



Gender Mainstreaming in Rangeland Resources Management

INFORMATION SHEET #6/09

People living in the rangelands have adopted a combination of livelihood options to ensure their survival. This survival system requires strong collaboration between women and men, but their differentiated roles generate different constraints and challenges in their daily life. Women and men also have different skill sets and knowledge and different patterns of use of natural resources. Successful programmes to improve rangeland management, reduce degradation, and enhance livelihoods, must take these different roles into account. But the gender perspective is rarely incorporated in rangeland resources management programmes in the region. The best way to raise awareness of this issue, and to support incorporation of a gender perspective in planning is to develop – and implement – a gender mainstreaming strategy listing the steps to be taken in programme planning and management.

There are a number of similarities in terms of gender inequality issues in different rangeland areas in the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region, despite the differences in the sociocultural settings and livelihoods, as shown by studies in Chitral, Pakistan; Ladakh, India; and Mustang, Nepal. One of the major issues for all rangeland women is their long hours of heavy work: 12 to 17 hours a day compared to 8 to 10 hours worked by men. Women spend a large part of their time collecting fuel for energy – up to a third in some areas – and collecting water. In addition to household-related tasks, women also play a significant role in livestock care and agriculture – cutting grass and fodder, milking, processing milk and animal products, ploughing with hand hoes, tilling, applying manure, weeding, watering, harvesting, threshing, winnowing, and processing the products for consumption and conservation. They generally have only limited technology to help them. Men are usually responsible for grazing the animals, trading animals and animal products, ploughing with draft animals, sowing seeds, harvesting, threshing, and trading food surpluses. At all three sites studied, men had a fair amount of free time that they could dedicate to community meetings and leisure, although they also face difficulties in the changing environment with longer periods of drought forcing them to graze animals further away or to migrate in search of work.

Addressing the different roles of women and men

In order to develop appropriate strategies to manage rangeland resources and ensure equitable access to those resources, it is important to recognise that both women and men play essential but different roles in using, conserving, and managing rangeland resources. Addressing the different needs of women and men and reducing gender inequalities benefits people and also helps improve rangeland conservation and management. Drawing on the different knowledge and skills of women and men provides a larger pool of solutions for

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addressing issues of environmental degradation. Building the capacities of both women and men through training and making technologies accessible can reduce the pressure on natural resources and enhance the ecosystem functions and services that rangelands provide. But the gender perspective is rarely incorporated in rangeland resources management programmes in the region. Policy and decision makers tend to neglect the differentiated gender roles in managing and preserving the fragile natural resources of the rangeland ecosystem. The best way to raise awareness of this issue, and to support incorporation of a gender perspective in planning is to develop a gender mainstreaming strategy listing the steps to be taken in programme planning and management.

Gender mainstreaming strategy for rangeland resources management

ICIMOD has developed a gender mainstreaming strategy that provides guidelines for promoting gender equity in rangeland resources management programmes in the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region. The strategy aims to contribute to the improvement of sustainable management of rangelands by promoting equitable benefits for women and men from programmes related to rangeland management. The objectives are to support equitable participation of women and men in the activities of rangeland management programmes; and to promote equitable access to resources for improving rangeland dependent people's livelihoods – training, information, technologies, finance, and services.

The strategy defines some key actions to support the process of mainstreaming gender into a rangelands programme:

- Documenting gender roles in the management of rangeland resources
- Raising awareness of the institutions working in rangeland management about the different issues women and men may face and the benefits of mainstreaming gender
- Mainstreaming gender in the project cycle
- Promoting technologies and practices to address women's practical needs
- Supporting women's empowerment
- Influencing policy makers



Gender analysis, gender mainstreaming, and gender sensitive policies and programmes

- A **gender analysis** is a process, with methods and tools, to identify gender gaps and the causes of inequalities. It analyses the roles and needs of both women and men, and seeks to identify the causes of gender inequalities. Thus a gender analysis also studies social organisations and institutions to identify what needs to be changed to ensure equity. It provides the basis for planning efficient development programmes that address both men's and women's needs and reduce existing gender and other social inequalities.
- **Gender mainstreaming** means systematically integrating a gender perspective in all aspects of an organisation; the needs and interests of women and men, their assets and the constraints they face, and unequal relationships are taken into account in a cross-cutting way in the organisation's structure and management and in all programmes and projects.
- A **gender sensitive policy or programme** recognises gender inequalities as an obstacle that deprives women of access to the same opportunities as men and from getting equitable benefits from development programmes. Thus it proposes measures to reduce gender inequalities and provides resources and services to address both men's and women's needs.

Applying the Strategy – Key Actions in ICIMOD's Rangeland Programme

ICIMOD has applied the strategy to its own rangeland programme, providing an example that others can use in their own planning. The main features are as follows:

- 1) **Documenting gender issues** – Continue documentation and analysis of gender roles and gender issues in rangeland management (six cases studies already produced in 2008 and 2009 from Nepal, India, Pakistan, China and Bhutan); deepen gender analysis in rangelands through a monitoring and evaluation system to measure changes and impacts of the rangeland programmes on women and men and how gender gaps have been reduced; and identify good practices for addressing gender issues in rangelands
- 2) **Raising awareness and building capacities of ICIMOD's partners to mainstream gender** – Contribute to raising awareness about gender issues in the rangelands and the benefits of mainstreaming gender for improving the management of rangeland resources; integrate a gender perspective in workshops and trainings related to rangeland management; publish case studies to raise awareness; collaborate with partners to conduct gender analyses and develop guidelines for mainstreaming gender in rangeland management programmes; integrate a gender perspective when designing rangeland related policies
- 3) **Mainstreaming gender** – Promote the integration of a gender perspective in planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the rangeland programme; use gender sensitive indicators in monitoring and evaluation to measure the benefits of the programme for women and men, and measure the reduction of gender issues



- 4) **Promoting technologies and practices for reducing women's drudgery** – Promote new technologies and practices for improving rangeland livelihoods and reducing drudgery; assess their impact on and benefits for both women and men; pay special attention to promoting gender friendly technologies and practices to ensure that both women and men will benefit and women's workload will not increase
- 5) **Supporting women's empowerment** – Facilitate rangeland women's participation in and access to capacity building activities; pay special attention to addressing women's needs and interests and ensure gender sensitive training conditions; organise separate sessions and where possible recruit women trainers where the sociocultural context does not favour mixed group activities; support rangeland women's groups by providing information, building their capacity (technical and management), and linking them with women's organisations networks; integrate a gender perspective in the co-management approach promoted by ICIMOD and promote equal participation of women in the co-management bodies
- 6) **Promoting women scientists and professionals working on rangeland related topics** – Collaborate whenever possible with women professionals and scientists working in the rangeland sector

ICIMOD and its partner institutions work together to promote gender equity in rangeland management by sharing knowledge with each other and within their own institutions, raising awareness; mainstreaming gender in the rangeland programme; and assessing improvement in reducing gender gaps

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What is a gender sensitive rangeland programme?

- It starts from a gender analysis of people's livelihoods and use of the rangeland resources.
- It acknowledges the different skills, capacities, and assets of women and men.
- It identifies different constraints, issues, and needs of women and men.
- It addresses the differential needs and interests of women and men.
- It promotes the participation of both women and men in decision making and management of the resources.
- It favours equitable access and control over natural resources and other resources such as information, financial services, capacity building activities, and technologies.
- It works directly with the primary stakeholders, taking into account that men are often away for trading, grazing, or outside work, and women must then take over the work usually done by men.
- It takes into account that degradation of the environment and conservation initiatives may have more impact on women due to their role in collecting water and fuel.
- It acknowledges that, in the rangelands, women are farmers and play an important role in food production.
- It adopts strategies and mechanisms adapted to the sociocultural context.

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