



Evaluation

WAVES: Weaving Leadership for Gender Equality 2019–2022



WAVES: Weaving Leadership for Gender Equality 2019–2022

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Evaluation

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Foreword

RECOFTC believes in a future in which people live equitably and sustainably in and beside healthy, resilient forests. One of its four strategic goals centres on social inclusion and gender equality, in which women, youth, Indigenous Peoples and other vulnerable groups are active and empowered contributors to forest management.

To achieve this goal, RECOFTC recognizes that gender equality and equity are matters of fundamental human rights and social justice and a precondition for sustainable forest governance. It uses an equity-oriented intersectional approach to help expand the representation and leadership of women and other excluded groups. This approach helps increase their access to income and other economic assets, promote gender-inclusive policy and extension mechanisms and tackle root barriers, including harmful gender norms, practices and knowledge gaps.

Tackling these long-standing inequalities is a complex process that requires dedicated attention and resourcing. RECOFTC established Weaving Leadership for Gender Equality, or WAVES, based on the idea that having stronger leadership and expertise will improve policymaking and investments in ways that promote gender equality and social inclusion. RECOFTC has positioned and engaged with WAVES as a regional network that leads, inspires and sustains long-lasting changes. WAVES operates in partnership with “gender leaders” who are change intermediaries creating context-relevant inclusive solutions that work for women, Indigenous Peoples and youth across the forest landscapes.

The WAVES results from the first nearly three years of the program, which are captured in this report, demonstrate innovative approaches, such as how engaging gender leaders and supporting them in determining national and organization-based gender issues and priorities can lead to locally acceptable and sustainable solutions. The results showcase the absolute value in power-sharing and inclusive engagement for co-creating long-term solutions on topics of gender and social inequalities.

The type and spectrum of changes brought about by the gender leaders that were evaluated for this report differed among them but were contextually relevant and significant.

We invite you to learn about WAVES and its gender leaders who have spearheaded different initiatives to make the forestry landscapes more equal and inclusive. We hope that WAVES will inspire you to become a gender leader, with each one of you taking actions to realize a more inclusive and equal world, especially in the forest landscapes.

David Ganz

Executive Director, RECOFTC

Kalpana Giri

WAVES Program Manager, RECOFTC

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The research report was designed and implemented under the technical oversight of Kalpana Giri, now the former Senior Program Officer for Social Inclusion and Gender Equality, RECOFTC, who also managed the WAVES program. Independent consultant Dibya Devi Gurung, who is the Coordinator of Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management in Nepal, collected and analysed the data and wrote the initial draft of the report.

WAVES country focal points reviewed and provided technical inputs: Tol Sokchea, Cambodia; Manilay Thipalansy, Lao PDR; Kanokporn Deeburee, Thailand; Ly Thi Minh Hai, Viet Nam; Khin Thiri Htun, Myanmar; Reny Juita, Indonesia; and Sujita Dhakal and Shambhu Dangel, Nepal. Vanessa Hongsathiviz and Julian Atkinson from RECOFTC provided technical inputs to finalize the report.

RECOFTC recognizes the partnership with and engagement from the 36 gender leaders and their organizations in the WAVES network in the seven countries where it works:

Ly Sophorn and Khlok Vichet Ratha, Ministry of Environment, Cambodia; Vong Sopanha, Forestry Administration of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Cambodia; Namira Arsa, Sulawesi Community Foundation, Indonesia; Kusdamayanti, Bogor Education and Training Center of Ministry of Forestry, Indonesia; Mardha Tillah, Rimbawan Muda Indonesia; Novaty Eny Dungga, Hasanuddin University, Indonesia; Dian Nurhadiatin, Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection, Indonesia; Sisomphet Souvanthalisith, Division for Advancement of Women, Mothers and Children, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Lao PDR; Yomala Phaengsuwan and Phonephanh Luangaphay; Department of Forest, Lao PDR; Nilapha Vorachit and Anouthay Panyanouvong, Department of Forest Inspection, Lao PDR; Khampheng Pongkham, Lao Biodiversity Association from Lao Civil Society Organization FLEGT Network; The Chhun Hak and Sengphal Davine, Ministry of Women's Affairs, Cambodia; Thazin Phyto, Food and Agriculture Organization Myanmar; Khin Nyein Nyein Mon, Myanmar Environment Rehabilitation–Conservation Network; Nu Ra, Promotion of Indigenous and Nature Together, Myanmar; Srijana Shrestha, Deepa Oli and Saraswati Aryal, Ministry of Forests and Environment and Female Foresters Network, Nepal; Januka Parajuli, Deputy Mayor of Chautara Municipality and Kalpana Shrestha, Vice Chair of Bhumlu Rural Municipality, Nepal; Madhuri Mahato, Radio Narayani reporter and BBC correspondent, Nepal; and Rama Paudel, Himalayan Grassroots Women's Natural Resource Management Association, Nepal; Jaronpis Moolsarn, Division of People's Participation Promotion, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Thailand; Attjala Roongwong, civil society group Forest for All, Thailand; Ratchadaporn Chanasawang, Village Chief Assistant and Field Coordinator from Kaeng Lawa Wetland Conservation Project, Thailand; Yupin Uppajak, Village Chief Assistant and Women's Group Leader from Mangrove Forestry Network, Thailand; Cham Phetchan, Women's Group Leader and Mangrove Forestry Network; Kritsana Fongdee, women's leader from Pong Daeng Subdistrict Administrative Organization, Muang District, Tak Province;

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Executive summary

WAVES, or Weaving Leadership for Gender Equality, is a RECOFTC initiative on gender equality in the governance of forest landscapes in the Asia-Pacific region. It was created to strengthen leadership and expertise to improve policymaking and investments that promote gender equality and social inclusion.

WAVES has created a network of 36 gender leaders from seven countries: Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand and Viet Nam. The program supported them as they advocated for equality and led gender-equitable programs in their communities and institutions.

In early 2021, more than two years into the program implementation, an evaluation was conducted to capture the results and learnings. The evaluation covered country and regional assessments through several workshops and individual discussions. The gender leaders, partner organizations and stakeholders from all seven countries provided their inputs.

Achievements

The evaluation found that the program produced a range of results and triggered changes among the WAVES gender leaders, their organizations and their partner organizations.

The most significant and visible change demonstrated by the gender leaders was an increased understanding of relational leadership and gender equality. They also honed their abilities to think strategically, shift power dynamics and become resilient against resistance and setbacks.

As the gender leaders became more aware of relevant issues and dynamics and designed and implemented new or alternative solutions to address gender issues, they gained recognition and support from their peers and networks for their increased knowledge and competency around gender issues.

The gender leaders developed and strengthened at least four networks championing women's and youth's leadership and competencies. A wide range of institutional changes was achieved by leveraging these informal networks' collective power. WAVES regional and national platforms provided collective spaces of inspiration, action and knowledge for the gender leaders.

WAVES supported the gender leaders in developing gender-inclusive policies and plans, particularly among forestry institutions. The WAVES training approach and materials were adapted and used by the gender leaders to create capacity-building events and knowledge products, including gender guidelines, training manuals and plans.

Harmful gender stereotypes and norms were challenged and revised. Dominant narratives were identified and challenged, and positive counter-narratives were devised. Male leaders took on important roles as allies and led collaborative efforts to promote pay equity and safeguarding measures that tackle harmful stereotypes. Media and youth leaders were mobilized to inspire and replicate achievements within and beyond the forestry sector.

Best practices and lessons

Several best practices were identified within the WAVES methodological approach to promote gender equality within forestry sector institutions and their programs:

- Equitable and respectful collaboration was pursued between participants, facilitators and managers, with different but based on participatory action research methodology.
- Individuals selected as the gender leaders were committed and open to driving gender-equitable approaches.
- A demand-driven and results-oriented approach was used to develop gender action plans that were unique to the specific context of an intervention.
- Risk mapping and mitigation strategies were developed through adaptive planning and management.
- Tailored mechanisms were used to support the gender leaders in implementing their action plans with technical and financial support.
- Partnerships were established with specialist leadership and gender equality organizations within each country. For the overall program, the RECOFTC WAVES team partnered with the Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management, based in Nepal.
- Deep and sustained engagement by all the gender leaders and partner organizations were facilitated at the regional and national levels.

Several lessons emerged that could inform the design of future action in promoting equitable leadership and gender equality:

- High-quality interventions with due diligence in both design and throughout the entire project cycle will ensure high-quality results. Assumptions about capacity, reasonable timelines for complex activities and the ability to commit to long-term workplans are all important considerations in projects.
- Awareness of the context and thresholds of change at the national, regional, institutional and individual levels is crucial.
- Negative institutional norms and patriarchy remain barriers to promoting gender equality. The concept or relational leadership and skills to promote gender equity must be enabled.

- Gender leaders, specialist staff and women require psychosocial support to become aware of microaggressions and to build resilience to it.
- Intersectionality and inclusion are vital. Young people, Indigenous Peoples, marginalized groups and men can be enablers in achieving intersectionality and inclusion.
- Financial support for WAVES-like interventions must be scaled up to achieve more widespread and sustainable impacts. Enabling follow-up action and partnerships is crucial to sustaining the momentum created through the activities made possible by WAVES.

The evaluation

About WAVES

Weaving Leadership for Gender Equality, known as WAVES, is a RECOFTC initiative that promotes gender equality in the governance, management and use of forest landscapes and their resources in the Asia-Pacific region. RECOFTC implemented the three-year WAVES program from March 2019 to September 2022. It was funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

RECOFTC established WAVES based on the idea that having stronger leadership and expertise will improve policymaking and investments in ways that promote gender equality and social inclusion more broadly. It also recognizes that creating transformative change requires identifying and supporting individuals working in natural resource management who can advocate for and negotiate such change at the institutional level.

The WAVES initiative so far has created a network of 36 gender leaders in the seven countries where RECOFTC works: Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand and Viet Nam. Although the WAVES program has ended, RECOFTC continues supporting the gender leaders as they advocate for equality and lead gender-equitable programs in their communities and institutions.

The gender leaders across the region encompass technical experts, senior government officials, politicians, academics, directors and officers of civil society organizations, local community leaders, business managers and a journalist. To date, WAVES has equipped them with the knowledge and capacity to understand, design and implement gender-equality measures in forest landscapes. It has built up women's leadership skills to promote gender equality across public agencies, the private sector and local communities and has worked with men as allies to support gender equality. And it has supported the gender leaders to integrate gender equality into policies, investments and actions.

WAVES has helped the gender leaders maximize their potential by cultivating leadership skills and by providing technical and financial support as they implement their individual action plan. Through regular mentoring and ad hoc psychosocial support, WAVES has helped the gender leaders create new narratives and visions in leading gender equality efforts and has helped amplify their work by linking them with wider networks and collaborators.

With support from the WAVES program, the gender leaders challenged conventional ways of thinking and promoted gender equality in policies and processes related to climate change, REDD+, forestry, forest law enforcement, governance and trade. They have revived and are driving the gender agenda and reminding their societies that the goal is inclusion and social justice for all.

The WAVES program is part of RECOFTC's dedicated effort to achieve its strategic goal 4 on social inclusion, gender equality and public action. In its work, RECOFTC tackles systemic inequities and marginalization prevalent in the natural resource landscapes by using a participatory approach of critical framing and co-engagement and co-creation of knowledge.

Four pillars of the WAVES program

WAVES was designed using participatory action research principles to activate self-discovery, analysis and actions (or co-creation) through a regional network of gender leaders. Participatory learning and action were activated by using engagement approaches that took into account the gender leaders' demand-driven needs and priorities. Multiple strategies were employed to address the intersecting barriers and drivers of gender inequality. The four pillars outlined here are part of the co-creation structure that was put in place to cultivate discovery and actions.

Demand-driven

- The gender leaders were selected for their commitment to gender issues and their ability to work on context-specific issues and achieve results. They were involved in the program's conception and remain involved in its implementation.
- Before launching the program, the WAVES manager and focal points from the seven countries where RECOFTC works conducted informal outreach and national discussions with the gender leaders. Together, they identified gender issues relevant to the national context and priorities and assessed potential positive outcomes as well as challenges, conflicts and barriers, and they planned risk-mitigation strategies.

The gender leaders were selected based on the following criteria:

- Demonstrated commitment: They had experience taking initiatives on gender and social inclusion work in forestry but were limited by the institutional set up or facing resistance.
- Understanding of gender issues and activities: They had some level of understanding of gender issues, activities and changes that result from such interventions and barriers.
- Scope of manoeuvrability: They had a mandate to create institutional influence over people working in gender, policy or planning who provide opportunities to influence institutional changes and were willing to lead work in these areas.
- Diversity of partners to deliver different types of changes: They had collaborated with a wide group of organizations and people who can bring about diverse levels of change, from the policy level to practice, with a good representation of state and non-state actors and the private sector.
- Period of engagement: They were willing to commit to working with the WAVES program for three years (2019–2022).
- English proficiency: They had a working level of English sufficient to participate fully in the program.

Participatory engagement approach

- **Meaningful engagement:** WAVES created spaces for deliberation and dialogue. It enabled ownership, power-sharing, knowledge co-creation and multifaceted engagement strategies. The gender leaders were involved in every step, from program scoping and implementation to unpacking tensions and nuanced resistance that they encountered. Problems and solutions, including unintended changes and resistance, were analysed as a group. The program's methods were defined by the participatory approach and power-sharing between the WAVES team and the gender leaders.
- **Tailored capacities:** WAVES provided the gender leaders with targeted and timely support at the regional and national levels. They were provided with trainings and workshops on various gender concepts and skill sets, based on each leader's specific skills, needs and interests to implement their action plans.
- **Learning space:** WAVES created learning channels to connect the gender leaders in a safe and trusting environment at the national and regional levels to share their accomplishments, challenges and pitfalls. WAVES focal points in each country moderated the learning channels at the national level.
- **Results-oriented:** WAVES provided support to each gender leader to implement their action plan and to link with other RECOFTC programs to expand their outreach and garner more support.

Intersectional interventions

- Different types of interventions were needed for the gender leaders to implement their respective action plan.
- The WAVES program employed diverse strategies and actions to address gender gaps and structural barriers, mitigate emerging risks and reduce opportunity costs.
- Technical and financial support were provided at the regional and national levels to roll out interventions.
- Interventions promoted inclusive changes at the individual and institutional levels.

Institutionalization and enabling systems

- The WAVES program design emphasized deliberative feedback loops to formal and informal spaces and governance procedures so that efforts to achieve gender equality extended to the institutional system to address systemic inequalities.
- A system of direct communication channels, such as the WAVES focal points working directly with the RECOFTC regional WAVES project team, leveraged influence and encouraged adaptive planning and strategizing.
- The gender leaders in each country supported one another and created communication loops between their informal network and the formal systems.
- Individual leadership approaches were used to influence institutional shifts within each gender leader's organization through policy changes, mandates, budgets and other means.

- The gender leaders were connected to a larger audience and network outside of their institutions and forestry circle for collective advocacy and amplification.

Of the 36 gender leaders from the seven countries where RECOFTC works, 31 are women and five are men (Annex 2).

About the evaluation: Purpose and framework

The regional evaluation was conducted in 2021, more than two years after the program had begun, by independent consultant Dibya Devi Gurung, in close collaboration with the then-WAVES program manager Kalpana Giri, the WAVES country focal points and the gender leaders.

The overarching objective of the evaluation was to review and identify the results and learnings of the WAVES program to date. The consultant interviewed the gender leaders, partner organizations and stakeholders from all seven countries where RECOFTC works.

The approach of the evaluation was based on the principles and practices of participatory learning.¹ The gender leaders were guided through a process of self-reflection and assessment through several facilitated workshops and individual discussions.

Framework for evaluating individual and institutional change

The framework for individual and institutional change,² which was also used to design the WAVES program, was adapted for the assessment. The framework focused on changes that took place at two distinct but interrelated levels:

Individual change: The performance and behavioural change of the gender leaders were assessed based on their understanding of gender and leadership concepts and how they were able to apply these concepts to their personal and professional lives. The evaluation also considered informal changes, such as increased confidence and capacities of leaders on gender integration into the efforts they have led towards influencing internal policies and programs.

Institutional change: The evaluation examined how WAVES effected changes in organizations' programs, policies, structures and work culture. It considered both informal changes, such as each institution's networks, peers, norms and values, and the formal changes, such as introduction of policies and programs to support gender equality.

Evaluation process

The evaluation process was guided by a framework designed by the RECOFTC WAVES team with the consultant and the gender leaders. The framework was used as a guide to examine the WAVES results at the country and regional levels. The following section describes the evaluation process.

Design and framework for evaluation

- The design and framework were developed by RECOFTC in consultation with the consultant and gender leaders.
- A first workshop was organized to create a common understanding of the evaluation framework among the consultant, the gender leaders and the WAVES RECOFTC team.
- The evaluation framework was then used to facilitate the country and regional evaluations.
- The evaluation was designed at two levels. First, workshops and meetings drew out evidence and learnings that occurred within each country. Then the learnings from the national evaluations were condensed into a regional perspective and shared at a regional evaluation workshop in March 2021.

Project documentation

The evaluation drew on all project documentation:

- WAVES concept report
- WAVES framework
- Country reports
- Meeting minutes
- Case studies
- Documents related to participatory action research, gender and leadership

Meetings and workshops conducted for the evaluation

- Country evaluation workshops: Country-level evaluations were made within a span of two months, from February through March. Each evaluation was conducted with a mixed approach of face-to-face meetings, virtual workshops and interviews and group discussions. One in-person workshop was conducted each in Lao PDR, Nepal and Viet Nam. One virtual workshop was conducted in Indonesia. Interviews and discussions were conducted in Cambodia, Myanmar and Thailand. The gender leaders shared their progress, learnings and achievements, including examples and evidence. The country-level workshops and meetings were used to assess the achievements, results, gaps and possibilities that the gender leaders had observed through their engagement with WAVES. Information derived through each country's evaluation process was then synthesized and consolidated to collate results and learnings at the regional level.
- Regional workshop: A three-day regional workshop in March gave the gender leaders the opportunity to present and discuss their results, learnings, challenges, opportunities and recommendations with all stakeholders, including partner and donor agencies.

- **Meetings:** Two meetings were organized between the consultant and the RECOFTC WAVES team to discuss and provide feedback on the draft reports. In addition, several rounds of in-depth discussions with the RECOFTC WAVES manager, the WAVES country teams and communication and learning experts were organized to gain a better understanding of the context and validate the findings.

Limitations of the evaluation

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the evaluation had to be conducted virtually. This made it difficult to discern behaviour changes and expansion of informal spaces, especially through the remote interviews. The pandemic made it unrealistic to visit the gender leaders' workspaces and conduct face-to-face interviews with them and their colleagues, subordinates, supervisors and partners, which could have provided further insights on the gender leaders' leadership practices and their influences on their colleagues' behaviour and institutional norms for gender integration. This also limited the face-to-face interaction with the WAVES leaders, except for Nepal, where the consultant is based.

Findings

The evaluation led to the findings presented here in three broad categories. These findings relate to the learnings generated through the WAVES program in terms of methodology, type of results and significance of results in the seven countries:

- The methodological approach of co-creation and interventions as best practice: WAVES processes, steps and investments in developing, planning and implementing the program
- Results at the individual and institutional levels: Changes at the personal level (knowledge, competencies, behaviours) and changes at the institutional level (policies, programs, mechanisms, culture)
- Actions led by the gender leaders in countries: Actions undertaken by the gender leaders to address gender issues in their own social, political and cultural contexts

WAVES methodological approach and interventions as best practice

The evaluation found that the WAVES methodological approach involved a platform of co-creation that encourages gender leaders to reflect and be aware of their beliefs about gender inequality and travel through a process of self-discovery to change the way they view, behave and take action.

The most important aspects of the WAVES program:

- Emphasis on equal collaboration between participants, facilitators and managers, who offered different contexts and approaches
- Deliberate selection of individuals who were committed and open to driving the gender-equitable approaches
- Demand-driven and results-oriented approach to develop gender action plans unique to each gender leader's context and work conditions
- Risk mapping and mitigation strategies developed through adaptive planning and management
- Tailored mechanisms for technical and financial support the gender leaders to implement their action plan
- Partnership with Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management (WOCAN), which specializes in relational leadership³ and gender equality
- Deep and sustained engagement of all the gender leaders and the collaborative partners with the program at the regional and national levels

What made the WAVES approach innovative?

The WAVES approach was based on the principles of participatory action research.⁴ It focused on one element of such research: that interventions are the practices associated with the co-production (co-creation) of knowledge, whereby the participants, facilitators and managers intentionally collaborate on equal terms and learn and respect each other's views and analysis of the issues and, in the process, generate new knowledge and approaches.⁵

Underlying the concept of co-production is that “knowledge” and “leadership” happen in a relative context of power relations. WAVES used a good mix of design elements to create a platform for knowledge co-creation.⁶ Invariably, the gender leaders interpreted the new ideas and practices proposed in the training interventions to make sense of their own social, cultural and political contexts. They then took the new ideas and owned them and decided whether to continue to practise them, depending on their own context.

WAVES provided the gender leaders with the conceptual and methodological knowledge, skills and gender language to activate their individual discovery⁷ and self-awareness. This approach was designed to add multiple dimensions of leadership and gendered experiences for the gender leaders to reflect, view, analyse and act upon.

WAVES entered existing discourses and spaces where the gender leaders already had personal, professional or academic experiences and knowledge on gender or were practising some form of leadership. The program focused on selecting individuals with strong potential for gender leadership and for understanding their contexts, opportunities and limitations, from which they would then identify needs, strategies and approaches. WAVES used a good mix of inclusive elements to develop the tailored, demand-driven program with significant and sustained engagement of the gender leaders, from the design to the evaluation stages.

The WAVES approach built up trust and created collaborative, safe spaces for sharing knowledge, achievements and challenges. This gave the gender leaders the opportunity to expand their experiences and approaches beyond their own networks to address inequalities in the system.⁸

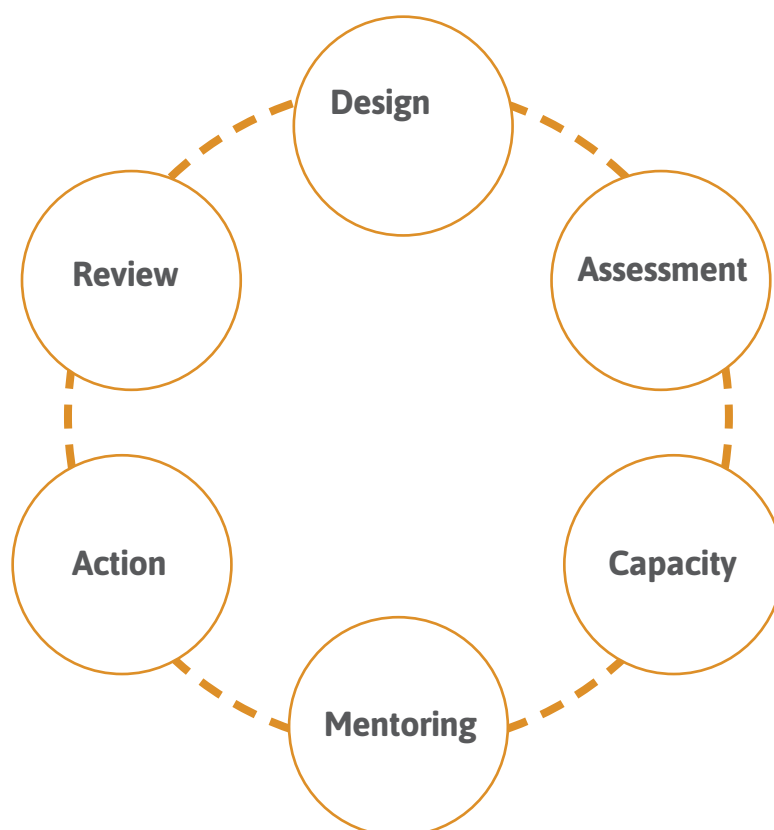
Quality of engagement and types of interventions

Working for gender equality requires carefully designed methods and approaches based on the needs, interests, priorities and capacities of stakeholders. These must be supported with well-planned programs that are backed by adequate technical and financial resources. Throughout all these processes, a deep and sustained engagement of the stakeholders during the design, monitoring and evaluation stages is critical.

WAVES has given high priority to collaborating with the gender leaders during the entire process. To ensure quality inputs, WAVES adapted the participatory action research principles, particularly the co-creation of knowledge, and applied them during the scoping assessments, in the training on relational leadership and at every stage of mentoring, facilitation and evaluation. The overall aim was to design and activate a co-

creation platform for gender leaders.

The following summary of the six components adopted by the WAVES initiative indicates the quality of inputs the program employed. The components are not linear but cyclical and interlinked.



Component 1: Designing the methodological approaches

- The WAVES approach was developed in collaboration with WOCAN, an organization with expertise in designing and implementing programs employing participatory action research methodologies. Their expertise encompasses relational leadership and gender and organizational change for gender equality frameworks.
- The WAVES approach tapped RECOFTC's expertise in participatory approaches and methods in the forestry and natural resource management sectors.
- The WAVES manager's expertise in participatory action research and gender integration, along with her well-developed networks in the region, proved to be very useful in designing the rigorous WAVES program methodology and package.
- The members of the RECOFTC, WAVES and WOCAN partnership designed the WAVES methodological steps and provided training and guidance to the participants. The program design broadly focused on conceptual framing of relational leadership and gender and organizational change for a gender equality framework.
- Guided by the WAVES program, participants learned concepts and skills that helped ensure that the interventions were properly practised in their context. For example, gender leaders from Cambodia's Ministry of Women's Affairs received guidance and resources to design and implement their Youth Leadership Lab for Gender Equality.

Component 2: Scoping assessments

- Consultation meetings with potential gender leaders: WAVES conducted scoping and assessments in collaboration with RECOFTC's country offices over five months. The consultation meetings and workshops aimed to orient the potential gender leaders and partner organizations about WAVES and to determine their willingness and compatibility with the program. The potential gender leaders shared information on the contextually relevant gender issues and priorities. They also presented their proposed intervention strategies and actions (or what they were struggling to implement) to address those gender issues. The consultation meetings collected inputs on how a regional network like WAVES could be more useful to support the work at the country level. These meetings were kept open, without any promise or pressure to engage with the WAVES program.
- Selecting the gender leaders: WAVES gathered information on potential gender leaders in the seven countries where RECOFTC works to determine their willingness to engage. Ultimately, 36 leaders working across diverse partners, from government and civil society organizations to academia and the private sector were selected.
- Further two-way learning: WAVES conducted short one-to-one and group discussions with the gender leaders to help them better understand the program. They were also guided to refine their gender issues, priorities and intervention strategies. The selected gender leaders had the choice to decide whether to engage or withdraw.
- Selection of gender leaders: WAVES selected gender leaders, tasked them each with developing an individual gender action plan and drew up individual agreements with them. In their gender action plan, each WAVES leader was asked to specify the gender issues they wanted to address in their context; the interventions they would use to address those gender issues; foreseeable risks and opportunities that would emerge during implementation; their and their partners' capacity needs for implementation; and areas where WAVES support would be useful.
- Determining capacity strengths: The information obtained from the gender action plans was analysed by the RECOFTC WAVES team to determine the capacity needs of each gender leader. The gender action plans also highlighted the changes the WAVES program could achieve. The information helped tailor the capacity-strengthening so that it responded to each gender leader's needs and priorities.

Component 3: Capacity-strengthening

- Training workshop on relational leadership: The gender leaders received training on conceptual clarity as well as operational methods and tools to help them self-reflect, be self-aware and increase their analysis skills to view issues from multiple angles. This initial workshop cultivated important leadership, negotiation and self-awareness skills, identified possible shifts for gender equality and tasked the gender leaders with finalizing their action plan to further gender equality in their respective organization.
- Implementation of the action plans: Following the first workshop, the gender leaders began implementing their action plan. WAVES supported them with technical expertise and mentorship.

- Coaching and close monitoring: WAVES tracked the leadership pathways of the gender leaders and captured results through a monitoring and evaluation system.
- Development and implementation of the research and learning plan: The WAVES team developed a research and learning plan to capture the results, gather evidence and analyse the impacts of the program.
- The capacity-strengthening activities, which were based on the initial assessments and demands of the gender leaders, included training on:
 - Leadership, negotiation and communication
 - Concepts associated with gender, inequality and exclusion
 - Methods and tools for gender-integrated planning
 - Pathways for change for equity and empowerment
 - Gender-inclusive institutions
 - Facilitation and training skills for gender leaders
 - Skills for dealing with resistance
 - Other topics deemed critical by the gender leaders

Component 4: Mentoring and learning

This component complemented and enhanced the capacity-strengthening process. The gender leaders were supported by trained and experienced mentors to help them reflect, identify challenges and strategize their responses. The WAVES mentors applied the following principles in mentoring and guiding the gender leaders.

Mirroring: Mirroring means reflecting or emulating another person's speech and affecting behaviour or other qualities to indicate comprehension of what is being said or to reflect bonding, with the intent of empathizing.⁹ It is based on empathic listening, which encourages stepping inside a speaker's story to feel their emotions and providing a safe place for them to work through complicated emotions.¹⁰ The RECOFTC WAVES team took on the mentor role and used this technique to help the gender leaders work through feelings they experienced as an influencer and leader. The mentors guided the gender leaders through various stages of isolation, feelings of victimization and forms of resistance they encountered from managers and peers as they started to practise new concepts, such as gender equality and relational leadership. Mentoring sessions were embedded with regular check-in sessions and conducted once every two months. The mentor team then followed up on when and how the leaders were supported. The team helped the gender leaders identify and name the resistance and barriers they faced; and the team connected them with other leaders and experts for inspiration and strategy development.

Legitimizing: The WAVES team helped the gender leaders progress from simply naming problems to entering the "norming" phase, wherein the team begins to chart out a plan to function in new consistent ways to address already named issues.¹¹ Norming can create new or improved forms of institutional culture.

Networking and amplification: Networking helps to create horizontal and vertical channels to communicate and amplify messages. The gender leaders benefited immensely from opportunities that linked them to local, regional and international networks that supported their leadership practice. Several networks were created based on their needs and interests, including country-level networks and a regional-level network of the gender leaders, the RECOFTC teams and the organizations, such as the Female Foresters Network and Team 30 in Nepal and the Civil Society Organizations Network in Lao PDR. The gender leaders were encouraged to form other networks beyond their groups to inspire, influence and amplify their learnings.

Component 5: Demonstrated action for change

This component aimed to translate learned knowledge and capacities into action. The gender leaders were provided financial and technical support to implement their individual action plan. They then mobilized their institution, partners and networks while implementing their action plan.

Component 6: Participatory review and evaluation

After two years of WAVES implementation, the gender leaders and the RECOFTC WAVES team reviewed activities and challenges and learned together. They then disseminated and scaled up the learnings. The review process entailed country-level evaluation workshops and meetings and a regional evaluation workshop. These workshops were carefully planned and prepared with the gender leaders. Each gender leader was provided space to demonstrate their achievements, challenges, gaps and results. In the regional workshop, all gender leaders interacted with RECOFTC staff members, donor officials and experts from the region. In this process, the gender leaders inspired their peers and people who wanted to join the network or to learn how to be changemakers.

The WAVES methodological approach deeply engaged the gender leaders in self-discovery so that they could view, assess and improve social and gender equality issues in their personal and professional lives from multiple lenses. This triggered several results and shifts among the WAVES leaders and partners.

Results at the individual and institutional levels

The framework for individual and institutional change that was used to assess the WAVES results looked at the detailed formal and informal changes at the individual and institutional levels. Although this framework was applied to conceptualize how each change occurred separately, in reality, the changes were interlinked and interconnected. Therefore, they are not separated as individual and organizational results in this report.

The most significant and visible shift experienced and demonstrated by the gender leaders was their increased understanding of relational leadership and gender equality. This helped them to also realize that viewing the gender patterns from multiple dimensions results in a deeper awareness of the issues and provides alternative ways to achieve solutions.

As the gender leaders became more aware and started to implement new or alternative ideas and interventions to address gender issues, they were also recognized and supported by their peers and networks for their increased gender competency. Many of them earned recognition as an expert on gender competency in research, training and facilitation. Their professional growth was notable in terms of increased responsibilities, promotions and awards. This process built up self-confidence and instilled leadership and empowerment within the gender leaders. They were able to develop and strengthen four networks that championed women's and youth's leadership and competencies. The gender leaders also leveraged the collective power of these informal networks to affect a wide range of institutional changes.

WAVES gender leaders developed several gender-inclusive policies and plans. The WAVES training approach and materials were adapted and used by the gender leaders to create capacity-building events and knowledge products for their targeted context, including gender guidelines, training manuals, plans and stories. WAVES gender leaders trained staff working in forest agencies, and institutional plans and processes were aligned across forestry institutions. New educational courses and guidelines for improving university curriculum were devised. Through revised policies, capacities and institutional provisions, gender integration was increasingly institutionally supported and normalized.

Harmful gender stereotypes and norms were challenged and revised. Male privilege and toxic masculine norms that perpetuate gender-based violence were targeted as a problematic norm. Women leaders across local communities and forest companies were increasingly recognized and prized for their knowledge and roles. Male gender leaders stepped into the role of ally and led collaborative efforts to embed pay equity and other safeguarding measures to tackle harmful gender stereotypes. Media and youth leaders were mobilized to adopt and amplify these innovations within and beyond the forestry sector.

Examples of applied gender concepts

The following examples demonstrate how the gender leaders applied their improved knowledge of gender concepts¹² and methods to identify, analyse and address gender inequality issues from multiple dimensions.

Elevating “participation” beyond static numbers

In forest landscapes, achieving gender equality goals is usually viewed in linear and instrumental ways and thus limited to counting the number of women's and marginalized groups who participate.

The gender leaders understood the need to go beyond counting numbers and that gender issues must be approached from different dimensions, such as examining how, where and when different groups of women and men are participating, who is being discriminated against or harassed or how to tackle elite capture of resources and decisions within participatory settings. This recognition led to improved gender and inequity analysis, intersectional targeting of marginalized groups and ensuring long-term programs to address inequality.

For example:

- In Lao PDR and Indonesia, the gender leaders specifically targeted youths and indigenous women within social forestry programs and included them as their new stakeholders.
- In Cambodia, the gender leaders saw the need for long-term coaching and mentoring of young people and women leaders and developed carefully designed and well-resourced long-term youth leadership programs for them.
- In Nepal, the gender leaders mobilized internal and external networks to recognize sexual and professional harassment as a barrier for women's leadership within the forestry bureaucracy.

Viewing gender inequality from multiple dimensions in Nepal to address root causes of inequality

Deepa Oli is a forest officer with the Ministry of Forest and Environment in Nepal. As a woman working in the forestry sector, she was making efforts to address workplace harassment issues prevalent in forestry workspaces. She was facing resistance from her peers and organization but felt challenged in finding workable ways to move forward. Taking part in the WAVES program as a gender leader provided her newer perspectives to move forward. It provided her with better research and analytical skills but also with ways to understand and address resistance that comes with gender interaction.

"I had not linked the behaviours and attitudes of my organization with my performance, leadership and the way I conducted myself," she said. "Now, to be able to discuss, analyse and articulate these links and understand the root causes is very helpful for me both personally and professionally. For example, it was such an empowering moment when we conducted a webinar session and publicly stated that harassment, including sexual harassment and normalization of toxic masculinity, within the forestry sector are the major barriers for women's leadership."

Oli added that the elephant in the room was unsafe working spaces and risks of gender-based violence. It deterred women's participation, but leadership never recognized it, and it was never named before by the institution and by women themselves. Thus, there were no response mechanisms to address them. Most development agencies, including the Ministry, were happy with a narrow understanding of leadership that headcounts women in the forestry workforce and in leadership posts but does not address the underlying sexism and male privilege rampant in forestry institutions.

"We all know now that this alone does not help to produce women leaders," she said. "I never realized how powerful it is to be organized and be able to use multiple lenses to analyse and articulate gender issues and to use different strategies to influence the leadership. You actually get heard and are taken seriously. Through WAVES, we were able to strengthen an informal network of female foresters and were also able to institutionalize gender-based violence as a major gender issue that needs an institutional response."

Questioning the normalization of gendered roles and women's positions

After the training, the gender leaders felt more comfortable to identify and challenge unequal and discriminatory distribution of gendered roles and resources in their communities and workplaces. This process of self-inquiry and questioning surfaced at the individual level of the gender leaders and across their institutional norms and roles.

For example:

- In Thailand, one gender leader started to self-reflect and question why she was the only woman in the history of their Citizen's Forest Committee and why other women were never selected as members or were not included in decision-making positions. She then initiated awareness and sensitization events with women members and eventually formed a gender charter in the Citizens' Forest Network in Thailand.
- In Nepal, the gender leader who was the deputy mayor in her province was given traditional women-related responsibilities, such as settling domestic violence cases and keeping records on women's and children's health and agriculture. She was systematically excluded from what was deemed to be more "important" roles, such as being involved in discussions and decisions about infrastructure, road construction and irrigation. She questioned these unspoken rules and strategically created space for herself in these areas within her municipality.

Understanding implicit bias

In most of the organizations where the gender leaders work, women's knowledge, skills and maturity are not usually as valued as those of men. As a result, women are often excluded from applying for or being promoted to management positions within their organizations.

This implicit bias hinders women from taking up leadership positions, even if they are as or more capable than their male colleagues. The gender leaders were able to identify explicit and implicit biases and stereotypes that surround them and their work in the institutions and then use interventions to overcome those biases.

For example:

- In Indonesia, one of the gender leaders said that in government organizations, when a senior-level officer retires, the next most senior officer usually steps into the position. However, if that person is a woman, she is usually not promoted and is discouraged to apply, even if she is eligible and qualified for the post. The gender leader questioned her organization about why women are never considered for the replacement in senior positions. She also mobilized the organization's gender group to lobby management and follow up on the promotions. She was proud to share this experience during the regional workshop and said that she used the concept of "implicit bias" to take up the issue.

Overcoming gender bias in a forest company in Viet Nam

Trinh Mai Quang Huy works at the Forest Protection and Development Fund within the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. He was one of the five men (across the seven countries) chosen as a WAVES gender leader.

At the regional workshop, he explained that most of Viet Nam's technical sectors are beset with biases and prejudices against both professional and community women. In Huy's workplace, only 50 of the 400 workers are women.

"Women are often not considered capable and suitable for technical work, such as planning and managing forest activities like forest fire prevention, forest patrolling or even driving," he said. "Due to these reasons, women are not considered valuable to the organization. During restructuring and budget cuts, women staff are the first ones to be sacked. They are given more administrative jobs and cannot exercise their technical skills and improve their careers."

Further, women who work and travel with men are often questioned about their capabilities and character. There is also risk of harassment from external loggers in the field.

"There are comments like 'who will marry her – she is always with men and travels with them in remote areas,'" Huy said.

Assigning equal roles to women in remote jobs was not a fair solution without addressing the risk of harassment. He needed to find ways that would allow redistributing recognition and resources more fairly between women and men workers. To do this, Huy mobilized his organization to conduct a study to identify and analyse the gender issues. As a result of the study findings, several changes were made to his organization's policies and strategies, including identifying diverse and important roles for women in forest work; integrating specific and separate gender-related actions in annual workplans; expanded or revised job descriptions to ensure women's participation in more valued technical work; gender-awareness activities and events offered to senior management, including the chairperson who later took on a significant role in approving the revised human resource policies and plans.

"These initiatives helped increase the roles and visibility of women in technical areas," Huy said. "Women have started to perform such technical tasks as managing forest fire plans. However, despite these small but important changes, resistance and barriers for women to participate are still there and must be addressed."

Developing aptitudes for strategic thinking and managing resistance and setbacks to the gender equality goals

Integrating gender requires persistence and continued persuasion by the people who work on the subject. Although people in general believe in the principles of gender equality, most of them do not understand the many challenges to integrating it into their programs and institutions.

Gender equality is often misunderstood as a “soft” subject that does not require technical expertise and experience. The assumption is that anyone can do it. Many also treat gender equality integration as increasing diversity of females and other marginalized groups. Gender leaders had to spend a substantial amount of time and energy convincing their staff and decision-makers of the value of integrating gender equality. Most of the time, it was a lone battle for the gender focal point or the gender officer or gender leader. This daily exposure and continued display of resistance created emotional setbacks to staff working on gender, who, in most cases, were women in mid-managerial positions.

The gender leaders said that using self-reflection as a tool that they learned from the initial WAVES training helped them examine their own thoughts and feelings, understand their own situation and recognize their own weaknesses and strengths more clearly. In their work, it helped them reflect on how and why they are doing certain activities and what other activities they should be doing. The self-reflections made them more self-aware about themselves and helped them to develop confidence.

While dealing with resistance and barriers, the gender leaders learned to better manage their emotions. For example, someone who tended to get emotional and react immediately learned to analyse the situation first and then deal with it logically using appropriate gender language and manoeuvring strategies. They became adept at recognizing the intentions of the people who challenged them and became confident to know when to respond and when not to and how.

For example:

- In Myanmar, a gender leader faced institutional resistance when trying to include gender issues in her organization’s planning process and projects. Existing patterns and practices of gender inequality and unfair allocation of leadership and resources to women were socially accepted as a normal practice by her team. She helped the team identify gender gaps in those patterns and initiated sensitization and awareness dialogues to identify such unequal patterns as a gender problem. It was not a smooth process to get the team buy-in, and she endured criticism and resistance, but she persevered and continued to discuss gender patterns within the team. Her approach has created some openness and acceptance for gender integration in her organization.
- Another gender leader from Nepal, a journalist, was confronted in her training by the husbands of her women trainees. They were all locked in the training hall for protection from their husbands and the police had to intervene. But after they were released, instead of confronting these men aggressively, the gender leader organized a meeting and dialogued with them and received their support instead. She used her self-reflection techniques to deal with the situation.

Recognizing dominant narratives and reframing counternarratives

Dominant narratives¹³ based on gender stereotypes and patriarchal norms were found to be shifting direction within the gender leaders themselves and among others. Gender leaders were able to develop counternarratives¹⁴ to define the specifics and nuances of gender issues experienced by women and other marginalized groups through alternative language and framing.

For example:

- In Indonesia, in a project area of one of the gender leaders, local indigenous women were stereotyped as poor beneficiaries and not considered as primary stakeholders or especially as leaders. The training and regular coaching on gender and relational leadership contributed to changing the ways these indigenous women conducted themselves and changed the perceptions of the development agencies and their village elites towards them. The indigenous women's groups now are recognized as a stakeholder by the community in the project area.
- In Nepal, sexual harassment and toxic masculinity are considered uncomfortable topics for formal discussion. However, when men comment on the appearance or intelligence of female staff or make unwanted advances towards them, it is often not considered a serious issue and is instead framed as "macho" or "flirtatious" behaviour. In the forestry sector, the Female Foresters Network of more than 700 members is led by the WAVES gender leaders. The network has reframed this narrative of harassment from "macho" behaviour to "creepy" behaviour. Young female foresters in the field have been supported to speak out against harassment issues, and a few cases of harassment have been successfully reported.
- Also in Nepal, gender leaders were often mocked and labelled "celebrity foresters" for being vocal and providing deep analysis and questioning institutional policies, programs and attitudes. However, the gender leaders reframed this label and turned it into their advantage. They used their "celebrity" status to get spaces in different forums to speak for gender equality. They said that this is one of the outcomes of the training whereby they learned to reframe and create counternarratives about themselves and the issues.

Establishing gender leaders as knowledgeable and skilled gender trainers and resource persons

The gender leaders have been recognized for the quality of knowledge and training they provide, which goes beyond gender definitions and methods. Their training facilitates deep discussions around gender and leadership issues, such as understanding dominant toxic masculinities, which can be practised by both women and men, and recognizing how stereotypes and implicit bias can subordinate women and trivialize their skills and contributions. The gender leaders said their training participants often told them that their training is different and makes them see things that they would not have noticed before.

Gender leaders were also able to identify the lack of a gender agenda and learning needs in capacity-building programs. Before the training, gender leaders had no issues

with key technical meetings only involving all-male staff members. Now, such gender-blind meetings make them highly uncomfortable, and they question such panels.

Gender leaders were widely recognized and appreciated for their knowledge and skill sets on gender concepts and methods of integration. They developed gender indicators and knowledge products to guide their team or programs. The gender leaders were often invited as gender resource persons by their institutions to provide gender training or inputs in planning processes and policies.

For example:

- In Indonesia, the gender leader from the Bogor Education and Training Centre under the Ministry of Forest developed gender-responsive criteria and indicators and integrated them into their training curriculum. She demonstrated that gender can and has to be integrated into any kind of training program. She even received the Gender Mainstreaming Competition award for effectively mainstreaming gender in the centre's work.
- In Nepal, gender leaders from the Ministry of Forestry and Environment and municipalities were invited by other institutions and networks to provide gender-oriented technical inputs and training. The gender leaders from the Ministry were invited by organizations, such as the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, to provide gender training to their regional partners, and by the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women to review the country report on the convention of that same name from environmental perspectives.
- In Lao PDR, all the gender leaders were recognized and prized for their knowledge and competencies. They were promoted and assigned responsibilities to manage gender integration into well-resourced projects and programs. Compared with previous practice of sending women to gender trainings, the Department of Forestry and the Department of Forest Inspection started sending people with relevant gender expertise to attend gender trainings.

Recognizing quality gender interventions and inputs in Lao PDR

In Lao PDR, the Village Forest Management Planning allocates forests and forest lands in the village administrative area. This is carried out both inside and outside the protection, protected and production forests so that villages can manage, protect, develop and use the village management area (Forest Law 2019).

The Five-Year Agriculture and Forestry Development Plan (2016–2020) targeted reaching 1,500 villages through this program. According to the Forestry Strategy to the year 2030, all the components of the projects and programs related to agriculture, forestry and rural development should promote gender equality.

However, the visions and goals had never been translated into action, and women's participation in the village forest management planning process was low, both as members and in decision-making roles. These gender gaps were not usually questioned nor addressed during the implementation.

The WAVES gender leaders within the Department of Forestry and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry coordinated and mobilized all the stakeholders related to the village forest management, such as the Department of Village Forest

Management and Non-Timber Forest Products and local communities. Then, with support from RECOFTC's focal point from Xieng Khouang Province, they provided training on gender integration.

The training organizers ensured that 50 percent of the training participants were women. The gender situation analysis conducted during the training identified gender issues, such as the extensive roles of women in the management of village forests and their low position in the management structure. This training program was eye-opening for all stakeholders on how gender issues are neglected and ignored by their management system.

The gender leaders also brought these field examples and experiences to inform the policymaking process, such as the Forestry Strategy to the year 2030. In addition, they initiated an institutional process of collecting and analysing sex-disaggregated data of their forestry trainings and outreach work. They periodically shared the data within teams and with leadership, creating institutional buy-in of these processes.

The gender leaders were recognized and promoted for their increased knowledge and competencies.

Building and expanding leadership networks as spaces for social, emotional and professional exploration and growth

Through its regional and national platforms, the WAVES approach led to collective spaces of power-sharing, inspirations and actions among the gender leaders. The gender leaders then replicated this approach by organizing and strengthening new and existing networks that provided better connection between informal and formal modes of governance or linked local-level women's networks to high-level policymaking processes. They also used these networks for their professional, emotional and social growth and well-being. In these spaces, they could ask technical questions; share work-

related innovations; strategize to influence policies, programs and harmful gender-related practices; share insecurities; network for opportunities; and conduct trainings.

For example:

- In Thailand, a gender leader led efforts to create an informal network of women who are engaged in community forestry and initiated efforts to sensitize them on gender issues. This process created a women-only space in which women can share their experiences, feelings and aspirations they have from the community forestry network and its governance. These women-only spaces were safe places for women to express and validate their experiences. Women leaders from these informal networks collectively strategized and advocated for their increased representation and engagement in governance and decision-making process of the Citizens' Forest Network. Their efforts led to a formal channel of gender chapter within the network governance mechanisms. Similar efforts of strengthening women's networks were observed in Cambodia, Indonesia and Nepal.
- In Nepal, the Female Foresters Network formed gender subgroups and focal points within their departments and across universities. This increased the network's membership to more than 1,200 women, amplifying its leveraging potential.
- In Indonesia, the gender leaders, who come from different sectors such as government, civil society organizations, academia and local practitioners, regularly shared their experiences with each other. This process increased their knowledge of how other sectors integrate gender issues and helped them find complementary roles and partnership for joint actions. For instance, the civil society organization representative was invited as a resource person to discuss gender and community related issues in government policy meetings. A researcher from the university and the local level practitioner jointly conducted gender analysis in South Sulawesi.

Creating spaces for male allies

Engaging men as gender leaders and as allies in the pre- to post-training stages was an important objective of the WAVES program. The few men who were engaged felt that there was space for them. These openings encouraged them to engage in the process of understanding, to view social and gender inequality issues from different lenses and to bring more people into the forestry process.

For example:

- In Cambodia, the male gender leader from the Ministry of Women's Affairs, together with other gender leaders and staff, introduced innovative methods to train and engage young women and men in relational leadership and gender equality. Their project Youth Leadership Lab for Gender Equality has trained, mobilized and mentored male and female university students and young government staff. Including young male students and staff was a conscious effort to bring in more men to understand and work on gender equality and practice relational leadership.
- In Lao PDR, a male gender leader from a civil society organization initiated a review and analysis of 14 environmental civil society groups' visioning and programming on gender equity topics. He shared the resulting evidence in the civil society networks and has encouraged the organizations to include specific and explicit gender provisions in their institutional priorities and approaches.

- In Viet Nam, two male gender leaders led community- awareness and sensitization workshops to ensure that women in local communities are financially rewarded for their labour and inputs to forest protection and resin harvesting work. They included gender-specific criteria for distributing payments and sensitized local men on equality through training and community programs.

Recognizing gender as an issue requiring knowledge and resources

Technical institutions have started to see the importance of having technical experts for gender integration, even if it is only at a small scale.

For example:

- In Lao PDR, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forest ensures that staff with knowledge or expertise on gender provide inputs at events, such as policy reviews, planning and monitoring. Before the WAVES training, any staff members who were free were sent to provide gender-related inputs. The gender leader from the Department of Forestry and the Department of Forest Inspection, said that their own attitudes, along with those of their senior management and peers, have changed towards planning projects and programs. They recognized the critical need to invest both technically and financially in the gender components of their programs. The WAVES gender leaders are now considered to be gender resource persons. Senior management provides them with support in planning and implementation processes, and they do not face resistance as they did before they joined the program. There is also a realization among the decision-makers that women staff should be given opportunities to go to the field and not be limited to desk jobs.
- In Nepal, the REDD Implementation Centre includes dedicated programs and resources for integrating gender equality and social inclusion in REDD+ and conducts workshops with gender and social inclusion experts to review policy documents and programs.

Recognizing that leadership and change happen in context

The shifts at the individual and institutional levels are based on the context and depict a spectrum of changes. They are subject to a specific country's existing political and historical contexts, culture and gender, organizations (government, civil society, academia, journalists, local government, the private sector), thematic areas (forestry, environment, education, women development) and affiliation with different networks and institutions.

One of the important lessons learned from the WAVES program was that the gender leaders found different and innovative ways to practise their leadership. The approaches depended on where they worked, their position in society and within their organizations, their socialization at home and their political and social networks.

Changes were different according to different contexts for different gender leaders. They expressed that they were able to see gender issues more clearly and from different angles than before this program and felt empowered from this discovery.

Demonstrated actions taken by gender leaders

This section provides country-specific details on WAVES work and the actions and results led by gender leaders. It focuses on gender issues and action plans relevant to each country and its execution by the leaders as part of the WAVES program.

Cambodia

WAVES work in Cambodia centred on developing an enabling policy and institutional environment for gender integration in three ministries that have mandates to work on forestry, environment and gender equality topics. Actions included developing or improving policies and plans with gender-specific provisions; strengthening capacities and coordination among the ministries to support implementation and learning; and creating a youth leadership program. The program also liaised with RECOFTC's other projects to strengthen women's networks in Community Protected Areas and women's networks in community forestry.

Workshops and training for youth leadership

In the first year of the WAVES program, gender leaders from the Ministry of Women's Affairs adapted WAVES materials to develop the Youth Leadership Lab for Gender Equality.

The lab engaged 18 university students and young government officials and provided them training and coaching on gender-related topics, participatory methods and approaches. The participants were given opportunities to intern with the Ministry and RECOFTC. A second group is now in training and mentoring from gender leaders and led by the first group of youth leaders.

In addition, an online capacity-building program was conducted with staff from the Ministry, youth groups and the gender leaders.

Contribution to gender-inclusive policies and plans

With technical and financial support from the WAVES program, the gender leaders continued developing policies and plans with explicit gender considerations:

- Neary Rattanak V Five-Year Strategic Plan 2019–2023 for the Ministry of Women's Affairs
- Policy analysis and strategy-building to develop and implement a Ministry of Environment gender mainstreaming strategic plan phase 3 in the environment sector

- Gender mainstreaming strategic plan in the forestry sector 2021–2025 and action plan for the Forestry Administration within the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

Support to community-protected areas

The training materials on Leadership for Gender Equality developed for the Ministry of Women's Affairs were adopted for promoting women's networks in the community-protected area management. With support from WAVES, the gender leaders initiated and facilitated a women's informal network comprising 25 women from several community-protected areas around the country.

A Telegram chat group was created for gender leaders to share and discuss issues, and face-to-face events took place every six months. This allowed the Ministry of Environment WAVES leaders and RECOFTC to identify gaps and issues to be integrated into the Ministry's gender action plan. The Ministry's gender leaders also invited the local women leaders to share their experiences and voices in national-level policymaking processes.

Support to the Ministry of Environment

The gender leaders conducted a rapid internal survey within the Ministry of Environment on the Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Plan Phase 2. The gender leader from the Ministry contributed to the Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Plan Phase 3. In addition, the training materials that RECOFTC developed for the Ministry of Women's Affairs' program on youth leadership were adapted and used by the Ministry of Environment's gender leaders to train 25 provincial gender focal points.

Indonesia

WAVES worked with gender leaders and partners from the Forestry Training Center, the Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection, the Sulawesi Community Foundation, the Indonesian Institute for Forest and Environment and the University of Hasanuddin to develop and implement gender integration guidelines and tools within their institutions, work programs and partnerships. WAVES interventions focused on strengthening institutional capacities and creating gender sensitization in academia.

Adaptation and reproduction of training approaches and modules in Indonesia's context

The gender leaders influenced and supported their respective institutions and partners to adapt or develop training materials and curriculums to integrate gender. The Indonesian Institute for Forest and Environment adapted to include gender concepts and approaches in the training course for the Youth Environmental Volunteers for Social Change.

The gender leader from the Faculty of Postgraduate of University of Hasanuddin convinced her dean to include gender equality as a subject for the postgraduate curriculum. Another leader from the NGO Indonesia Young Foresters drafted the gender-based monitoring and evaluation tools and policy on gender equity that could be adopted by other institutions. They also drafted a training manual on gender in natural resource management for community activists, such as the *Berbagi ruang untuk maju Bersama*,¹⁵ and developed gender-responsive criteria for their faculty's training curriculum in Bogor.

Need-based trainings or workshops for the partners and community

The gender leaders conducted training for partners and communities that included gender awareness and analysis, composting, harvesting training for women farmer groups; organized workshop and trainings on leadership concepts, including communication, gender equality and social inclusion for lecturers in all faculties in the University of Hasanuddin; and provided training for youth environment volunteers for social change in the Indonesia Young Foresters.

Gender analysis and technical inputs in the planning cycles

The gender leaders raised gender-related questions and provided inputs in different stages of planning cycles and discussions in their respective organization. For example, in the Indonesia Young Foresters and the Sulawesi Community Foundation, the gender leaders influenced their organization's budget to allocate resources for gender-related activities and raised gender issues during high-level discussions (see the Indonesian case study).

Networking, meetings and discussions

The gender leaders created different types of networks to mobilize their influence.

A national gender network using a WhatsApp group was created to conduct regular meetings and exchanges among the gender leaders. These exchanges helped the gender leaders learn from each other's work and identify the areas where they can provide complementary support to each other. RECOFTC WAVES focal point in Indonesia used the exchanges to identify opportunities and inputs.

An institutional-level gender group within their organizations was crafted to regularly discuss, plan and advocate for gender equality and promote relational leadership. These groups provided a critical reflection space for WAVES leaders and their organization to reflect and improve their practices. The assessments helped the Indonesia Young Foresters identify and address gender-blindness in their community engagement strategies through the targeting of women's groups, training their trainers and using a gender-balanced extension staff.

Case study: Indonesia

Namira Arsa is the Program Coordinator, Gender and Social Inclusion Coordinator with the Sulawesi Community Foundation. She runs the WAVES program with the help of her director and co-workers.

Arsa leads all gender-related programming for her organization as the gender focal point. She has trained numerous women farmer groups in gender equality and relational leadership and assisted in the formation and revitalization of local women's organizations in Kayah Village to engage in agricultural farming and eco-tourism on customary (Adat) forest lands.

Some of Arsa's relational leadership skills have been reproduced by the women farmer groups. During COVID-19, these women farmer groups helped other villages by sharing their vegetable crops.

"I believe my greatest accomplishment is assisting local women in developing their confidence and leadership skills," she said.

The Sulawesi Community Foundation promoted her to gender officer in recognition of her contributions to the growth and development of local women's leadership. Her co-workers now seek her assistance on gender mainstreaming projects and recognize her as a gender leader.

This recognition helped Arsa exert her influence within the organization to plan and invest in gender-related initiatives. She also decided to pursue her master's degree in gender and development at Hasanuddin University, where she is supervised by Professor Novaty Eny Dunnga, another WAVES gender leader.

Lao People's Democratic Republic

WAVES supported the capacities of the gender leaders and partners from civil society organizations and government through workshops and mentoring to support gender integration into their professional contexts. As a result, the gender leaders worked to ensure gender-inclusive provisions in training and extension mechanisms of their institutions. They also conducted gender analysis and used sex-disaggregated data in the monitoring systems. WAVES' work in Lao PDR also supported ongoing revisions in the forest and land policy framework from a gender perspective.

Workshops, training and mentorship support

Gender leaders conducted a training workshop for diverse groups of government and civil society partners. In 2019, they organized the Workshop on Dialogue for Solutions: Promoting Gender Equality in the Forestry Sector. Through the workshop, they examined the gaps and opportunities in integrating gender equality in the forestry sector.

Subsequent trainings focused on skills development of the gender leaders. Gender leaders from Division for Advancement of Women, Mothers and Children, the Ministry

of Agriculture and Forest; the Production Forest Division and the Village Forest Division, Department of Forest; the Department of Forest Inspection and civil society organizations led and facilitated those trainings. This workshop identified their issues and needs and listed priority areas for intervention.

Other trainings included Gender in Village Forest Management Planning in Xayaboury Province; Skill Development Training on Gender Mainstreaming in Forest and Forest Resource Inspection; awareness-raising and training on gender roles in wood processing in Attapue and Xayaboury provinces; and a writing workshop for forestry officers and media.

Gender analysis, reviews and surveys

The gender leaders conducted reviews and surveys on gender equality within the Department of Forest Inspection. They highlighted the gender gaps, such as the low number of women in the organizations and their capacity needs. These survey results were accepted by the Department's leadership and shared with the Division for Advancement of Women, Mothers and Children to develop and support a gender integration plan for the Department.

With support from RECOFTC and partners, the gender leaders analysed the gender impacts on employees of small wood processing factories and worked to increase the gender-sensitivity of members of the Lao Civil Society Organization FLEGT Network. This analysis identified pay inequity across wood-processing companies as well as limited compliance with labour laws and safety standards. The gender leaders shared this information with policymakers from the Ministry Agriculture and Forests and invited the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare to engage in the policy dialogue.

Inputs in policies and strategies

The gender leaders provided inputs on the ongoing revisions to the Forest Strategy to the year 2020 and development of the Forest Strategy to the year 2030, in collaboration with the Department of Forest and the Department of Forest Inspection.

Some of the indicators proposed in the strategy were inclusion of women leaders in decision-making by 2030; gender equality extension in the village forestry management plan; and safety, health and equality of women in wood processing companies. The gender leaders also supported including gender-inclusive provisions in timber legality definitions and monitoring systems that aim to improve forest governance and promote the trade of legal timber.

Networking and development of networks

To avoid duplications, the gender leaders conducted a coordination meeting with diverse groups of stakeholders to ensure synergies among ongoing initiatives and actors. The meeting was attended by 14 men and 27 women. They also formed a network of WAVES gender leaders for regular tracking of their progress and for exchanging and sharing information.

Myanmar

Opportunities to raise awareness of gender issues in the forestry and environment sectors

Gender leaders supported the Ministry of Natural Resource Management and Environmental Conservation to raise awareness about gender issues in the environment sector. On World Environment Day, they exhibited and distributed translated versions of posters, brochures, photographs and publications about gender equality.

The WAVES Myanmar team conducted a session on gender concepts in the Stockholm Environment Institute's final workshop on Chindwin River Basin, at Sagaing Regional Government in Monywa.

Workshops and webinars

The gender leaders organized a workshop on Gender Equality in Forestry: Fostering Leadership for Inclusive Sustainable Forest Management for Prosperity of People. The workshop was attended by Shan ethnic ministers, members of parliament, gender- and forestry-related government agencies, civil society groups, NGOs, the private sector and the media. They organized a webinar on experiences and insights of female foresters in Myanmar to discuss the gaps and opportunities for integrating gender equality in the forestry sector. It was attended by 48 participants, about 90 percent of whom were women from the forestry sector.

Another webinar on Gender Integration in Forest Management Practice was organized in coordination with the Voice for Mekong Forest Project-Myanmar team. The webinar provided an overview of gender equality policy provisions in Myanmar and highlighted the benefits of gender-sensitive forest management programs. It was attended by 70 participants, including field-level staff and policymakers from the gender and forestry sectors.

Developing gender guidelines and tools

WAVES Myanmar coordinated with the Voice for Mekong Forest Project to train on conducting gender assessments and to launch the gender guidelines in their project area. They mobilized a gender consultant to provide technical inputs in the development of gender guidelines and frameworks.

The gender leaders selected the consultant, coordinated development of the consultant's terms of reference, guided and monitored the consultant's work and facilitated the engagement of all the concerned stakeholders in the process. The guidelines have been drafted and were expected to be approved in 2021. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the unstable political situation in Myanmar, most of the planned activities were postponed.

Expanding networks

The gender leaders joined the national Gender Equality Network in Myanmar to expand the WAVES network, receive gender-related information and support and identify opportunities for collaboration with the Gender Equality Network. The gender leaders regularly attended their meetings and participated in their special events.

Nepal

Under the WAVES program, RECOFTC Nepal supported the formation of gender strategies in two targeted municipalities. It strengthened the Female Foresters' Networks and supported them to address gender-based violence in the forestry sector. The WAVES team strengthened the institutional capacity of the Himalayan Grassroots Women's Natural Resource Management Association and focused on mobilizing media and journalists to widely capture and disseminate information.

Training for network members and partners

The seven gender leaders in Nepal adapted and developed gender training packages and conducted more than 25 online and in-person trainings over two years on gender awareness, analysis and integration, relational leadership and sexual harassment. The trainings were conducted for diverse groups of participants, including federal and provincial government staff, Indigenous groups, journalists, local government officials, community groups, women's groups and students.

The power of networks

A group of gender leaders was created for mutual support from the RECOFTC WAVES focal points. The network tracked the gender leaders' individual action plans and provided them with coaching, mentoring and backstopping support. One national and one regional network were created. The gender leaders expanded these networks and formed other networks within their thematic areas so they could include more participants and increase their outreach.

For example, the three gender leaders from the Ministry of Forest and Environment co-founded and led the Female Foresters Network Nepal, which has more than 700 members who are recognized as a strong force to tackle gender issues in the forestry sector. They also selected 30 young women foresters, called Team 30, within the Female Foresters Network and provided them with the gender trainings to develop second-generation women leaders in the forestry sector.

The gender leaders from the municipality formed provincial-level networks comprising 67 participants, with 55 women and 12 men, including 14 members from the Indigenous community. They also established separate committees for women, people with disabilities and marginalized groups at the ward and municipality levels.

Workshops and webinars on relational leadership and gender equality

The gender leaders, most of whom work within the Ministry of Forests and Environment, conducted more than 10 webinars with diverse groups of peoples and institutions on toxic masculinity. They invited male and female experts and senior male government officials as speakers who brought significant visibility to this issue within the forestry sector. The webinars were covered by newspapers and social media.

A national gender workshop was organized in collaboration with the Female Foresters Network and RECOFTC to discuss gender issues beyond programming and capacity-building. Workshops and consultations were also conducted to provide inputs into the national gender strategy for the forestry sector.

Media promotes awareness on gender issues in forestry

Gender leader and journalist Maduri Mahato covered 10 stories on gender in forestry and 60 stories on other gender issues for BBC Nepali radio and Narayani FM. She also used social media, such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to disseminate gender in forestry-related information and stories. Six journalists who were participants of a gender training under WAVES published their stories on gender and natural resource management in various online news portals. This helped with a mass outreach to spread awareness on gender roles.

Thailand

The WAVES work in Thailand supported the gender leaders to integrate gender issues in the Citizens' Forest Network through research, training and networking. Activities during 2019–2020 included an assessment of the impacts of forest policy reforms on poor and women community members; leadership training for women at the grass-roots level; and creating gender-inclusive governance mechanisms within community forest networks.

Workshop for community forest women leaders and ethnic group representatives

One gender leader from Thailand, with RECOFTC's support, conducted a workshop for community forest women leaders and representatives of ethnic groups on the value of gender diversity in community forest and forest resource management in protected areas. The first workshop engaged 37 participants, of whom 31 were women and six men, nine of whom were from ethnic communities.

The workshop participants agreed to create an informal space for women to share gender concepts in forest resource management; support women's representation in the Citizens' Forest Network; conduct a study of policy impacts on women and forest resources; and promote increased women's participation in the networks and forest governance monitoring inside and outside the protected areas.

Assessment and studies

In collaboration with RECOFTC, the gender leaders conducted an assessment of the impacts of forest policy reforms on poor people and women community members. The findings were shared with the communities, the Citizens' Forest Network members and policymakers to improve understanding of the differentiated impacts of Thailand's forest policy reforms.

The information also helped tailor the content of trainings for women leaders on developing community forest management plans. RECOFTC worked closely with the gender leaders to integrate gender issues in the Citizens' Forest Network through research, training and networking.

Seminars and workshops

The gender leaders organized an online workshop on "Women's Role and Status of Women and Ethnic Groups in Forest Management and Administration Mechanism in Thailand" for 25 participants (19 women and six men) from community forest and ethnic groups. They also conducted a workshop for 32 participants from the Community Forest Network in Pong Daeng community forest.

They conducted a workshop on promoting women's roles, ethnic groups and youths in community forestry and protected area management and administration, in Bangkok, that was attended by 37 participants (31 women and six men). In addition, the gender leaders also documented their stories of change (involving two women and two men). Discussion with male leaders and with Citizens' Forest Network members helped create support from male leadership.

Mobilizing women staff from the Government and creating a formal charter in the Citizens' Forest Network

The gender leaders facilitated grass-roots training and orientation sessions for women for the Royal Forest Department to ensure their support for mobilizing women leaders as resource persons in community forest extension work.

Gender equity and social inclusion are now included as a functional charter within the Citizens' Forest Network's governance mechanism. These links indicate that the institutional environment for gender equality in the Citizens' Forest Network has been strengthened.

Viet Nam

The WAVES work supported the strengthening the extension capacity of forest rangers to understand and implement sustainable forest management that responds to the needs of marginalized groups, including women, poor communities and ethnic groups.

Another focus of the work was to improve the conditions for social and environmental safeguards for female workers in forest companies. WAVES also supported the gender

leader from Vinh University to develop guidelines for gender integration in the course topics and the curriculums of environmental subjects at Vinh University while increasing the capacity of university lecturers to integrate gender equality topics across agriculture, fisheries and environment subjects.

Review, adapt and draft training module strategies on gender topics for environmental courses at Vinh University

Vinh University developed guidelines on mainstreaming gender in natural resource management and piloted it through two subjects of climate change and environmental ecology. The guidelines were produced in English and Vietnamese. The gender leaders also shared these guidelines with lecturers and mobilised a group of lecturers.

The gender leader from Vinh University and their faculty trainers developed and conducted several gender trainings, including a training of trainers, on training design and delivery of gender topics in forestry, a gender integration in training curriculum and a network meeting for the faculty members. They also conducted orientation classes with students on gender equality topics. The capacity of university lecturers to integrate gender equality topics across agriculture, fisheries and environment subjects thus increased.

Gender analysis and equity interventions at Phong Dien Forest Company

The gender leader from the Phong Dien Forest Company used WAVES learnings to examine and analyse gender patterns that existed in his company. Female staff in his company were perceived as “lazy” who avoided field work and were therefore paid less and not considered for promotion and leadership opportunities.

He conducted a gender analysis and recognized that women faced multiple barriers to fully engage in the company’s work due to stereotypes and potential risk of harassment in the field work. He used multiple inclusive strategies to measure women’s performance and provided equal pay for their work in the company.

Because of his demonstrated commitment and experience, he was also invited to organize a capacity-building workshop to develop gender-sensitive forestry business start-ups for ethnic women in Quy Chau District and participatory learning and assessment workshop in Que Phoing District.

Gender analysis and technical inputs in the planning cycles

The gender leader from the Forest Protection and Development Fund within the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development mobilized his agency to first conduct a study to identify and analyse the gender issues and then shared the study findings within his unit and Department.

Based on the gaps identified, they made several changes in their Department’s policies and strategies, such as integrating specific and separate gender-related actions in their annual workplans and expanding and revising job descriptions to ensure women’s participation in more valued technical work. He also conducted gender-awareness

activities and events with senior management, including the chairperson, who later had a significant role in approving the revised human resource policies and plans.

Community-level strengthening

The gender leaders facilitated workshops in Nghe An Province to benefit ethnic women in the Payment of Forest Environmental Services. As a result, women's and men's names are included in the contracts so that women are also eligible for direct payments.

The Gender leaders conducted gender and leadership workshops for local women entrepreneurs, including the Women's Union of Nghe An Province, to promote women-led entrepreneurship and capacity development on leadership skills in community groups supported under the Production-driven Forest Landscape Restoration under REDD+ through Private sector–Community Partnerships project (FLOURISH).¹⁶

Improved skills of forest rangers

The gender leaders strengthened the extension skills of forest rangers to help them understand and implement sustainable forest management that meets the needs of marginalized groups, including women, poor communities and ethnic minorities.

Network of WAVES gender leaders

A Viber (telephone app) group for WAVES gender leaders was created to enable regular meetings and exchanges. Monthly Zoom meetings were also conducted to track and update the progress of the gender leaders' action plans. Periodic WAVES group discussions were conducted to provide technical and emotional or psychosocial support and to identify and address emerging issues, needs and opportunities and plan appropriate responses.

Lessons learned, challenges and opportunities

The evaluation points to the following lessons learned, challenges and emerging opportunities.

- The WAVES approach is a best practice for promoting relational leadership and addressing gender inequality.

Addressing gender inequality is a challenging task. It is difficult to demonstrate the degree and quality of changes through regular gender mainstreaming approaches, which usually focus on the symptoms and do not invest adequately on the root causes of gender inequality. The WAVES approach, through its principles of adding multiple dimensions of viewing and addressing gender inequality issues, provided institutions with ideas to develop innovative and effective programs.

- The quality of interventions determines the quality of results.

The experiences from the WAVES approach demonstrated that it is critical to exercise due diligence in designing and in the entire planning cycle of the training program. For example, gender trainings are usually designed as a one-time support and are not packaged with other support, such as systematic mentoring, guidance and technical and financial resources. Attention to the quality of the training, such as the content, the knowledge and experience of the trainer or contractors and the duration of the training are also not adequately considered. As a result, the investments made on increasing the capacity of staff and gender practitioners are not adequate to address the multiple dimensions of gender inequalities.

- The significance and thresholds of change depend upon the context.

The levels of results achieved in each country's context are different but relevant and significant. The assessment revealed that the types and scale of the actions taken by the gender leaders largely depended upon their individual context, such as the institutions they were situated in, their position within the institution, their country, the types of networks they were affiliated with and their past experiences and preparedness of the forestry actors to work on gender issues. Therefore, the level of significance of change should be understood and determined by analysing the context in which that change took place, rather than sticking to pre-supposed national or international thresholds. The gender leaders in WAVES had important roles in identifying the threshold of changes that are feasible and significant.

- Attitudes of the institutions and patriarchy remain major barriers in promoting gender equality.

Despite the high level of awareness and increased skills and confidence among the gender leaders, they still faced resistance and barriers, such as toxic masculinity in their workplace, which affected the quality of their performance and contributions. For example, the division of roles and responsibilities within organizations were highly gendered. Female professionals were often given fewer challenging tasks or as in the case of journalists, were often given administrative tasks rather than opportunities to report on challenging issues.

Gender integration within the forestry sector is still viewed as an undertaking that will challenge and compete with men rather than about gender equality and transformation. For example, a webinar organized, led and moderated by the Female Foresters Network gender leaders in Nepal on understanding toxic masculinities within the forestry sector was disrupted by some attendees displaying pornographic videos. There is still more work to be done to build on the entry points that have been created by the gender leaders.

- The concept of relational leadership is still not recognized in practice as an effective approach to addressing gender inequality.

The gender leaders recognized the value of practising relational leadership and its contributions to making their work effective.

However, they were confused when their efforts were framed as “being nice, collaborative, cooperative” and not as a meaningful contribution. This created “institutional lock-in” and, despite the individual level of awareness and efforts, some institutions did not allow them to apply the concepts and methods in their work.

- Female leaders for gender equality are confined to the single identity as “gender practitioners”.

The WAVES gender leaders and other female staff who advocated and promoted gender within the forestry sector were not recognized for their technical knowledge, skills and contributions. Instead, they were labelled as gender advocates or practitioners. Women staff members’ technical expertise was often undermined, which may have had implications on their professional growth.

- In dealing with microaggressions, the gender leaders and organization staff needed psychosocial support.

Gender mainstreaming is a challenging and demanding job, particularly for the staff or experts directly involved in it. Gender mainstreaming in the current context is considered a priority by most of the technical organizations and is included as a main component. However, the subtle resistance related to behaviour and attitudes faced by the gender leaders were difficult to recognize and define. The resistance was subtle and came in the form of microaggressions, which made the people working for gender mainstreaming uncomfortable. Yet, they could not recognize and define it concretely and therefore could not raise it as an issue.

These microaggressions that the gender leaders and organization staff experienced daily consumed their time and energy and affected their emotional health. In most cases, people working on gender mainstreaming were women. The WAVES program did not include a component on psychosocial counselling. However, the need for it was high, and networks developed as part of the WAVES programs filled this vacuum to some extent.

- Intersectionality must be a critical component.

A focus on intersectionality generated some results, such as the inclusion of young people, Indigenous Peoples, marginalized groups and men. Although the intersectional approaches were used, they were not consistently applied. The investments in terms of content and understanding, time and financial resources

were not adequate to fully embed intersectional approaches. There is a need to better understand and address this in future.

- Financial support cannot be limited.

One of the components of the WAVES program was to translate the trainings into practice. But the financial investments were not adequate to support these actions to generate the desired results and learning. For example, the gender leaders, including male allies, and their networks created by the WAVES program could have been further mobilized to scale up within and outside their organizations.

Recommendations

The results and learning generated from the WAVES program demonstrate that the quality of interventions is key to generating good gender outcomes. The interventions, such as the application of the principles of participatory action research, co-creation of knowledge and emphasis on learning and change requires both conceptual and practical knowledge and skills combined with adequate financial resources to determine good results. The following recommendations are offered to further strengthen the WAVES program, should it be continued.

Sustain the momentum

Although most development agencies understand this, most of them do not recognize the need for adequate financial and technical investments that should be built into for gender programs. As a result, gender equality programs are either placed as special or stand-alone initiatives with time-bound funds from donors or mainstreamed, with the “core” components but with limited or zero budget. These programs are not considered part of the core business with a dedicated annual budget. To maintain and sustain the momentum that has occurred and capitalize on the learnings and experiences of the WAVES program, RECOFTC should integrate this component as their core business with adequate financial and technical investments, as is the case with other components of the organization.

Replicate the WAVES co-creation approach

Based on the principles of participatory action research and co-creation, the WAVES package offers a best practice that can deliver deep engagement of both the facilitators and the participants in all stages of a program. The learning experiences from WAVES illustrate how addressing gender equality goes beyond increasing the participation of women and capacity-building trainings. Therefore, it is crucial that organizations and stakeholders working to promote relational leadership and gender equality are aware and educated in the principles of participatory action research. There is huge value in promoting and replicating the WAVES co-creation approach among development partners.

Create partnerships

Coordination with like-minded partners to support and scale up the WAVES approach, particularly through gender networks and groups, can help to continue and expand the processes that were initiated. For example, these networks could be strengthened to expand both vertically within the institutions and horizontally, by including diverse groups of partners. Further replicating and expanding these networks and processes at the provincial and community levels could reach more grass-roots and community women and partners.

Review the training package and integrate the learning

The WAVES training package should be reviewed to integrate the learning into its implementation. The content should be revisited to include more time and space for specific topics, such as tackling resistance, hegemonic masculinities and intersectionality. Networks should be redefined to include other components, such as psychosocial aspects and self-care. The need for psychosocial support was highlighted

by all the gender leaders because they found it difficult to deal with backlash and resistance, particularly when they questioned and challenged the norms and status quo; raised uncomfortable issues, such as sexual harassment, and called for policy changes and other sensitive and challenging issues. The safe and enabling spaces provided by the WAVES program should be enhanced to include a psychosocial component and strengthened to support the gender leaders to identify risks and deal with resistance, microaggressions and other challenges.

Document and disseminate

The learning and knowledge generated from the WAVES program should be systematically documented and used to influence, educate, develop and design gender equality programs and to make adequate investments.

Glossary

Counternarratives arise from the vantage point of those who have been historically marginalized. A counternarrative goes beyond the notion that those in relative positions of power can just tell the stories of those in the margins. Instead, these must come from the margins and from the perspectives and voices of those individuals. The effect of a counternarrative is to empower and give agency to those communities. By choosing their own words and telling their own stories, members of marginalized communities provide alternative points of view, helping to create complex narratives truly presenting their realities.¹⁷

Gender refers to the characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed. This includes norms, behaviours and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy as well as relationships with each other. As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time.¹⁸

Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for women and men and girls and boys in societies, at work and at home.¹⁹

Gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action that includes legislation, policies or programs in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy to make women's as well as men's concerns and experiences integral in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluations of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and thus inequality is not perpetuated. The goal is to achieve gender equality.²⁰

Gender stereotyping refers to a (over)generalized view or preconception about attributes or characteristics or the roles that are or ought to be possessed by or performed by women and men. A gender stereotype is harmful when it limits women's and men's capacity to develop their personal abilities, pursue their professional careers and/or make choices about their lives. Stereotypes can be both positive and negative, and they perpetuate inequalities.²¹

Hegemonic masculinity is defined as a practice that legitimizes men's dominant position in society and justifies the subordination of women. It proposes to explain how and why men maintain dominant social roles over women and other gender identities, which are perceived as "feminine" in a society.²²

Implicit bias refers to unconscious association, belief or attitude towards any social group. Implicit biases can be either positive or negative.²³

Intersectionality refers to the complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap or intersect, especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups.²⁴

Masculinity (also called manhood or manliness) refers to the roles, behaviours and attributes that are considered appropriate for boys and men in a society. Masculinity is constructed and defined socially, historically and politically rather than being biologically driven.²⁵

Microaggressions are comments or actions that subtly and often unconsciously or unintentionally express a prejudiced attitude towards a member of a marginalized group, such as a racial minority.²⁶

Psychosocial counselling is the process of counselling an individual or group during one or more sessions to support the process of overcoming emotional, social or environmental problems that are affecting the health and well-being.

Relational leadership is a relational practice that is a way of achieving goals and getting the job done using such skills as listening, mutuality, reciprocity and sensitivity to the emotional context. It is founded on a set of implicit beliefs, for example, the idea that growth, achievement, and effectiveness occur best within a network of connection and support.²⁷ Relational leadership is not a commonly used term and has its roots in feminist theory and feminist psychology. Its basic conceptual understanding is that people psychologically develop in relation to others and not individually in isolation. Relational leadership differs from positional or managerial ideas of leadership. It is about how people relate to each other to influence each other. Everyone can learn these skills and everyone can be a leader to influence. The relational leadership skills mainly entail being a participatory, collaborative and active listener.

Social normalization refers to a process in which a new social norm is established. In some cases, it might take place by destroying the old normal acts of a society. In some cases, it might just generate a new pattern of behaviour, which is in general accepted by the society.²⁸

Toxic masculinity refer to ideas about the way that men should behave that are seen as harmful, such as the notion that men should not cry or admit weakness or that poetry and flowers are for girls and women and that it is shameful for men to like them.²⁹

Endnotes

1. Pretty, Guijt, Thompson, and Scoones, 1995.
2. Gurung, and Menter, 2004.
3. Relational leadership is a way of achieving goals and getting the job done using such skills as listening, mutuality, reciprocity and sensitivity to the emotional context. It is founded on a set of implicit beliefs, for example, the idea that growth, achievement and effectiveness occur best within a network of connection and support.
4. Participatory action research is an approach to action research emphasizing participation and action by members of communities affected by that research. It seeks to understand the world by trying to change it, collaboratively and following reflection.
5. For further information on co-production of knowledge, see www.igi-global.com/dictionary/co-production-of-knowledge/48060.
6. The term “co-production of knowledge” is also synonymously used with “co-creation of knowledge”. In development practices, it is commonly referred to as co-creation.
7. The term “discovery” is an idea to explain that interventions, such as relational practice, are provided to spark a process of individual discovery and learning that leaves the individuals looking at issues from different angles or dimensions.
8. “WAVES Methodology and Approaches”, 2019, internal program document.
9. See <https://dictionary.apa.org/mirroring>.
10. See <https://positivepsychology.com/empathic-listening/>.
11. See <https://thefutureorganization.com/forming-storming-norming-performing-adjourning-and-transforming/>.
12. Such as intersectionality, stereotypes, implicit biases, disappearing acts, socialization, social construct, power relations and trivialization.
13. “Dominant narrative” is an explanation or story that is told in service of the dominant social group’s interest and ideologies. Because dominant narratives are so normalized through their repetition and authority, they have the illusion of being objective and apolitical, when in fact they are neither.
14. “Counternarrative” refers to the stories and lived experiences of people not in the dominant narrative or not allowed to be a part of it.
15. Sharing space to move forward together.
16. For more information on FLOURISH, see www.recoftc.org/projects/flourish/news/flourish-national-inception-workshop-viet-nam.
17. Center for Intercultural Dialogue. See centerforinterculturaldialogue.files.wordpress.com/2014/10/key-concept-counter-narrative.pdf.
18. World Health Organization.
19. See www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm.
20. United Nations, 1997.

21. See www.ohchr.org/en/women/gender-stereotyping.
22. Connell, 2005.
23. See www.verywellmind.com/implicit-bias-overview-4178401.
24. See www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/intersectionality.
25. See www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/ACFrOgAZ9X_S2Bl-K9iPv3XhiQ140Fw6QWeUNSQwjwuNXzShO1b_Wv9-Vbsw1KX0rkmdxRZ-nlwzPhL-WIQLh1agPgzn5s70jFg-wYO0cIafAvyfqfNvFQQX_UYSZKGjzuPLlYl2J_UFqRjaCxNs.pdf.
26. See www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/microaggression.
27. WOCAN, 2016.
28. See www.igi-global.com/dictionary/social-normalization/69285.
29. See <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/toxic-masculinity>.

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Annexes

Annex 1. Project documentation

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Annex 2. Gender leaders

| | Name | Gender | | Designation and organization | Position | |
|-----------|---------------------------|--------|------|--|----------|-----|
| | | Female | Male | | DM | NDM |
| Cambodia | | | | | | |
| 1 | Khlok Vichet Ratha | X | | Deputy Director, Ministry of Environment (Government) | X | |
| 2 | Ly Sophorn | X | | Deputy Director General, Ministry of Environment (Government) | X | |
| 3 | Vong Sopanha | X | | Deputy Director General, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (Government) | X | |
| 4 | The Chhun Hak | | X | Director General, Ministry of Women's Affairs (Government) | X | |
| 5 | Sengphal Davine | X | | Deputy Director General, Ministry of Women's Affairs (Government) | X | |
| Indonesia | | | | | | |
| 6 | Namira Arsa | X | | Coordinator, Gender and Social Inclusion Division, Sulawesi Community Foundation (civil society) | | X |
| 7 | Kusdamayanti | X | | Head of the Training Office, Bogor Environment and Forestry Regional Training Office (Government) | X | |
| 8 | Mardha Tillah | X | | Director, Rimbawan Muda Indonesia or Indonesian Institute for Forest and Environment (civil society) | X | |
| 9 | Novaty Eny Dungga | X | | Lecturer, University of Hasanuddin, Makassar, South Sulawesi (Academia) | | X |
| 10 | Dian Nurhadiatin | X | | Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (Government) | | X |
| Lao PDR | | | | | | |
| 12 | Sisomphet Souvanthalisith | X | | Head of Division for Advancement of Women, Mothers and Children, Permanent Secretariat Office within the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (Government) | X | |
| 13 | Phonephanh Luangaphay | X | | Senior Forester and Technical Coordinator, Village Forestry and NTFP Management Division, Department of Forest (Government) | | X |
| 14 | Nilapha Vorachit | X | | Technical Officer, Department of Forest Inspection (Government) | | X |
| 15 | Yomala Phaengsuwan | X | | Technical Officer, Production Forest Division of Forest Department (Government) | | X |
| 15 | Khampheng Pongkham | | X | Lao Biodiversity Association and Lao Civil Society Organization FLEGT Network (civil society) | | X |
| 16 | Anouthay Panyanouvong | X | | Department of Forest Inspection (Government) | | X |
| Myanmar | | | | | | |

| Name | Gender | | Designation and organization | Position | |
|-----------------------------|--------|------|---|----------|-----|
| | Female | Male | | DM | NDM |
| 17 Thazin Phyo | X | | FAO-Myanmar (previously Community Engagement Officer, Wildlife Conservation Society) (civil society) | | X |
| 18 Khin Nyein Nyein Mon | X | | Program Officer of Communication, Networking and Gender, Myanmar Environment Rehabilitation- Conservation Network (civil society) | | X |
| 19 Nu Ra | X | | Program Officer, POINT-Promotion of Indigenous and Nature Together (civil society) | | X |
| Nepal | | | | | |
| 20 Januka Parajuli | X | | Deputy Mayor, Chautara Sangachowkgadhi Municipality (Government) | X | |
| 21 Srijana Shrestha | X | | Under Secretary, Climate Change Management Division, Ministry of Forests and Environment (Government) | X | |
| 22 Deepa Oli | X | | Assistant Forest Officer, Planning Division, Ministry of Forests and Environment (Government) | | X |
| 23 Saraswati Aryal | X | | Assistant Forest Officer, Division Forest Office, Kathmandu, Ministry of Forest and Environment (Government) | X | |
| 24 Madhuri Mahato | X | | Journalist, Association of Community Radio Network, Radio Narayani/BBC Nepali Service Correspondent (Media) | | X |
| 25 Rama Paudel | X | | President, Madhesh Province, The Himalayan Grassroots Women's Natural Resource Management Association (civil society) | X | |
| 26 Kalpana Shrestha | X | | Vice Chair, Bhumlu Rural Municipality (Government) | X | |
| Thailand | | | | | |
| 27 Jaroonpis Moolsarn | | | Division of People's Participation Promotion, Department of Environmental Quality Promotion, Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment (civil society) | | |
| 28 Attjala Roongwong | X | | Forest for All (civil society) | | X |
| 29 Ratchadaporn Chanasawang | X | | Village Chief Assistant and field coordinator, Kaeng Lawa Wetland Conservation Project | | X |
| 30 Yupin Uppajak | X | | Village Chief Assistant and women's group leader, Mangrove Forestry Network | | X |
| 31 Cham Phetchan | X | | Women's group leader and community mangrove forestry network leader, Mangrove Forestry Network | | X |
| 32 Kritsana Fongdee | X | | Women's leader, representative from the village, Pong Daeng Subdistrict Administrative Organization, Muang District, Tak Province | | X |
| Viet Nam | | | | | |
| 33 Nguyen Tuong Van | X | | Senior Official Forest Protection and Development Division (Government) | | X |

| | Name | Gender | | Designation and organization | Position | |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------|----------|---|-----------|-----------|
| | | Female | Male | | DM | NDM |
| 34 | Mai Quang Huy | | X | Director, Phong Dien, Forest Company, Thua Thien Hue Province (civil society) | X | |
| 35 | Ho Thi Phuong | X | | Lecturer, Vinh University, Nghe An Province (Academia) | | X |
| 36 | Nguyen Khac Lam | | X | Director, Nghe An Forest Fund, Nghe An Province (Government) | X | |
| Total (36) | | 31 | 5 | | 16 | 20 |

Note: DM= decision-making; NDM=non-decision-making.

Annex 3. Meetings and workshops conducted for the evaluation

| SN | Meetings and workshops | Participants |
|----|---|---|
| 1 | Preparatory workshop (online), January–February 2021 | RECOFTC regional and country staff and partners, consultant to develop and agree on a common approach of evaluation |
| 2. | Two-day workshop Indonesia (online) Feb 2021 | Gender leaders, RECOFTC regional and country staff, partners, consultant |
| 3. | Two-day workshop Viet Nam (online) March 2021 | Gender leaders, RECOFTC regional and country staff, partners, consultant |
| 4. | Two-day workshop Lao PDR (online) Feb 2021 | Gender leaders, RECOFTC regional and country staff, partners, consultant |
| 5. | Two-day workshop Nepal (in person) Feb 2021 | Gender leaders, RECOFTC regional and country staff, partners |
| 6. | Three-day regional workshop (online) March 2021 | RECOFTC, Sida, gender leaders, partners, consultant |
| 7. | Regional-level discussion on the draft regional report April–June 2021 | RECOFTC WAVES regional team members, consultant |
| 8. | Country-level discussion on the draft country reports June–August 2021 | RECOFTC WAVES regional and country team members, consultant |
| 9 | Series of individual meetings May–August 2021 | Senior program officer (RECOFTC/WAVES), WAVES focal points & consultant |



At RECOFTC, we believe in a future where people live equitably and sustainably in and beside healthy, resilient forests. We take a long-term, landscape-based and inclusive approach to supporting local communities to secure their land and resource rights, stop deforestation, find alternative livelihoods and foster gender equity. We are the only non-profit organization of our kind in Asia and the Pacific. We have more than 30 years of experience working with people and forests, and have built trusting relationships with partners at all levels. Our influence and partnerships extend from multilateral institutions to governments, private sector and local communities. Our innovations, knowledge and initiatives enable countries to foster good forest governance, mitigate and adapt to climate change, and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda.

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