Measuring Women’s Leadership for Sustainability in Landscape projects with the W+ Standard
Featured Speakers

For more info and gender, ag & forest landscape-related resources:
Gender and Vulnerability Program | wb (progreen.info)
www.folur.org/gender-inclusion
Why women’s leadership is important in landscape projects

Gender equality and women’s empowerment in environmental work are linked to:

• higher agriculture production and profits, improved economic outcomes, and a fairer distribution of wealth

• better ecosystems conservation, protection and sustainability outcomes

• higher CO2 emissions reductions and better resilience outcomes

*Gender-neutral programs undermine conservation goals & human rights*

*Making women’s contributions visible and supporting their leadership is essential!*
Emerging lessons on measuring results of women’s leadership

Projects and experiences in 3 countries: Nepal, Mexico and India

Indicators of Leadership

Methodological challenges in measuring leadership
Nepal: Community Forestry Program and User Groups

- Since 1980, Nepal’s Community Forest initiatives, supported by national policies, feature decentralized, community-based natural resource management, community forest monitoring and local leadership - widely seen as a successful model of local forest governance that addresses deforestation & degradation.

- WOCAN’s team applied the W+ Standard and its Leadership Domain to assess the extent of changes in women’s leadership initiatives within Nepal’s Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs) of the Community Forestry program in December 2023.

- The leadership assessment was applied to three districts, selected to represent a microcosm of the social & geographic differences across Nepal. Results were measured for 7,750 women leaders and forest user group members.

- Case study: Women’s Leadership Outcomes within Nepal’s Community Forestry Program using the W+ Standard.

Results: a 40% improvement in women leaders' personal transformations and the changes they led in their community forest user groups.
Dedicated Grant Mechanism (DGM) for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities: Mexico

- Implemented by Rainforest Alliance Mexico, with support from PROGREEN in the State of Oaxaca, benefitting 128 indigenous women.

- Supporting IPLC subprojects aimed at conservation and integration of sustainable land management practices.

- DGM-supported activities aimed to improve key gender equality outcomes, including:
  - Access to and control over productive assets
  - Voice and agency
  - Positive changes in women’s leadership & participation

- Activities: Capacity building for the W+ Standard and application of the Standard to measure results for Leadership and Income & Assets in 4 subprojects.

**Results:** 60% increase in Leadership domain, 125% increase in Income & Assets domain.
Women-led community resilient local governance (wCOREL), India

- Implemented by Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP) in Maharashtra

- Climate-resilient farming: organic cultivation of multiple indigenous food crops and livelihood diversification to ensure household health, nutrition and income security

- Transforming marginalized women farmers in climate-risk areas into resilient leaders by positioning them as agri-innovators and decision makers

- Resulting in sustainable livelihoods and well-being for 75,000 women and their families

- Activities: Applied the W+ Standard to measure results for Leadership and Income & Assets domains in October 2023

**Results:** 101% increase in Income & Assets domain, 127% increase in Leadership domain

Verification completed in Feb, 2024 for **778,286 W+ credits**
Definition:
Leadership is a relational practice –

Evidence of relational practice results from the structural changes affected by leaders and the individual transformations that they undergo.

2 aspects of evidence for leadership:
- Structural change
- Individual transformation
## Structural change

### Affecting change in group structure
- Changes in policy
- Gender-responsive budgets
- Gender-sensitive ToRs

### Affecting behavioral change in others
- Confidence bestowed by others on leader
- Engaging others in group’s decision-making process
- Number of colleagues who are influenced
## Individual Transformations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTCOME</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
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<tr>
<td>Recognizing resistance from peers and management</td>
<td>• Tokenism</td>
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<td>Managing socio-cultural challenges and obstacles</td>
<td>• Number of hours women work</td>
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<td>• Degree of mobility</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Norms and values</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dealing with emotional challenges</td>
<td>• Ability to articulate predicaments</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Strategies to deal with predicaments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Generating counter narratives</td>
<td>• Alternative stories about themselves</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engaging with obstacles</td>
<td>• Quality of decision making</td>
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Women’s agency within structures
Methodological challenges

The leadership domain, unlike other domains, requires the following:

• Fairly substantial training on leadership concepts and practices for enumerators prior to the data collection

• Accurate means of verification to substantiate behavioral and psycho-social outcomes

• Challenge to replicate by others
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Lessons</th>
<th>Nepal</th>
<th>Mexico</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women leaders engage with opportunities, producing a significant increase in leadership results when compared to women members of CFUGs</td>
<td>Importance of technical capacities and knowledge of the local context from the Project staff</td>
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<td>Leadership produces shifting ideas of womanhood: from domestic to public-oriented ideas of themselves</td>
<td>Capacity building and access to resources has increased confidence and women’s agency</td>
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<td>The glass ceiling effect of CFUGs inhibits upward mobility</td>
<td>Need further support to navigate challenges that come with leadership, especially to face social isolation challenges</td>
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<td>The ‘tempered’ nature of women’s leadership is strategic and effective</td>
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*WOCAN*
Why India’s leadership is so effective and a best practice

- Organization is oriented towards grassroots collective action
- Project created linkages between women’s groups and government offices; women no longer depend on Project resources
- Organization provides constant mentoring that goes beyond technical issues – women receive emotional support from their groups
Jeannette Gurung @ jeannettegurung@wocan.org
coordinator@wplus.org
www.wocan.org
www.wplus.org