.
- Social organization and audit capacity in the areas of sexual and reproductive health are only just beginning.
- Weak information and record systems exist at the project and health services levels.
- There is weak coordination among regional health units.
- Communication and interaction are poor among the different levels of the health-care system.
- There are insufficient budgetary provisions for the Ngöbe Indigenous Territory, including for intercultural sexual and reproductive health programmes.
- Discrimination against indigenous peoples persists.
- There is very limited access by the youth to sexual and reproductive health-related information, education and service opportunities on sexual and reproductive health.

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Jambi Huasi Health Clinic, Otavalo, Ecuador

Project title	Jambi Huasi Health Clinic
Thematic area/programme	Reproductive and sexual health
Project duration	2003-2005
Location	Otavalo, Ecuador
Beneficiaries	Indigenous population
Executing agency/agencies	Jambi Huasi
Implementing agency/agencies	United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
Source of funds	UNFPA

Overview

As part of its national strategy to address the needs of the poorest, underserved communities, the UNFPA 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 had been 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, 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 2 indigenous medical doctors and 2 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 had been set up initially 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 places 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 indigenous medicine

- To strengthen cultural comprehension of the causes of sickness through an effective doctor/patient relationship and a world view adapted to the cultural reality of the indigenous and mestizo populations
- Broadening the level of problem solving by complementing indigenous medicine with occidental medicine through a system of internal referrals and by providing, if needed, a referral to a health centre with greater resources

What the strategy was

Attempting to combine the two systems of obstetric care, Jambi Huasi seeks, on the one hand, to respect the confidence that indigenous women have placed in traditional birth attendants owing to the role that they play in the community and, on the other hand, to offer an institutional service with the technical capabilities to resolve complications and a referral system in case of obstetric 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 among women, families and communities. By offering direct, customized information in their proper language, these community visits built confidence and motivated people to visit Jambi Huasi, benefiting from its services and setting up consultations.

From the beginning, UNFPA, in its focus and its work, was respectful of the cosmovision, recognizing that one could not approach indigenous peoples in the same way as one approached a mestizo population. The support of UNFPA aimed at strengthening the capacity to develop and take the lead in an intercultural project for health.

Who was involved

From the beginning, Jambi Huasi took the initiative and asked UNFPA for technical and financial support. Over 10 years, Jambi Huasi established links and networks, particularly with local government, the Ministry of Health, other United Nations organizations such as UNICEF, the Pan-American Health Organization, universities and non-governmental organizations.

In November 2005, Jambi Huasi organized an international seminar on the intercultural approach to maternal health which was supported by UNFPA, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), UNICEF, Family Care International, the Quality Assurance Project, Municipio de Otavalo, the National Commission for Women (Ecuador), the Ministry of Public Health (Ecuador) and Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar.



UNFPA Ecuador

Specific changes resulting from the project

- As Quechua communities learn more about reproductive health issues and how to take better care of their children and newborns, the contraceptive prevalence rate rose from 10 to 40 per cent in areas served by Jambi Huasi.
- Jambi Huasi changed the way health services were offered in traditional communities by making them totally community-based, thereby fostering rapid and lasting improvements in the reproductive health of women, adolescents and men.
- Jambi Huasi changed the perspective of health to one encompassing a combination of traditional and occidental medicine. At the moment, mestizo and indigenous peoples are using the services of Jambi Huasi.
- A gender focus within a cultural perspective was incorporated. Initially, gender was not a subject for consideration by Jambi Huasi. Currently, violence against women is also an issue that is tackled in the centre.
- Jambi Huasi has contributed to the empowerment of indigenous people. Indigenous organizations and particularly women took responsibility for sexual and reproductive health and learned how to make decisions affecting their own lives, on the community level, and how to influence public policies.

- Jambi Huasi is moving from a “pilot” project to public policies, lobbying the Ministry of Health for the inclusion of cultural perspectives in its work.

Sustainability

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

Replication/spin-off effects

Jambi Huasi is an example of a grass-roots organization manifesting political will and technical capacity. It is hardly conceivable that this experience could be replicated as a “model”. However, what could be replicated are the principles applied in Jambi Huasi, namely:

- Grass-roots participation and empowerment
- Commitment of indigenous leaders, women and men
- Political will of local and national authorities
- Inclusion of different perspectives on health, there being no one single approach, only differences in knowledge and beliefs related to culture. Success is linked to the recognition of and respect for different approaches

What was learned

- An intercultural undertaking must consider the heterogeneity of the population, and its beliefs, culture and cosmology, accepting the emerging differences. It should not only be concerned about the adaptation of the services, through, for example, changing the birthing position, but also work to overcome the more profound obstacles related to long-lasting racial prejudice including disrespectful attitudes towards language and indigenous beliefs and the lack of gracious and respectful private care.
- Occidental medical knowledge and indigenous medical knowledge are complementary rather than in opposition to each other and both need to be promoted in the training of health professionals in universities and training centres. This implies an attitude of respect and acknowledgement of the values of the other cultures.

- An intercultural approach to reproductive health needs to start with an acknowledgement of the cosmovision proper to the indigenous world. Consideration of conceptions of sexuality, the body, health and sickness, community participation and the physical environment, among other things, are important in reshaping health services to accommodate cultural differences. Referrals by an occidental health system to a service including indigenous medicine, and vice versa, are possible only if there exists a basis of confidence in, and acknowledgement and valorization of, different types of knowledge.
- Cultural identity is a reinforcing element with respect to the achievement of personal, family, community and social well-being.
- Jambi Huasi illustrates how—through the striving for intercultural access to health care that respects the equality of indigenous women, indigenous people in general and mestizos—citizenship can be built based on equality of rights and duties and the elimination of gender, racial, ethnic and generational discrimination.

Factors contributing to success

The presence of women doctors of indigenous descent trained in Western medicine yet having a strong identity and bearing a legacy of cosmovision was an important factor in the service's becoming defined as intercultural.

Obstacles or problems identified during the project

Some resistance was felt towards having a non-governmental organization like Jambi Huasi lead a process of developing intercultural medicine, inasmuch as there existed a specific division within the Ministry assigned to deal with this issue.

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Indigenous women and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

Latin America

Prevention of Gender Violence towards Young Women and Teenagers in Situations of or at High Risk for Violent Relationships in El Alto, Bolivia

Project title	Prevention of Gender Violence towards Young Women and Teenagers in Situations of or at High Risk for Violent Relationships
Thematic area/programme	Violence against women
Project duration	Two years and eight months (June 2002–February 2005)
Location	El Alto, Bolivia
Beneficiaries	Young women and teenagers in El Alto
Executing agency/agencies	UNIFEM Andean region
Implementing agency/agencies	Centro de Promoción de la Mujer Gregoria Apaza (CPMGA)
Source of funds	Trust Fund for the Elimination of Violence against Women, New York

Overview

Since 1995, the Gregoria Apaza Centre has been developing activities to raise awareness and prevent violence against adult women. In 2002, after a process of institutional deliberation and participatory consultation with adolescents and young women, their violent relationships were identified as another manifestation of the problem of violence against women. This type of behaviour 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 part of romantic relationships. It goes unrecognized as a form of violence and is instead learned and experienced as something inherent to a woman's role within a relationship.

In Bolivia, there exist Law 1674 against Violence within the Family and a National Plan for the Eradication of Gender Violence. 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 behaviours that take place during the period prior to marriage. Violent relationships before marriage constitute 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

General objectives

- Decrease the incidence of violence in the relationships among adolescents and teenagers in El Alto through actions of prevention and assistance, thereby contributing to building a society characterized by gender equality
- Provide quality assistance to adolescents and young women in violent relationships
- Contribute to educational processes oriented towards transforming the situation of violence against women
- Generate public opinion on the issue and introduce into the public agenda both the issue and the lack of public policies addressing it

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 on the theme in El Alto

What the strategy was

The strategy had three dimensions:

Prevention

- Developing greater knowledge and greater skills among teenagers and for combating gender violence within schools
- Distributing information about human rights and gender violence with a view to training adolescents in schools and teenagers as leaders in the promotion of gender equity



UNIFEM Andean Region

- Creating greater public consciousness of gender violence, specifically as directed against adolescents and young women

Assistance

- Offering assistance with adequate methodologies to adolescents and women who are victims of gender violence
- Providing information to adolescents and teenagers on how to transform gender stereotypes within their relationships

Research

- Developing research demonstrating the significance 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 per cent of whom were women and 30 per cent of whom were men (36 per cent of the planned number).

- 1,508 youths were informed about the service and the results of the research.
- 294 youths participated as activists, approximately half of whom were men (59 per cent of the number hoped for).
- 1 teacher participated (of the 24 teachers hoped for).
- 26 programmes were broadcast.
- There were fairs promoting anti-violence in relationships, three theatre productions and two discussion panels.
- There were 14 meetings, which brought together 19 organizations that worked with youth to create the Inter-institutional Network of Youth in El Alto (RIDJEA).
- Research was presented and used as a basis for debates in workshops in high schools.

Sustainability

The organization maintains its commitment to continuing its support for the problem. This commitment is driven in large part by the statistics generated by legal services for women which report that almost 80 per cent of the cases that come before them mention sexual violence perpetrated by their partner even prior to their marriages, that is to say, starting with their initial courting. In 2005, a family psychologist and an educator were contracted to ensure the quality of the training portion of the project. The Centre has developed the following 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 youth, so as to include them in local and national public policy agendas
- *Financial:* allocation of \$10,000 for 2005 until new financing sources are found, with the objective of sustaining the provision of integrated services such as training activities and political participation

Replication/spin-off effects

The organization continues to work on the issue of violent relationships among adolescents and teenagers and it is currently seeking funding correlated with its experience.

What was learned

- Even for organizations that work in the area of violence against women, addressing this theme is relatively recent. It is accepted and almost normalized in a large part of society.



UN Photo/Isaac

- In contrast with the difficulties experienced by adult women in relationships, the difficulties experienced by young women in their first romantic relationships, though they do exist, are less dramatic. In respect of the participation of women in the presence of their male partners, we have confirmed that the difficulties for young women are not as great as those for adult women. Effective work with young women entails integrating young men into the process instead of dividing the work groups by gender. This has proved 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.
- The project plan must be flexible enough to respond to changing situations, since, sometimes, results cannot be achieved owing to circumstances that are impossible for the implementing organization to predict or to control.

Factors contributing to success

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

Obstacles or problems identified during the project

- There was not 100 per cent achievement of the project's objectives owing to the fact that:
 - ♦ Since 2000, there has been an intensification of protests from social and grass-roots organizations regarding access (or the lack thereof) to property and natural resources. These themes are a priority in the policy agendas of these organizations which treat the issue of violence against women differently;
 - ♦ There have been changes in the management of the implementing organization which have interrupted some of the activities.

Documentation/bibliography

Two DVDs documenting the experience

Eight advertisements and three radio programmes broadcasted by Radio Pachamama

Four publications used by the leaders in the training sessions against gender violence

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Indigenous Women: Local Development and Leadership Building, Saraguro, Ecuador

Project title	Indigenous Women: Local Development and Leadership Building (Mujeres Indígenas: Desarrollo Local y Construcción de Liderazgos)
Thematic area/programme	Engendering leadership and governance
Project duration	Two years (2000-2002)
Location	Saraguro, Ecuador
Beneficiaries	Indigenous women of Saraguro, technical staff of Corporación Mujer a Mujer, Council members of Saraguro Municipality and Saraguro municipal staff
Executing agency/agencies	Corporación Mujer a Mujer
Implementing agency/agencies	Corporación Mujer a Mujer
Source of funds	UNIFEM Trust Fund (Project No. ECU-96-WO1)

Overview

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

In the wake of democratic consolidation in Ecuador, members of the judiciary branch of government, in particular, sought to establish legitimacy by signalling 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 labour protection law (*Ley de Amparo Laboral*) set the level of the quota at 20 per cent.

In Ecuador, generally, it was expected that women would fill political positions so that the quota could be reached but not that women would make decisions or enter into negotiations. This was especially the case within the indigenous movement. Capabilities associated with being a good leader, such as skill in public speaking, articulateness and the ability to take the initiative, were not cultivated in indigenous women. As a result, on many occasions these women excluded themselves by not acting like leaders.

As a result of the success of the replicas, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (Andean Region office) (UNIFEM-AR) expanded

the Saraguro project in an attempt to meet increasing and new demands. The UNIFEM project entitled “Indigenous Women: Local Development and Leadership Building” was designed to address the need for a new generation of capable indigenous women leaders with experience on the local scene who would become models for future generations of women leaders to follow.

What was planned

The project had four components:

- 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, and decentralization
- A study of indigenous peoples’ access to justice in Saraguro
- 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
- Communication and dissemination (radio programme and bulletin) via eight programmes 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, women’s roles, and elections

What the strategy was

In the context of the invisibility of ethnic and gender demands and proposals, this project aimed towards: 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- and ethnic-conscious values and increasing the participation levels of indigenous women and indigenous organizations within the decision-making arena.

Furthermore, the project aimed at developing strategies to integrate engendered leadership and governance more fully into the programmes on violence against women, and on economic and social rights. This is in accordance with the belief of UNIFEM that ensuring that women are leaders in all aspects of their lives, both individually and collectively, will engender governance and compel adequate responses to situations of gender inequality and differences.



INDESIC

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
- Indigenous Women's Association of Saraguro (ASOMIS)
- Association of Indigenous Communities of Saraguro (ACIS)
- Asociación de Comunidades y Organizaciones de San Lucas (ACOS)
- Casa de la Mujer

Specific changes resulting from the project (outputs and impact)

- The Saraguro Indigenous Women's Agenda for Action was developed.
- A Municipal Commission on Gender was established.
- Twenty-five indigenous women leaders from different communities of the locality became advocates for indigenous and rural women's rights.

Others

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



INDESIC

The local radio broadcast programme sensitized their audience on the issue of women's rights and on the means to prevent violence against women.

Sustainability

The 25 indigenous women leaders who were trained (along with the 130 women trained previously) have trained another 930 people, with about 1,300 indirect beneficiaries.

The president of the Interprovincial Federation of Indigenous People of Saraguro and Corporación Mujer a Mujer have institutionalized the Leadership School so as to make it a permanent part of the organization.

Replication/spin-off effects

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

What was learned

Prior to the project, indigenous women had often denied the existence of violence against women within their communities. They feared that bringing about changes in the nature of their relationships with their partners and within their communities would be detrimental to their

efforts to be strong as an ethnic group. As the project progressed, these women came to realize that fighting against the abuses they had endured would not weaken their community, but would actually serve to strengthen it. Thus, throughout the project, it was learned that violence was not a natural part of relationships and that a strong community was one in which no members suffered from any forms of abuse.

Obstacles or problems identified during the project

Despite an encouraging display of openness from the mayor and the Council, indigenous councilwoman Angelita Chalan and several departmental heads were the only ones showing consistent attendance. Part of the problem involved a political split within the Council, and another part was the prevailing conception that “gender” referred only to women. Our counterpart, Corporación Mujer a Mujer, attempted to maintain a dialogue, especially with the mayor, but they were often unable to meet with him.

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Indigenous women and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Asia

Training for Women Leaders in Decision-making: Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh, and Sabah, Malaysia

Project title	Training for Women Leaders in Decision-making Bangladesh and Malaysia
Thematic area/ programme	Governance
Project duration	June 2005–February 2006
Location	Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh, and Sabah, Malaysia
Beneficiaries	<p><i>Direct beneficiaries:</i> Approximately 60 training participants from the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh, and Sabah, Sarawak and Peninsular Malaysia; and five women trained as trainers to conduct follow-on training</p> <p><i>Indirect beneficiaries:</i> Staff of the local partner organizations who had their capacity to conduct gender training enhanced, which also enabled them to incorporate more easily the gender dimension into decision-making processes and into sustained and broader programmes and activities; other women who will receive future training from the trainers through replication of the modules in each country; and the indigenous communities as a whole, on whom the trainings will also have some impact and influence and who will also benefit in the long term</p>
Executing agency/ agencies	United Nations Development Programme Regional Initiative on Indigenous Peoples' Rights and Development-Asia-Pacific (UNDP-RIPP)
Implementing agency/ agencies	Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact Foundation and its partner organizations in Bangladesh and Malaysia
Source of funds	UNDP (RIPP and the Asia-Pacific Gender Mainstreaming Programme (APGMP))

Overview

Indigenous peoples, communities and organizations face significant barriers to securing full and equal participation in national development, and control over their own development.

Empowerment of communities and peoples to assert and gain greater control over their lives and futures necessitates a holistic and multifaceted approach covering areas in which indigenous peoples remain among the most vulnerable in society. For such empowerment to be sustained, it is necessary that it reach every segment of society, including youth, the poor and women. It is vital that in the struggle of indigenous societies for recognition of rights, women's rights assume equal importance.

Over time, the influence and impact of globalized socio-economic patterns have resulted in the transformation of some cultural norms and traditions to conform to the dictates of modern society. Indigenous women are most affected by the consequences of such transitions, and suffer from the violation of their rights within their own community, from entities such as the armed forces and through their undervalued labour.

International instruments that advocate for the recognition, protection and promotion of women's rights such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women¹ can serve as tools for indigenous women. The need to strengthen the recognition of their rights is linked to including their participation in decision-making processes so that they can play an effective role in their community and among their peoples. Recognizing indigenous women's equal right to decision-making positions and empowering them to take informed and sound decisions pave the way for innovations crafted to address and adapt to the changing relations in indigenous communities and the general society.

Given the generally low status possessed in most societies by women in general and indigenous women in particular—given their triple burden of being indigenous, female and poor—training to enable indigenous women to be better informed on their rights strengthens their capacity to demand and enjoy the same rights as others and provides an excellent building block towards empowerment and capacity development.

As stated in the Project Completion Report (February 2006):

It is a rare experience for women to be given a space to gather and identify issues relevant to their own decision-making. Moreover, discussing resolution to such issues is much more important, as it provides space to facilitate actual decision-making. In general, providing such moments empower women, as well as men, to look deeper into the changing social and cultural relations as indigenous societies develop in the context of a broader sphere. This process allows

¹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1249, No. 20378.

co-accountability of both women and men in decision-making while considering transformation of structures within the dynamics of an advancing society.

What was planned

The objectives of the women in the decision-making programme were:

- (a) To provide a venue and an opportunity for indigenous women to share specific and common experiences within their social context;
- (b) To provide women with broader comprehension of their rights with a view to building their capability to protect and demand recognition of such rights, both within their community and in general;
- (c) To provide a space within which to assess the skills and knowledge necessary to make sound decisions or influence leaders in their community within the context of changing relations in indigenous communities or societies;
- (d) To employ indigenous resolution processes in the long term with a view to deciding on conflicts and situations of inequality so as to be able to guarantee the rights of indigenous women within communities and the general society;
- (e) To enhance the capacity of local trainers in Bangladesh and Malaysia by facilitating exchange visits in the actual conduct of the trainings.

Activities

The project was implemented from 15 July 2005 to February 2006 and covered training conducted with local organizers in Bangladesh and Malaysia.

In order to implement the training, efforts involved creating and clarifying the responsibilities of the team of local trainers, preparing the participants and the venue, training conduct and report-writing. These were packaged into the preparatory process, the actual conduct and the post-training activities:

Activity one: creating the local trainers' team

In preparation for the training, each country formed a local trainers' team composed of from three to four local trainers directed to serve as resource persons. A visiting local trainer from Malaysia joined the team of Bangladesh and a trainer from Bangladesh joined the Malaysia team. The local members of the team were chosen from indigenous communities/groups with previous experience in gender-related discussions.

Activity two: conducting the training

Subsequent to the training of the pool of local trainers, a five-day training session was conducted using the commonly understood local language.

(a) *Training for Indigenous Women Leaders on Decision-making, Bangladesh:* The activity was co-organized by Trinnamul Unnayan Sangstha, the Hill Tracts NGO Forum (HTNF) and Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact Foundation (AIPP) and held from 5 to 9 August 2005 in Rangamati, Bangladesh. The participants were some 33 women leaders from different communities including Chakma, Marma, Pankua, Kiang, Tangchangya, Tripura, Bawm, Chak, Mro, Khumi, Garo, Khashi and Orao, covering the three districts of Rangamati, Kagrachari and Bandarban in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, as well as from the plains areas of Bangladesh. The training was conducted by four local trainers and the members of the Gender Committee of the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact Foundation (AIPP). There were also UNDP resource persons available during the training.

(b) *Training for Indigenous Women Leaders on Decision-making, Malaysia:* Subsequent to the training in Bangladesh, the Partners of Community Organizations (PACOS) Trust co-organized a counterpart training held from 8 to 15 December 2005 in Sabah, Malaysia. Thirty-two participants from Malaysia (including five men) attended from the regions of Peninsular Malaysia, Sarawak and Sabah. This series included six women representatives from Bangladesh participating as part of their training as local trainers and as members of an exchange/sharing-of-experiences component. PACOS staff served as secretariat, while AIPP and UNDP resource persons also participated.

Activity three: evaluation

At the end of the training, an evaluation was conducted with a view to improving future trainings and gaining an overview of the training's successes and challenges.

Activity four: documentation

This activity encompassed documentation of the process and methodology of the training, and of the experiences and situations of women participating in the training; and dissemination of the documentation, both in formal reports and in accessible booklet form, to ensure awareness-raising on the issues facing indigenous women.

The programme of activities was adapted to the local condition with a view to providing a better response thereto. Evaluation of the topics contained in the programme included other stakeholders. This led to the recommendation of adding one more day to the module, to be devoted to an exchange of views on issues significant with respect to national and international processes and policies specifically affecting indigenous women.

The learning method used in raising the capability of the local trainers took some innovative forms. In particular, the training in Malaysia accommodated six local trainers from Bangladesh, instead of one. This



UNDP-RIPP

allowed for a collective approach to gaining knowledge for the purpose of building the capacity of the local trainers.

The modifications mentioned above resulted in changes being made to the budget allocation so that it would include additional activities such as field visits, as well as related documentation and miscellaneous expenses within the whole learning process.

What the strategy was

The strategy was to incorporate local organizations into every stage of the training so as to ensure that indigenous women at every level, ranging from those in community organizations, civil society and development organizations to those in regional and national indigenous organizations, would become more aware of their rights and of the constraints that they faced. The training aimed at enabling all women involved in the process to realize their full potential to play a decisive role in their society and communities. This was achieved through training and capacity development workshops and sharing and learning sessions.

Who was involved

UNDP, through its Regional Initiative on Indigenous Peoples' Rights and Development-Asia-Pacific (RIPP) and the Asia-Pacific Gender Mainstreaming Programme (APGMP), in partnership with the Asia Indigenous

Peoples Pact Foundation (AIPP), the Hill Tracts NGO Forum and Partners of Community Organisations (PACOS).

The training was jointly organized by AIPP, Trinamul Unnayan Sangstha, Hill Tracts NGO Forum, PACOS Trust and other women's groups and organizations in close consultation and cooperation with UNDP-RIPP.

The collaboration fostered the complementarity of the roles of the various organizations and groups and created the means to empower and strengthen indigenous women's leadership and representation.

Specific changes resulting from the project (outputs and impact)

It is rare for women to be given a space within which to gather and identify issues relevant to their own decision-making. Discussing the resolution of such issues is much more important, as it provides a space within which to facilitate actual decision-making. In general, providing such moments empower women as well as men to take a deeper look at changing social and cultural relations as indigenous societies develop within a broader context. This process allows for the co-accountability of women and men in decision-making while the transformation of structures within the dynamics of an advancing society is considered.

The impact of the training on women local trainers has been reflected in a broadening of skills in imparting knowledge to their colleagues. The training in Malaysia, especially, has fostered a country-to-country exchange of skills among the trainers, thereby contributing to the acquisition of broader knowledge.

The participants and local organizers were provided with a greater opportunity to enhance their familiarity with coordinating and networking among various groups such as non-governmental organizations and support agencies at the regional (Asia) level. In the case of Bangladesh, the event provided the local hosts with an additional opportunity to consolidate their efforts in organizing indigenous women members and partners.

Integral to the capacity-raising of the participants was the formulation of a follow-up action plan. Identification of efforts to further the resolution and discussion of gender-related issues among both women and men in indigenous societies was generally held to be significant.

In addition, the learning/sharing experiences of the indigenous women in the two target communities helped build stronger linkages and cooperation.

Sustainability

The gender training included a component on training of trainers. It is expected that this group of indigenous women will be available to contribute



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to and support the work of their sisters in their communities and in other countries in the region.

It is envisioned that follow-up activities shall consider medium- and long-term activities and plans directed towards the concrete realization of the training as a tool for empowerment of women in respect of their participation in decision-making.

Further development of the training module shall be made integral. The series of training sessions will continue and will be held in the years that follow, possibly in two countries per year. Projects shall be identified, if necessary, depending on the outcomes of the training sessions.

At the regional level, the results of the training sessions have predictably included better linkages and networking between the two countries specifically, and in the region at large, given the learning/sharing nature of the training series. In addition, documentation and materials through which to disseminate the stories, experiences and lessons learned are being produced, and these will in turn support further training, dissemination of information and advocacy on gender issues.

Replication/spin-off effects

This model will be replicated and expanded to other countries in the Asia-Pacific region in the next steps of the programme. The two country sharing/learning exchanges have proved to be extremely rewarding and will be followed up to ensure that the process is manageable and that the exchange between indigenous women maintains its momentum and gen-

erates greater awareness of the challenges they face both within and outside their communities.

The training modules used will also be freely available to any indigenous organization that is interested in providing members with the same technical skills and knowledge.

In addition to funded replication of the training modules used in this training process, sustained impact from the “training of trainers”, which is an integral part of the training process, is expected.

As a result of the training of trainers, groups of technically skilled local women have been able to replicate the training with or without external funding.

What was learned

Lessons learned during the first training session held in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh, in August 2005 were examined and built into the second training session (Malaysia, 11-14 December 2005). The primary lessons identified in the implementation of the project thus far revealed that, *inter alia*:

- The inclusion of women in positions of decision-making authority has direct and positive effects on the level of social inclusion experienced by women
- Forms of exclusion stemming from economic and social marginalization may not always be recognized as stemming from such causes, but can be addressed more easily once their root causes are articulated
- Cultural norms of gender subordination are better able to be challenged and changed if they are understood
- The inclusion of men in training events aimed at examining the roles of women in decision-making can broaden the impact of the training provided

Full analytical treatment was applied to the lessons learned in both training sessions, and these lessons will be directly applied to the design of possible future training sessions.

Factors contributing to success

- Providing comfortable space for the sharing of experiences, visions and problems
- Working directly with community workers
- Having trainers from the same communities or peoples as the trainees



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- Having committed and skilled trainers with experience in development and empowerment work
- Working in partnership with local organizations, with government and with regional organizations
- Focus on identifying practical steps forward
- Imparting knowledge and experience

Obstacles or problems identified during the project

- Language (different languages)
- Differing socio-economic conditions
- Training-of-trainers component of the training was insufficient in respect of enabling independent replication without support; however, this outcome had been partially predicted, and a follow-up and support process with training graduates is planned

Documentation/bibliography

AIPP Gender Training Module

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Conclusions

1. The 18 case studies of partnerships between indigenous women and agencies of the United Nations system articulate and depict the unique challenges and opportunities experienced by indigenous women in different areas including their participation and leadership as actors in the projects.
2. The talent and capabilities of the leaders, both women and men, are essential for projects to function. They are the ones responsible for encouraging and mobilizing people, and may require external support, including specialized training and opportunities to share and exchange experiences and lessons learned with other projects and processes involving indigenous communities, in order to compare, learn and connect to wider processes. Capacity development initiatives such as leadership training, capacity-building, technical assistance and alphabetization are predominant in the case studies collected. Post-literacy support should focus on improving training processes and capacity-building, going beyond the teaching of reading, writing and arithmetic to enable women to better carry out their productive activities and increase household income.
3. Strengthening the skills of community members, both women and men, prior to the planning of projects enhances beneficiary participation and builds the sense of ownership needed to ensure that the schemes will be appropriately managed and maintained by the communities.
4. In most cases, a close partnership and the exchange of information were successfully achieved among indigenous women's organizations, indigenous peoples' organizations and the United Nations country offices as well as the other actors involved.
5. Legal security and law enforcement with regard to the different aspects of the lives of indigenous persons (citizenship, identity papers, the right to individual and collective ownership, rights to land and territory, intellectual property rights etc.) are an important element for the sustainability of their development process.
6. One challenge demonstrated by the case study projects was the tension that arose as indigenous women sought to claim both their collective rights as indigenous people and their individual rights as women. By pressing for equal treatment by gender, indigenous women 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, although experience has shown that reinforcing women's rights benefits community as a whole. Hence, there is also a need to translate the rights of women as outlined in international treaties into culturally relevant concepts and priorities. Good-practice studies that can be replicated exist in this regard.

7. Although indigenous women continue to be marginalized and discriminated against, the projects demonstrated that through the involvement of government offices and indigenous organizations, encouraging partnerships, opportunities do exist to improve recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples and women, to address patriarchal and discriminatory attitudes and to improve equality of opportunities in the public sphere.
8. The creation of synergies between governmental offices and United Nations country offices was important in developing a systematic programme for analysis and reform of existing legislation, legal training and broad-based interaction involving indigenous organizations, especially women, public and local authorities and other social actors.
9. Increasing decentralization and devolution to local governments, and its effects on local-level power and public investment, are opening up new spaces for indigenous participation in local government administration and management of territories, communities and neighbourhoods, with a legitimacy that is sustainable over time.



Recommendations

1. The United Nations system, Governments and all actors involved should promote the establishment of true participatory mechanisms for the involvement of indigenous peoples, especially women, in decision-making processes related to any projects or programmes impacting on their lives.
2. The United Nations system needs to pursue effective methods for maintaining and increasing its support to projects fostering the protection and sustainable use of natural resources, in particular through the expansion of participatory research programmes designed to explore and record indigenous women's knowledge and their specific ways of owning, using and maintaining diverse natural resources. Another important element is to ensure that indigenous women hold the ownership and copyright of that knowledge, and that their work in this sphere is granted due recognition.
3. The educational materials generated by different projects undertaken by United Nations organizations should be broadly disseminated as knowledge products that can be used to stimulate the creation of effective strategies as a tool for protecting and safeguarding indigenous women's rights. In this context, the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues can play a key role in facilitating the collection, dissemination and adaptation of relevant materials as tools for advocacy and outreach.
4. Project implementation should be as decentralized as possible at the national level through provincial, district and community implementation, and restructured in accordance with existing institutional capacity at those levels. External support should be planned and carried out in a complementary manner.
5. Within the framework of the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, it is crucial for relevant United Nations organizations to adopt targeted policies, programmes, projects and budgets for the development of indigenous peoples, including concrete benchmarks, with particular emphasis on indigenous women, children and youth. This should be conducted with the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples, and with their prior informed consent.
6. United Nations organizations should ensure and support the full participation of indigenous peoples, and indigenous women, as equal partners in all stages of data collection, including planning, imple-

mentation, analysis and dissemination, access and return, with the appropriate resourcing and capacity-building for achieving this objective. Data collection must respond to the priorities and aims of the indigenous communities and indigenous women themselves, and be gender-focused and -disaggregated.