



STARTING THE PROCESS



## CHAPTER V

# ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT OF PROTECTED AREAS FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

The administration and management of a PA is generally under the responsibility of an agency<sup>1</sup> that is in charge of the Management Plan operation. In some instances, management is in the hands of a public entity, for example, the state or federal office responsible for national parks, natural areas or biosphere reserves; it may also be an office attached to the Ministry of Environment, or an institution specifically created for this purpose. Another modality is to assign management responsibility to a non-governmental organization, through an agreement signed between the NGO and the government; and there are other instances when PA administration takes place under a self-administered modality, under the responsibility of the community, which assumes full management responsibilities.

Management should be participatory, with considerable community and stakeholders' participation. It cannot be stressed enough that PA conservation initiatives will only achieve their objectives through equity and improvement of the population's quality of life.

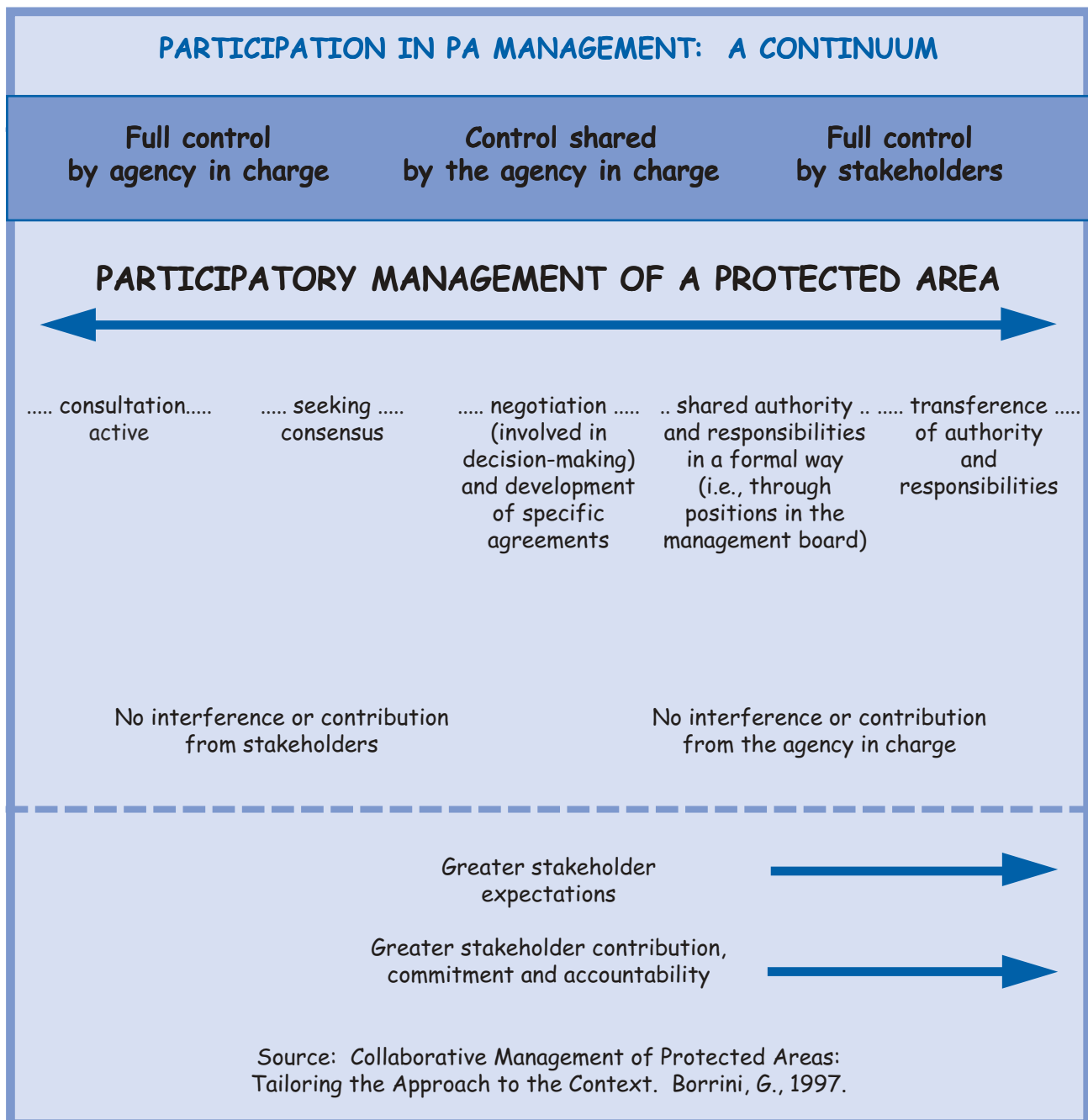
"Management can be defined as the set of actions of political, legal, administrative, research, planning, protection, coordination, promotional, interpretative and educational character, which result in a better use and permanence of a PA, and the achievement of its objectives" (Cifuentes, M., *et.al*, 2000).

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1 \_\_\_\_ The agency term will be used to refer to the entity responsible for PA administration.

The involvement of communities and groups in PA management, is a process that can be deepened as the Management Plan is executed. However, participation should not be viewed as a continuous or linear sequence. There may be instances where a community might consider that the best way to participate would be by sharing management responsibility with another agency, without expecting to attain full control.

The following diagram may be useful to identify the characteristics of the population's participation in the administration and management of a PA.



There are different management systems: administration in the sole hands of a government entity, co-administration between an NGO and the communities, management by a federal authority, private management of an area, and self-administration by the communities established in PA.

There are many criteria and conditions involved in the determination about PA management. For example, there are management categories and conservation objectives that may limit the level of participation. The communities' organizational level to take over management of an area, does also affect.

Nevertheless, there is increasing consensus about the fact that community participation is of the essence for a more effective and efficient PA management. One of the forms that is gaining wide acceptance in some regions of the world is **co-management**.

**Co-management**, is also known as participatory management; it is an institutional arrangement between the local users of a territory or group of natural resources or stakeholders interested in its conservation, and public entities responsible for the administration of these resources.

Co-management should not be understood as one single event. Co-management is not only about transferring PA management responsibility or part of it to a community group; it should be viewed as a process towards skill development, to enable communities to play an effective role in biodiversity conservation.

Based on the above characteristics, co-management constitutes an extremely feasible alternative to mainstream or integrate a gender equity perspective into PA conservation work. Since this type of management favors recognition about the various levels of "knowledges" possessed by men and women, (it is possible to visualize the differences and inequalities), skills will be developed to enable both genders to play a leading role in biodiversity conservation and sustainable development activities.

Co-management is based on the complementarity of the various players and institutions, to reach the common objective of preserving the natural resources and using them in a rational manner; as such, it focuses on the comparative advantages of the various players' capabilities, skills, knowledge and interests. That is, it entails the establishment of alliances where responsibilities, authority, rights, and duties will be shared.

Co-management does not necessarily mean the constitution of a legal structure, although it is advisable to formalize community participation through agreements or other legal mechanisms, in order to make an explicit recognition about the contributions to be made by the various community members and groups, including their participation in benefit distribution and decision-making.

Some negative experiences have turned co-management into some form of participation simulation. In the name of conservation and claiming the importance and fragility of certain ecosystems, non-governmental organizations that enjoy international support and have access to significant financial resources, have displaced communities from management and resource administration. Such type of situations entails the risk of transferring state responsibilities to an external group.

*As understood in this book, co-management springs from a series of principles:*

- The word co-management implies the participation of two or more players in the process. It is not about transferring state responsibilities to another organization or agency, but to **share** responsibilities and rights. It should be kept in mind that PA are part of a nationwide system governed by national as well as international regulations, which compliance is state responsibility.
- Co-management requires a process leading to decentralization, desconcentration and delegation of responsibilities, duties and rights. To carry out the work assigned, the necessary skills need to be developed within stakeholders. Thus, co-management should be viewed as a process for empowerment and capacity building, rather than a process entailing the transference of a certain amount of hectares.
- Co-management should not be viewed as a biodiversity appropriation opportunity for national and international environmental NGOs. NGOs should take over management of a protected area only on a temporary basis, while the communities located in or near the PA undergo the training process required prior to management take over.

- Co-management requires national policies that define the concept of co-management and its regulatory legal framework. The lack of this type of instruments has been the cause for excesses and abuses in the name of co-management, which have led to PA privatization by private enterprises.

*In Canada, many of the areas proposed for conservation purposes include territories belonging to the Inuit (Eskimos) and the First Nations (other indigenous populations). For several years, the land claims filed by the Aboriginal People have been negotiated in and extra courtrooms. Currently, several participatory management agreements incorporate a detailed account of the results of the negotiations, and meet the specific needs of the various Aboriginal Populations and the protection of natural resources. Management Boards, involving representatives from government agencies and Aboriginal Populations, address all management-related issues, from long-term planning to daily activities. The Boards, established through legislation, have formalized the rights of the indigenous stakeholders to participate in management activities (Borrini, G., 1997).*

Care should be exerted to ensure that co-management favors equity both, among stakeholders and between genders, as it is common practice to assign resource administration to previously organized groups, which are mostly or entirely constituted by men. Even though it is important to recover previous forms of community organization, instead of arbitrarily creating or superimposing structures, a full revision and restructuring of the groups should be undertaken to encourage women participation at all levels: as administrators, in decision-making spaces, resource operation and administration, evaluation and follow up. It is also important to invest resources and time to support the creation of women's organizations, to grant them legal standing to participate in this type of public spaces.

There are certain duties in co-management that may be delegated to community groups or members, or to other institutions, like local non-governmental organizations. To this effect, it is important to clearly specify the management activities to be undertaken, by who and how.

If the entire PA conservation initiative has been designed in a participatory manner, the stakeholders will already have been identified (please refer to the selection of stakeholders in Chapters II and IV of this book). Yet, when implemented, the plans will, most likely, require a certain amount of adjustment and accuracy, which should be undertaken in an open and transparent manner. The best way to define the distribution of tasks, responsibilities, rights and duties, is through the elaboration of a **co-management agreement**.

*A co-management agreement should clearly stipulate:*

The co-management agreement should—then—be based on accurate information; it should stipulate the development of common objectives and minimum solutions; it should establish the rules of the game, define the decision-making mechanisms, as well as the principles of association among the various groups of stakeholders.

- The territory comprised by the PA, its boundaries and zonation
- The duties assumed by each stakeholder
- The individuals responsible for each duty: persons, institutions, groups, and organizations
- The rights of PA residents and stakeholders
- The obligations of PA residents and stakeholders
- The systems and mechanisms involving decision-making
- The systems and mechanisms involving control and surveillance
- The methods and mechanisms for conflict resolution
- The methods and mechanisms for public information and consultation
- The Management Plan's monitoring, evaluation and revision systems

*See definition of stakeholders in Chapter II and IV of this book*



### Example

During an initial meeting held to establish a co-management system at the Godam Forestry Area—which includes extensive bamboo plantations—a very serious conflict arose between the Bhanjda bamboo basket weavers and the Haryana Forest Department of Godam (HFD). The meeting was prolonged for five days, during which time HFD staff and community members addressed pertinent issues, assisted by a support team.

The Bhanjdas residents possess no land and are completely dependent upon bamboo basket production and the availability of fresh bamboo. Most community members are illiterate and are engaged in no other trade than basket weaving; furthermore, their product enjoyed good demand, for which reason they could not understand why they were required to modify their traditional activity. HFD has planned to grant permits for Bhanjdas families to cut limited quantities of bamboo during certain times of the year, but the field experts from the Forest Department felt that the villagers were violating the quotas assigned, which led to confrontations with the Bhanjdas.

The same group dynamics was followed during these five days: the field staff listened in silence to the community's Bhanjdas, but upon going back to the office, they questioned most of the demands expressed by the Bhanjdas. They insisted that the local people were dishonest. It was obvious that the conflict between HFD staff and the Bhanjdas had created such huge barriers that it was impossible to expect field personnel to stick to their traditional role of only tending to their own point of view. The support group, The Hill Resource Management Society, responsible for establishing the co-management agreement, returned over and over to the community to take a look at the demands and the responses to these demands. The support group found that HFD staff contradicted and rejected the demands of the Bhanjdas, right in front of them, instead of contributing new elements to be carried back to the community.

At the end of the exercise, during a meeting attended by a large number of community members, the chief of the HFD office read aloud the draft establishing the basis for the Co-management Agreement to be signed between the Bhanjdas Management Society and the Forest Department. The potential agreement did immediately create an optimistic reaction among the Bhanjdas and created expectations among HFD personnel. The Bhanjdas women assumed an active role during the discussion and committed themselves to the transformation of the conditions of the bamboo forest within a three-year period, provided the HFD did honor its own commitment. Upon seeing the Bhanjdas' change in attitude, the field staff also began changing theirs. Now, the Bhanjdas are clearly interested in having the support group follow up on HFD agreement compliance. They have, finally, been able to understand that to keep this change in attitude, both parties need to honor their own commitments. The Haryana Forest Co-management Program was legally constituted in early 1990 (IUCN 1997).

In spite of the gender equity advantages posed by the co-management model, this does not imply that other management systems cannot contribute to build more equitable and ecologically sustainable societies. What is most important is political will and disposition by the management agency to address the issue.

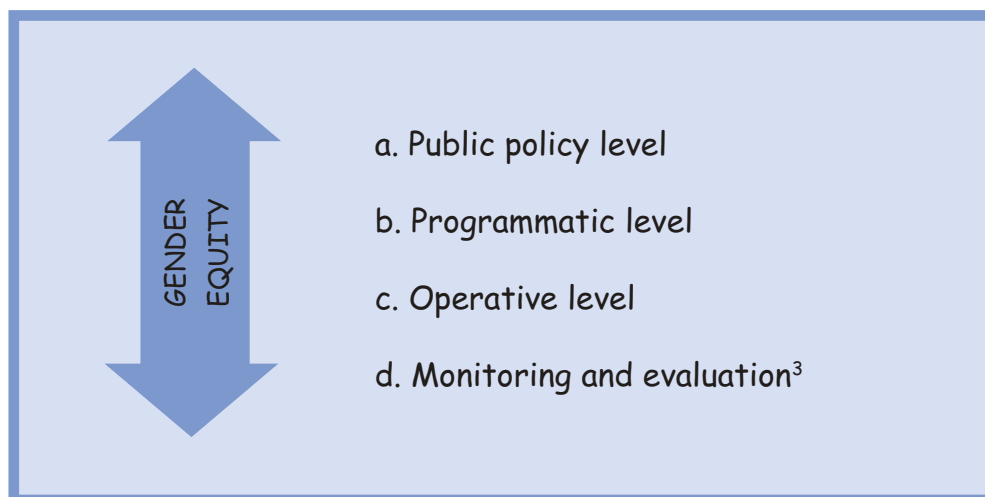
On the other hand, gender cannot be tackled only at the level of actions and strategies for the stakeholders (external). It also entails taking up and promoting a series of requirements and conditions within the management agency itself.

The need to adjust the policies or strategies and the internal structure of the organizations responsible for PA management, stem from an **ethical** demand to secure democratic and equitable workspaces. It also stems from an **operative** demand, given the fact that, without undertaking an internal change process, the structure of the organization or agency will become a straight jacket that will hinder the successful implementation of equity-related efforts. It does, ultimately, correspond to a demand linked with the management agency's **projection** towards the promotion and development of local and community structures involved in PA management, whereby the latter will be allowed to create equity-related spaces.

## 1. Management based on gender equity<sup>2</sup>

A gender equity policy within PA management entails adopting a set of principles, actions and measures logically, continuously and systematically structured, and aimed at achieving more equitable relations between women and men within the management agency and its areas of influence.

These should cover the following levels:



*Explicit  
commitment  
that the PA  
conservation  
initiative will  
contribute to  
promote  
gender  
equity*

### a. Public policy level

The **Management Plan**<sup>4</sup> is the instrument whereby management guidelines are established. It should outline the strategies for a PA conservation initiative to promote gender equity. The commitment about gender equity promotion should be explicitly expressed in the Plan. If the Plan was not elaborated from a gender perspective, it should be reviewed and corrected. If at all possible, a gender-based participatory appraisal should be conducted, and restructured according to the guidelines stipulated in Chapters III and IV of this book.

<sup>2</sup> \_\_\_\_ This section was built from Module 7 of the "Towards Equity" series. Blanco, L. and Rodríguez, G. **Practicing What We Preach: Toward Administration and Management with Equity**. Ed. Absoluto S.A. -IUCN- Arias Foundation. San Jose, Costa Rica. 1999.

<sup>3</sup> \_\_\_\_ Given the importance of this level and the analysis required, this subject is addressed under Chapter VI, Monitoring and Evaluation Systems.

<sup>4</sup> \_\_\_\_ The term Program or Management Plan is indistinctively used in many countries; we have selected Plan because of its broader scope.

There are some countries where environmental legislation or public policies formally establish gender equity promotion. For example, the Ministries of Environment of Mesoamerica have endorsed policy declarations and drafted action plans. These guidelines should be taken up in both, management policies and PA plans.

When due to limitations of a financial, human resource or any other nature, it is not possible to carry out an extensive revision of the Management Plan, it is advisable to draft an Annex document or *addendum* explaining the commitment towards gender equity promotion and the corresponding action plan. This document should explain the actions and measures to be taken, and stipulate time schedules, responsible people and resources; and it should be incorporated into the Management Plan and bear equal legal status.

Do not  
forget...

***The addendum "Commitments and action plan to incorporate the gender perspective into the Management Plan" should contain:***

- **Objectives.** General and specific, for the short, medium, and long term.
- **Strategies or programmatic lines of actions to incorporate the gender equity perspective.** For example: implementation of a gender information system; increased number of women who participate in decision-making; implementation of institutional procedures to promote the gender equity perspective in PA; elaboration of conservation projects for women.
- **Activities.** One or more activities should be incorporated into each strategy or programmatic line of action. For example, to implement an information system, the activities scheduled might be: bibliographical revision of information systems from a gender approach; training courses for the staff of the management agency and the stakeholders, and design of techniques for gender data gathering (questionnaires, interviews, surveys, focal groups).

- **People responsible, resources and time schedules.**

There should be a person responsible for each action. This individual should be provided with the resources needed to carry out the new activities, and time schedules should be determined for each one. Care should be exerted not to assign the activities to women under the assumption that they are capable of carrying out the tasks just because they are women, as well as to ensure the activities do not overburden one single person or group of persons.

- **Resources.** Since the gender equity perspective was not originally included in the Plan, quite likely, there will not be availability of financial, human, and material resources for the new activities. It will, thus, be necessary for each area to reallocate some of their resources to this activity, simultaneously undertaking actions towards securing financial assistance, which may also become part of the action plan.

## b. Programmatic level

### *Setting up the management agency*

The management agency is the entity responsible for Management Plan execution. This responsibility is generally assigned to a government institution, which, under a more participatory plan, delegates some of its duties and authority on other stakeholders.

The operation of the management agency should facilitate relations, communication, responsibility distribution, duties and tasks among all work areas involved. Its organization chart should be clear and vastly discussed with all personnel. This will be of great help to enable any employee from the management agency to provide any information requested by the communities and groups, and establish coordinated and collaborative working relations.

Often times, women do not hold management positions within PA management agencies. In the case of Central America, women, who also have less access than men to these posts, coordinate less than 3% of the PA. This is due to the opportunity inequalities prevailing for top-level positions, but also because the duties and work places of protected areas management agencies were chosen without taking into consideration gender differences. Thus, the place of residence, time schedules, and conditions under which the management agency will operate, should be determined considering gender differences as well as the opinion and needs of the women who may be capable of filling these positions. It is also necessary to undertake **affirmative actions**<sup>5</sup> towards facilitating women's access to these management positions.

For example, in Bahuaja-Sonene the evident presence of women as former park directors, park rangers, health care promoters, served to dispel the general idea that protected areas are located in areas too remote to attract professional women (IUCN, 1997).

There are a series of initiatives that could be promoted to incorporate gender perspective within management agencies. Some of these are:

- Appointment of a person responsible for gender issues or a unit specialized on the subject
- Hiring a gender consultant
- Mainstreamed assignment of responsibilities to all team members

*Below  
is an account  
of some of  
the advantages  
or limitations  
of these  
solutions*

By appointing a person responsible for promoting the gender equity perspective within the PA conservation initiative and the execution of the Management Plan, it is possible to shift from intention to actions, as this provides permanence to the subject, makes it visible, and makes it possible to address the subject in a professional manner. However, the person in charge of the gender area may be confronted with the risk of being isolated or excluded

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5 \_\_\_\_ Please refer to the Glossary.



from essential activities of the Management Plan, or not having the budget or staff needed to carry out the duties, or having a very low hierarchical position in the organization chart, as a result of which facts, she/he will be unable to exert any influence on the remaining components of the Plan. It may also happen that the gender topic is assigned to a female team specialist simply because she is a woman, without—necessarily—verifying whether her gender specialization is appropriate, or assuming that gender equity is an issue which only concerns women.

This situation might result in the gender specialist becoming overburdened with work to prove the importance of the subject, or having to deal with a demand far beyond the budget and human resource possibilities. This gender inequality may create radical reactions on the part of the appointed person, which are likely to result in attitudes of rejection by the other technicians. However, the presence of a gender responsible person could constitute the driving force needed to promote gender equity, provided the existing limitations are overcome, a gender knowledgeable person is assigned to the position, adequate budget and staff are allocated, and she/he is vested with authority and influence over other areas.

When hiring a female consultant or a group of gender specialists, these usually conduct high-quality research, appraisals, reports or work plans. Unfortunately, though, even if the consultant or group of specialists are hired for successive periods, they will remain as external advisors and will not interact in a permanent way with the dynamics of the PA work and team, let alone with the communities and stakeholders.

The third option, related to the mainstreamed assignment of responsibilities to all team members, may be theoretically valid, but discouraging in practice. Experience has shown that, without first creating specific mechanisms, delegation to the entire team will end up becoming everyone's and no one's responsibility, and, consequently, falling into general oblivion. This type of alternative could be appropriate when there are previous experiences and all personnel as an integral part of the activities and work areas have already adopted the gender equity perspective.

The simultaneous implementation of several of the above-mentioned strategies would be quite advisable. For example, hiring a specialist responsible for gender issues, with full participation in decision-making spaces, and appointing gender responsible personnel within each of the work areas. Thus, there would always be a top-level individual responsible for gender promotion, supported, at the same time, by a representative team at the level of the organization responsible for PA management.

### *Conformation of a team*

The conformation of the PA management team does also bear great importance. An adequate balance is recommended among professionals, technicians, and operating personnel from the various fields of activity, particularly with respect to economic, social and cultural aspects, on one hand, and physical, ecological and biological aspects, on the other. But this is not enough; equitable management of human resources is a process that goes beyond the delimitation of personnel responsibilities. This action approaches personnel from the premise that each person is a key resource with particularly valuable characteristics. At the same time, individual responsibilities and knowledge are only one piece of a broader team, for which reason, overspecialization should not be favored, as it would hinder adequate levels of communication among the various team members.

At the time of conforming a work team, care should be exerted to avoid feminine undervaluing with regard to the people who will work for the management agency. Undervaluing women's capabilities and qualities is not always conscious, and may seem natural or as an existing situation.

### *Do not forget...*

Work division by sex where productive tasks are generally assigned to the men and the reproductive tasks to women, tends to be reproduced when women join the labor force. Thus, preference is given to hiring women for tasks involving cooking, cleaning, certain administrative duties (secretaries, special events' hostesses and workshops), with low salaries, in positions with very little decision-making power, and little social prestige. Instead, men are hired for high-ranking technical, specialized operational or administrative work. Obviously, this generates and reproduces inequality. The incorporation of women and men into non-traditional jobs (in other words, jobs that are usually assigned to men), has shown that women are capable of successfully undertaking many of these jobs. However, there is great need for certain affirmative actions, such as training, including training in non-traditional trades, to encourage women to incorporate themselves into the labor marketplace.

It is important to undertake constant revisions about certain aspects that result in discriminatory situations.



*In Punta Allen, at the Sian Ka'an protected area, there is a sense of urgency to turn fishermen into tourist guides before the coral reef becomes extinct. A tourist guide course has been developed to learn English and other skills. One woman attends the course, even though she was not a fisherwoman, she was accepted because of her personal charisma and desire to participate. She has become an important role model for other women. Women breaking away from traditional roles are sometimes pointed at with pride and others with consternation. They are agents of change (Rojas, M., 2000).*

*For instance, in Mexico, there is great salary discrimination in certain positions and fields of activity. This discrimination is measured by comparing the income received by men and women for the same job, with similar qualifications, and working the same number of hours. The value of the discrimination rate indicates the extent of the change to be undertaken for salary equity purposes. Thus, the income of women industrial supervisors should be increased by 103.4%, the salary of women art workers by 138.8%, the salary of women public workers by 45.1%, the salary of women farmers by 49%, the salary of women handcrafters by 29.9%, the salary of women agricultural administrators by 37.9%. Salary discrimination rates in Mexico reflect that out of the 18 trades analyzed, in 14 occupations the salaries obtained by women were lower than men's, whereas they earned more in only four trades; of these, women's participation was quite insignificant, and the fourth covered housemaids, where women earned 5.9% more than men (INEGI, 2000).*

**Some of  
these are:**

- **Personnel selection and hiring.** PA management has proven how convenient it is to integrate community members to management tasks, including instances when they are directly hired to work for the management agency or related activities. Such hiring should include men as well as women, so that both may have access to the benefits of new jobs. The hiring process should clearly state that it is directed to both genders to avoid appointing women to certain positions only.
- **Salaries, responsibilities and promotion policies.** The differences prevailing in the income earned by women and men do not only stem from the fact that men occupy positions of higher hierarchy and salary level. It also happens that women obtain lower salaries even when carrying out jobs that are similar to those of the men. The equity principle (equal salary for equal work) is, thus, disrupted. It is useful to make salary comparisons by gender, and should the differences be significant, an analysis should be conducted in order to take the necessary steps to bring salaries to equal levels. The same process is applicable to the assignment of roles and promotion policies, ensuring the latter are available to men and women alike.

- **Support services, working conditions and schedules.** A gender-sensitive organization sets up mechanisms to resolve the productive and reproductive tension experienced by its staff. The effects of traditional roles place greater tension on women, for which reason women deserve special attention, until such a time when changes are made to the practices related to work division by sex, and a more equitable scheme of household responsibilities exists between women and men.

It also is essential to take into account the conditions under which many men work in the PA. For example, there are park rangers who live in the area for extended periods of time (22 days of work and 8 days of rest). Throughout various workshops, men have stated that this poses serious limitations to the relations with their sons and daughters, as they see them very little and are unable to take an active participation in their education or be there when needed. They have also stated this isolation affects the relation with their spouse/partner.

*Take note  
of...*

A gender-sensitive management agency should recognize women and men as "couples", "fathers", "mothers", and members of a family with specific requirements. Support should be provided to women and men to ease the burden posed by the reproductive workload. Yet, it is not only material conditions that should be considered; just as important is to promote an institutional policy based on mutual respect and the recognition and incentive about each other's virtues. Following are some gender-sensitive indicators for an organization:

- The materials disseminated throughout the institution show respect for women.
- Facilities such as bathroom and childcare are provided.
- There are procedures in place to prevent and sanction sexual harassment.
- Women and men do not pull practical jokes about the other gender.

- The diversity of styles between men and women is viewed as organizational strength.
- Spaces are facilitated to promote the development of caring relations among the workers' families.

- **Training activities for the staff of the management agency and the stakeholders.** Gender equity mainstreaming demands establishing gender equity as one of the guiding principles of a PA conservation initiative. However, the formal adoption of this principle is not sufficient; a gender-sensitive team is of the essence, resistance- or prejudice-free, and with a thorough understanding about the gender-sensitive actions to be undertaken. Three dimensions of training can be identified: training aimed at sensitizing personnel on gender equity matters; training on practical techniques to make operative the gender perspective; and training to specifically provide support to female personnel, i.e., to assist women to increase their technical capabilities.

### c. Operative level

*Communication and information as essential tools for participation*

The population should be informed about the conservation initiative undertaken in a PA, including knowledge about and access to the Management Plan, to be able to assess the advantages and disadvantages posed by the PA conservation initiative, and to learn about potential forms of participation.

There are times when people are not aware that they live in a protected area, ignoring, thus, existing restrictions about the access to or use of resources, as stipulated by the Management Plan, the alternatives that will be promoted, and the future opportunities for participation. It is not enough to inform the community's organized groups or those carrying out remunerated economic activities. The information should reach the entire population through adequate communication means.

*To disseminate the project about "Non-Timber Forestry Products" at the Cachoeria reserve in Brazil, a meeting was held at the site where the first health care post and the first school had been built, and where most of the population belonged to either the labor union or the Cooperativa Agroextractivista de Xapuri (CAEX). In other words, the conditions seemed ideal for discussions about the model for an exploitation-related reserve. However, Francisco said that, "The representative explained everything but I did not understand anything. He repeated it twice and then asked if anyone understood what he had said. Everyone said no" (Pontificia Universidad Católica de Perú, 1997).*

The communities and stakeholders are not homogeneous populations, for which reason the communication and information methods cannot be alike for everyone. The project should ensure that all women receive the information. It should be recalled that the women, boys and girls, and the elderly are also users and managers of natural resources, and potential participants in a management plan. Key questions asked:

- a. Is the population informed about the conservation initiative and Management Plan for the PA?
- b. Which stakeholders have been involved the most?, Within the stakeholders: Who has participated more actively?, Have women, native populations, elderly women and men, and boys and girls been informed and involved?
- c. Are the groups involved in management activities or are they part of the management agreement?, What type of relation is established with the groups that are not directly involved in management activities?
- d. Which are the groups' formal and informal mechanisms to convey information?, Are these mechanisms used to inform about the PA conservation initiative?

The use of certain techniques for public information and dissemination may be especially appropriate to reach certain groups.

*Following  
are some of  
these  
techniques:*

- **Workshops and public information meetings**

As many workshops and public meetings as necessary may be organized, depending on the size of the population and the diversity of the stakeholders. The presence of a gender-sensitive facilitator with experience in group facilitation is recommended. The invitation for workshop attendance should explicitly include women, and the design should be planned in agreement with the participants. The workshop objectives, date and place, duration and time schedule, will be determined.

Should there be opposition among certain groups or persons about the participation of women, it might be advisable to

schedule workshops exclusively for women, at the places and spaces where they meet: school meetings, health clinics, churches, etc. Other obstacles for female participation may be the schedules, lack of childcare facilities, the language in the case of indigenous communities, the characteristics of the facilitator, and clarity regarding the usefulness of the information to be received. To overcome such obstacles, consideration should be given to scheduling simultaneous workshops for male and female adults and boys and girls, making available children care services, setting workshop hours in line with the routines of the women and

*In a small village within the protected area of La Encrucijada, Mexico, a public meeting was called for the evaluating team of the Parks in Peril project, which was attended by male fishermen only. The women were working somewhere else. As stated by a woman "Many programs lack female participation. Several members of the staff do not talk to us because we are women". These barriers are extremely common and there are strategies to address them (Rojas, M., 2000).*

other groups, making translation services available, preferably by a member of the community, and inviting the women or groups of women to participate in the workshop in question.

- **Audiovisual presentations and signposting**

The preparation of audiovisual material such as slides or videos are good workshop aids and help to tackle certain communication problems, particularly when there is a high level of illiteracy among participants. It should be recalled that female illiteracy rate is higher among adult populations, and that there is less female bilingualism in local populations. The materials should be prepared in a very didactic manner and translated into the native language, if necessary. The problems needing solution should be specified, including the manner in which the solution will benefit the community and the women. The population should identify itself with the images presented in the audiovisual material, keeping in mind that women should be present in them; gender stereotypes should be avoided as well.



Throughout a vast strip of semi-arid land in Kenya, inhabited by Masai communities engaged in grazing activities, the Management Plan for the Elangata Wuas Ecosystem was implemented. The objective of the plan was to promote new practices aimed at a sustainable use of resources. In the hope of strengthening women's capability for discussion and participation, as well as to learn about their problems, the program decided, in 1993, to apply a new technique called "photographic evaluation".

The exercise consisted on asking small groups of women to discuss about the positive and negative aspects of their lives, and then take a few photographs to represent such problems. Cameras were provided to groups of four women each. When the photos were developed, two sets were made: one for the group of women and the other for the Plan's team. Each group explained to the promoter the reason for taking each particular photograph. Subsequently, the groups got together and discussed the results. The photos were mounted and the women recorded their comments about them. The group that best represented the negative and positive aspects through the photographs received a small prize. The discussion was taken from groups of four to groups of 20 women. The women were handed printed photographs to take home and show to visitors, which action originated much discussion.

Finally, the best photos were used in Plan meetings with other participants, both, women and men. Ever since, photo display is used in Kenya, Germany, and other countries. Many people have been surprised about the quality of the photos taken by women who had a camera in their hands for the first time (IUCN, 1997).

- **Placing signs and signposting**

The provision of visual and written information is a massive dissemination mean that may contribute to awaken the population's interest and awareness. For example, marking the boundaries of the PA, the buffer zones, and the areas of restricted access or use. It may also include information about endangered species, species needing protection, and practices that should be encouraged or eliminated. This could be accompanied by the installation of modules or information tables located at much frequented places, including the sites attended by women and children.

- **Other effective information methods**

Street performances, musical events, puppets, clowns, etc. Some communities have a community radio station that may be used for information purposes or to include informative messages in popular and high-rating radio programs. Itinerant shouting, mural newspapers, and banners are means that may be more effective than a formal meeting and complement the dissemination task.

*At the Annapurna Protected Area a "mobile camp" was included as part of the education and extension program. The purpose was to create awareness about various conservation-related issues. There are two types of "mobile camps". A special one is set up every year during the time of low agricultural activity. Camps include a wide range of disciplines and a complete team of specialists to address subjects like forestry, alternative power, tourism, community development, women's development, and conservation. Other types of camps are directly involved in addressing specific subjects or responding to specific needs as they emerge (IUCN 1997).*

- **Creation of an advisory committee and a gender equity promoting team**

The constitution of an advisory committee conformed by representatives from the various stakeholders, may be extremely useful to establish a liaison mechanism with the community, as well as to gather the proposals and opinions in connection with the implementation of the Management Plan. The creation of this body should be duly stipulated in the management agreement, and it should preferably include people who have no direct participation in PA management, for external point of view purposes. The duties of the advisory committee are:

- To act as the communication channel between the community and the management agency
- To promote participation of the various groups in PA management activities
- To receive from the various community groups complaints, suggestions or requests about Plan implementation
- To conduct regular evaluations about the execution of the Management Plan
- To propose adjustments, modifications and improvements to the execution of the Management Plan
- To participate in conflict resolution and surveillance tasks

Together with the advisory committee a **gender equity promoting team** may be appointed to promote the participation of women, represent their interests and verify that the actions and policies established in the Management Plan or the *addendum* for the incorporation of gender equity, are effectively undertaken.

The gender equity promoting team may operate in a formal or informal manner, as it may seem convenient, in accordance with the

*The participation of a local NGO with experience in gender issues, could be extremely useful when there is no previous experience or there are signs of resistance by the community, the management agency, or certain stakeholders. The NGO may be part of the promoting team and provide assistance about gender-sensitization activities, but always working jointly with community women and men.*

conditions and spirit of the community and the stakeholders. It should be conformed by persons who show interest or willingness or persons identified with the implementation of gender equity policies, and its activities should relate to institutional management in coordination with the management agency. The promoting team may include both, women and men, and among its duties is carrying out workshops about gender awareness issues that include masculinity.

In practice, women's participation and organization have been strengthened by:

- Promoting women's organizations
- Promoting women's participation within community organizations. Both entail advantages and disadvantages

The advantage posed by the participation of women in their own organizations, is that these open a space for women to discuss and analyze their problems and needs with greater freedom, and gain strength for an active participation in community, local and regional structures. Women's groups also are an opportunity to strengthen their own self-esteem. Among the disadvantages is the fact that, due to predominant customs and values, community men, technicians and other women, might feel distrustful about the groups of women, and isolate, criticize or relegate them to unimportant tasks.

Strengthening women's participation within community organizations has the advantage of incorporating them into the major development activities undertaken by the PA conservation initiative, as a result of which, they might be included in the decision-making process. However, community organizations are not always willing



to allow women to participate in their hierarchical structures or the decision-making process. Women are hardly ever elected to community boards of directors, as a result of which, quite frequently, their interests and expectations are not represented. In addition, women themselves have no confidence on their leading abilities, or feel that these are male tasks and responsibilities.

The most convenient form of participation should be determined on a case-by-case basis. The promoting team should make sure that men and women have equal opportunities to participate in the activities carried out when the Management Plan is implemented.

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