



Evaluation

WAVES: Weaving Leadership for Gender Equality in Cambodia 2019–2022



WAVES: Weaving Leadership for Gender Equality in Cambodia 2019–2022

Reproduction of this publication for educational or other non-commercial purposes is authorized without prior written permission from the copyright holder, provided the source is fully acknowledged. Reproduction of this publication for resale or other commercial purposes is prohibited without written permission of the copyright holder.

Published by Regional Community Forestry Training Center for Asia and the Pacific (RECOFTC)
©RECOFTC October 2022
Bangkok, Thailand

ISBN (ebook) 978-616-8089-59-0

This publication was produced with the financial support of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). Its contents are the sole responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of Sida or RECOFTC.

Suggested citation:

RECOFTC. October 2022. *WAVES: Weaving Leadership for Gender Equality in Cambodia 2019–2022*. Bangkok, RECOFTC.

WAVES: Weaving Leadership for Gender Equality in Cambodia 2019–2022

Evaluation

November 2021

Contents

Foreword	1
Acknowledgements	2
Executive summary	3
The evaluation	4
About WAVES	4
Four pillars of the WAVES program	5
About the evaluation: Purpose and framework.....	7
Framework for evaluating individual and institutional change.....	7
Evaluation process.....	8
Limitations of the evaluation.....	9
WAVES in Cambodia	10
Gender leaders.....	10
Implementation of the WAVES approach	10
Findings and results	12
Opportunities for WAVES in Cambodia	15
Recommendations.....	16
Endnotes	17
Annex: Actions undertaken by the gender leaders	18

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 focuses on social inclusion and gender equality, whereby women, youth, Indigenous Peoples and other vulnerable groups are an active and empowered part of forest management.

RECOFTC recognizes that gender equality and equity are matters of fundamental human rights and social justice and a precondition for sustainable forest governance and the achievement of its goals. 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 and structural barriers to gender inequality 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 also 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 take time to read this report and learn about WAVES and its gender leaders who have led different initiatives to make the forestry landscapes more equal and inclusive. We hope that WAVES will inspire you to be 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

Acknowledgements

The research report was produced under the technical oversight of Kalpana Giri, now the former Senior Program Officer for Social Inclusion and Gender Equality, RECOFTC and who also managed the WAVES program. Independent consultant Dibya 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 report.

Tol Sokchea, the WAVES country focal point, reviewed and provided technical inputs. Vanessa Hongsathiviz and Julian Atkinson from RECOFTC provided technical inputs to finalize the report.

RECOFTC recognizes the partnership with and engagement from the gender leaders and their organizations in the WAVES network in Cambodia: Ly Sophorn and Khlok Vichet Ratha, Ministry of Environment; Vong Sopanha, Forestry Administration of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; and The Chhun Hak and Sengphal Davine, Ministry of Women's Affairs.

RECOFTC is thankful to the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency for funding WAVES.

Executive summary

Weaving Leadership for Gender Equality, or WAVES, is a RECOFTC initiative that promotes gender equality in the governance of forest landscapes in the Asia-Pacific region.

WAVES built a network of 36 gender leaders from seven countries where RECOFTC works. In Cambodia, five gender leaders from government agencies involved in forest management and gender equality were supported in advocating for social and gender-equitable programs in their communities and institutions.

In early 2021, two years into the program, an evaluation was conducted at country and regional scale to document the initial results and learnings. Gender leaders, partner organizations and stakeholders provided inputs.

The evaluation found that the program triggered a range of results and changes among WAVES leaders and partners at the individual and institutional levels. Gender leaders reported personal and professional growth in their ability to articulate gender and inclusion concepts, formulate effective plans and strategies and influence high-level policymakers and community leaders through negotiation and advocacy.

In Cambodia, WAVES-supported gender leaders helped shape gender-inclusive policies, including the Five-Year Strategic Plan (2019–2023) of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, a policy analysis for gender mainstreaming in the environment sector with the Ministry of Environment and a Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Plan in the Forestry Sector (2021–2025) with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries.

The two WAVES gender leaders in the Ministry of Women's Affairs initiated a Youth Leadership Lab for Gender Equality, and its curriculum also has benefited 25 provincial focal points. The Ministry's training material on leadership helped mobilize an informal women's Community Protected Area management network with 25 women across Cambodia.

The evaluation process documented several lessons:

- An accurate understanding of the capacity of stakeholders that allow for reasonable timelines for complex activities, and the ability of stakeholders to commit to longer-term work plans are all important determinants of project success.
- Gender action plans can be most effective when they are demand-driven, results-oriented, and context-specific.
- Understanding and being responsive to intersectionality is important to achieving inclusion and equity.
- 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, or 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. Creating transformative change requires identifying and supporting individuals working in natural resources management who can advocate for and negotiate such change on an institutional level.

The WAVES initiative so far has built a network of 36 gender leaders from 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 include technical experts, senior government officials, politicians, academics, directors and officers of civil society organizations, local community leaders, business managers and a journalist.

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 it has worked with men as allies to support gender equality.

WAVES has supported the leaders to integrate gender equality into policies, investments and actions. WAVES has helped the gender leaders maximize their potential by cultivating leadership skills and providing technical and financial support as they implemented action plans. 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 amplify their work by linking them with wider networks and collaborators.

With support from the WAVES team, the gender leaders have learned to challenge conventional ways of thinking and promote gender equality in policies and processes related to climate change, REDD+ and forestry, forest law enforcement, governance and trade. And they have revived and are driving the gender agenda to remind their society 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 (referred to as “co-creation”) through a regional network of gender leaders.

Participatory learning and action were activated by using participatory engagement approaches that allowed for taking into account the gender leaders’ demand-driven needs and priorities. Multiple strategies were employed to address intersecting barriers and drivers of gender inequality. The four pillars outlined here are part of the co-creation structure put in place to cultivate discovery and actions.

Demand-driven

- The gender leaders were selected for their commitment to gender issues and on their ability to work on context-specific issues and achieve results. They were involved in the program’s conception and through its implementation.
- Before launching the program, the WAVES manager and focal points from the seven countries where RECOFTC works conducted informal outreach and national-level discussions with potential 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 with 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 interventions and barriers.
- **Scope of manoeuvrability:** They had a mandate to create institutional influence over people working on gender, policy or planning who provide opportunities to influence institutional changes and were willing to lead work on these areas.
- **Diversity of partners to deliver different changes:** They had collaborated with a wide group of organizations and people who can bring diverse levels of changes 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, including program scoping. They adopted methodologies for implementation to unpack 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 offered trainings and workshops on various gender concepts and skill sets, based on each leader's specific skills, needs and interests to implement their action plan.
- **Learning space:** WAVES created learning channels to connect gender leaders at the national and regional levels to share their accomplishments, challenges and pitfalls in a safe and trusting environment. WAVES focal points in each country moderated the learning channel at the national level.
- **Results-oriented:** WAVES provided support to the individual gender leaders 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 design employed diverse strategies and actions to address gender gaps and structural barriers and to mitigate emerging risks and reduce opportunity costs.
- Technical and financial support was provided at the regional and national levels to roll out interventions.
- Interventions were undertaken to promote inclusive change at the individual and institutional levels.

Institutionalization and enabling systems

- The WAVES program design emphasized 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 team, was developed for leveraging influence and encouraging adaptive planning and strategizing.
- The gender leaders mobilized their network in the country to support one another and created communication loops between informal networks and formal systems.
- Individual leadership approaches were used to influence institutional shifts within the gender leaders' organizations 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 selected gender leaders from the seven countries where RECOFTC works, 31 are women and five are men.

About the evaluation: Purpose and framework

When the program was more than two years into its operation, a regional evaluation was conducted in 2021 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 effected by the WAVES program thus far. The consultant interviewed gender leaders, partners and stakeholders from all seven countries.

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 evaluation. The framework focused on changes that took place at two distinct but interrelated levels.

Individual change: The individual performance and behaviour 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 each of the gender leaders' institution of employment or affiliation in terms of its programs, policies, structures and work culture. It considered both informal changes, such as each institution's networks, peers, norms and values, and 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 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 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, country workshops and meetings aimed to draw out evidence and learnings from across the countries. Second, learnings from the national evaluations were condensed for 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

As noted, the evaluation approached the WAVES work at three levels:

- Country evaluation workshops. The country-level evaluations were conducted within a span of two months, from February through March. The evaluation at each country level was pursued with a mixed approach of face-to-face meetings, virtual workshops, interviews and group discussion. Three onsite (physical) workshops were achieved, one each in Nepal, Lao PDR and Viet Nam. One virtual workshop was conducted in Indonesia. Interviews and discussions were conducted in Thailand, Cambodia and Myanmar. The gender leaders shared their progress, learnings and achievements with examples and evidence during these events. The country-level workshops and meetings were used to assess the achievements, results, gaps and possibilities that gender leaders had observed through their engagement with WAVES to date. The information derived through the country evaluation process was then synthesized and consolidated to draw out the results and learnings at the regional level.

- **Regional workshop.** A three-day regional workshop in March gave the gender leaders and their stakeholders 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 arranged between the consultant and RECOFTC WAVES team to discuss and provide feedback on the draft reports. In addition, several rounds of in-depth discussions with the RECOFTC's WAVES manager, the seven WAVES country teams and the RECOFTC communication and learning experts were organized to gain a better understanding of the context and to 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 insights of the gender leaders' leadership practices and their influence on their colleagues' behaviours and institutional norms for gender integration. This also limited the face-to-face interaction with the WAVES leaders, except in Nepal, where the consultant is based.

WAVES in Cambodia

Gender leaders

RECOFTC supports five WAVES gender leaders from three government agencies involved in forest management and gender equality: the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the Ministry of Women's Affairs.

The gender leaders were carefully selected based on their commitments to gender activities, their scope to create changes in policies and practices at national and local levels and their potential to affect gender transformative shifts in their respective organization. The program's main objective was to promote gender-inclusive participatory approaches in forestry policies and community activities.

	Name	Organization	Position
1.	Khlok Vichet Ratha	Ministry of Environment (government)	Deputy Director
2.	Ly Sophorn	Ministry of Environment (government)	Deputy Director General
3.	Vong Sopanha	Forestry Administration, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (government)	Deputy Director
4.	The Chhun Hak	Ministry of Women's Affairs (government)	Director General
5.	Sengphal Davine	Ministry of Women's Affairs (government)	Deputy Director General

Implementation of the WAVES approach

As this section elaborates, RECOFTC provided step-by-step, demand-based inputs and some financial support to each WAVES leader to implement their specific plan to meet the program's objectives. The focus in Cambodia was on strengthening community forestry networks to include and better represent women, particularly ethnic and marginalized women.

Within Cambodia, the WAVES approach evolved with the following primary inputs.

Country-level scoping meetings and orientation workshops

The RECOFTC WAVES focal point in each country was oriented on the overall WAVES approach and provided them with guiding criteria to help identify prospective partner organizations and gender leaders. One country-level scoping meeting and one-on-one in-depth discussions were conducted with prospective participants to determine their vision for gender equality in forestry work, map out major barriers they faced to integrate gender in their work and to understand their interest to engage with a program like WAVES. After a few months of careful preparation by the RECOFTC

country team and through the scoping meeting, the gender leaders were selected. They then attended a training workshop to learn about different gender concepts and analytical tools, how to apply them in a gender situation analysis and how to develop strategies and plans based on the situation analysis. They narrowed down the gender mainstreaming priorities that they wanted to implement under the WAVES program.

Regional launch, training workshops, coaching, mentoring and technical support

A regional leadership workshop was organized in Bangkok to launch the WAVES program. The workshop examined training on gender concepts, including negotiation, communication and networking. Participants were encouraged to critically analyse their situation and explore solutions and opportunities for developing their individual action plan based on their needs, priorities and context.

After six months of implementing their action plan, the WAVES gender leaders attended another regional training in Bangkok on relational leadership and gender analysis. This Leadership Pathways and Change workshop focused on developing frameworks on domains of change and gender assessments, managing resistance and self-care, training of trainers with facilitation skills, designing training courses and developing delivery skills.

Demonstrated actions

After the first regional training, the gender leaders started implementing their individual action plan. The RECOFTC WAVES focal point in each country worked with the gender leaders to help facilitate their respective action plan. They were also provided some financial support to help execute their individual action plan. The RECOFTC WAVES focal points provided regular support to the gender leaders through technical backstopping and guidance, regular monitoring and addressing their queries and challenges at the personal and institutional levels. These regular exchanges helped the gender leaders and RECOFTC staff analyse and identify their needs and challenges and develop demand-based, tailor-made capacity-building programs.

The following singles out examples of the WAVES activities implemented in Cambodia.

Training workshops, mentoring and technical support

In the first year, the gender leaders from the Ministry of Women's Affairs collaborated with RECOFTC to develop and apply a training manual on leadership for gender equality. In the second year, the manual was adapted for use by the gender working group of the Ministry of Environment. Training was also provided to new officers in the Ministry of Environment, provincial gender focal points for the Ministry and the Community Protected Area Women's Network.

Cultivation of a new generation of female leaders from universities and government agencies

A program called Youth Leadership Lab for Gender Equality was initiated by the WAVES gender leaders in the Ministry of Women's Affairs and implemented in collaboration with several partners. In the first generation of this program, 18 university students and young government officials received training and coaching on gender-related topics and participatory methods and approaches. They were also given opportunities to intern with the Ministry of Women's Affairs and program partners, including RECOFTC.

A second group of young people are being trained and linked with the first group to learn from their experiences under the guidance from the WAVES gender leaders. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic situation, a planned capacity-building program was conducted online with staff from the Ministry of Women's Affairs, youth groups and the WAVE gender leaders.

Support the development of the Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Plan in the Forest Sector 2021–2025 for the Forestry Administration

With technical and financial support from WAVES, the Forestry Administration gender leader led development and finalizing of the gender mainstreaming strategic plan in the forest sector 2021–2025 for the Forestry Administration. The strategy has now been approved and published.

Contribution to the Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Plan in Environment Sector 2021–2025 Phase 3

The gender leaders were involved in the Ministry of Environment's rapid survey to assess the implementation of the Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Plan in the Environment Sector Phase 2. They also conducted workshops and face-to-face and online meetings to collect data for the Strategic Plan Phase 3.

Initiatives to support members of the Community Protected Area Women's Network

With support from the WAVES team, the gender leaders coordinating with RECOFTC initiated and facilitated the informal Community Protected Area Women's Network, comprising 25 women from 20 protected areas in 15 provinces. They also conducted regular face-to-face learning via the Telegram chat group. This platform continues to be used for technical learning and sharing and for discussing challenges and opportunities that the women members experience in relation to their engagement in Community Protected Area management.

Findings and results

Overall, the WAVES program provided useful conceptual knowledge, skills and approaches to view and analyse the social and gender equality issues from multiple dimensions and generated several outcomes and learnings at the institutional and personal levels, as the following highlights.

Increased knowledge and skills to analyse and tackle the deep-rooted gender issues within the technical sectors

The gender leaders better understand the value of conceptual knowledge and skills to analyse the deep-rooted gender issues within the forestry and environment sectors and in society generally. The gender training they received in Bangkok helped them realize that gender mainstreaming is about social change. They said that the long-term support beyond training, which is demand-based and participatory, helped them explore and recognize the gender issues from multiple dimensions that were not easily visible to them before.

They have used the concepts and skills, including gender language, to articulate issues, strategize, negotiate, advocate and influence high-level policymakers and community-level leaders.

There are several examples of how the gender leaders have recognized and articulated the gender issues. For instance, in the Ministry of Women's Affairs, one gender leader said that she now recognizes and articulates the different types of resistance within her organization regarding the integration of gender equality interventions. Being able to name the forms of resistance has given her the confidence to speak up and spark deep discussions among her colleagues and networks on how change happens, on how difficult it is to recognize resistance and on why people resist change. The gender leader from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries also faced resistance when working on the institution's gender strategy. But instead of giving up, she chose to actively engage and made a plan to address this situation by consulting with the technical groups, preparing the content to be integrated and following all the steps and mandates required.

Strategic use of gender information and data to influence policies at the macro and micro levels

One of the achievements of the gender leaders has been around influencing their respective institution's policies and strategies from a gender perspective at the macro and micro levels. They learned to use evidence and analysis to strategize and find the right channels to influence and make interventions.

For example, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries gender leader used gender data and conducted participatory consultation meetings to influence the decision-makers and garner donor support for the Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Plan. Another milestone achievement in 2021 was the inclusion of the Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Plan of the Forest Administration as one of the indicators of the Joint Monitoring Indicator. The Joint Monitoring Indicator is a mechanism to monitor the overall development in the country, under the coordination of the Cambodia Development Council, which the prime minister chairs.

The male gender leader from the Ministry of Women's Affairs said that he uses three main channels to influence policymakers and practitioners to integrate gender: sectoral leaders (ministers and vice ministers), by joining and making interventions in annual meetings; technical groups (all departments and units of associated ministries), by working with them to target sectoral policies and mobilize support from the government, donors and civil society organizations; and the Gender Mainstreaming Working Group and experts, by working closely with them.

Influencing policymakers at the macro level

The National Council for Women organizes a yearly meeting with the prime minister to review an annual progress report. The prime minister provides recommendations for improvements. Each year, the prime minister joins the International Women's Day campaign. The male gender leader from the Ministry of Women's Affairs, together with his team and fellow gender leaders, used this space to present gender issues and the WAVES program to publicly get the prime minister's commitment. He explained that to do so, he had to be strategic and prepare beforehand. He had to orient and engage

relevant government departments, including the cabinet of the prime minister, the Ministry of Economy and Finance and the Ministry of Planning to learn about macro trends and prepare gender programs, inputs and recommendations.

Cultivating future leaders—reproduction of relational leadership

The gender leaders in the Ministry of Women’s Affairs found the concept of relational leadership effective for integrating gender equality goals within their programs as well as for bringing about changes in the ways individuals view and understand “change and transformation” in development. They said it helps development practitioners become more sensitive and see changes beyond projects.

These gender leaders developed the innovative Youth Leadership Lab for Gender Equality to cultivate young people to become future relational leaders by reproducing the WAVES leadership training model. The Lab provides university students and young officials from line ministries with a series of capacity-building activities on leadership development to promote gender equality. A total of 18 university students and young officials from the line ministries were selected for this program. They were provided a series of training workshops on such topics as gender concepts, analysis, guided reflections. They received mentorship and made exchange visits in the community. They were exposed to project formulation and implementation and internship opportunities. A second group of young leaders has been selected for training and mentoring. The first group of young gender leaders are expected to take this program forward and develop a critical mass of “relational” leaders.

The male gender leader from the Ministry of Women’s Affairs who initiated this program explained of the motivation behind the Youth Leadership Lab, “The initial self-awareness training deeply affected me. WAVES taught me to be ‘transformative.’ I realized that a fundamental shift can be achieved if young people learned about equality and leadership before they became leaders.”

Community women find spaces to organize, dialogue, learn and link with policymakers

Women’s engagement in the Community Protected Areas is still limited. Even though they are recognized as a valid stakeholder with distinct roles within the protected area’s development, the social norms and stereotypes on women engaging in the community still influence their behaviour and participation in activities. In addition, women still limit their capacity, knowledge and confidence whenever they participate in community activities. The institutions and mechanisms at the provincial and local levels focus more on the technical aspects and give little priority to social and gender issues. The gender leaders picked up this issue and mobilized their provincial offices to form and strengthen grass-roots women’s networks within the different Community Protected Areas. These networks were developed as safe spaces for women to learn new gender and other technical and livelihood-related skills, share ideas, motivate each other and engage in the protection of their forest. These networks have also formed as a platform to connect directly with the national offices, where they can share their issues and ideas and seek technical and financial support. The communication with the national offices is maintained through face-to-face meetings and other mediums, such as Telegram and Facebook.

Men as leaders for gender equality

Cambodia demonstrated how the engagement of men can accelerate the process of advancing gender equality and in promoting relational leadership. The several innovative actions taken by the male gender leader, such as initiating the Youth Leadership Lab for Gender Equality and influencing policies, have shown a new way of leading and have helped bring in more men and technocrats to understand and be gender-sensitive. According to the male gender leader, “Working for gender equality is not about promoting women only, but it is about building mutually beneficial partnership and bringing everyone together to work and share a common goal.”

Replication of relational leadership modules by the Ministry of Women’s Affairs

Another significant achievement is the institutional replication of relational leadership modules within the Ministry. The two gender leaders influenced their Human Resource Department’s units to link their internal training with the WAVES program. By offering technical, moral and financial support, the RECOFTC country team helped the gender leader who works at the Ministry take the Youth Leadership Lab for Gender Equality to the next level. For example, they assisted the Ministry in developing and implementing a second round of the youth leadership program by giving direction in customizing the WAVES training module to their Ministry’s context, assisted in recruiting appropriate participants for the second phase and provided small-scale financial support to implement projects.

Opportunities for WAVES in Cambodia

Going forward, WAVES in Thailand could consider emphasis in the following areas.

- The gender leaders understand the difference between a positional leader³ and a relational leader.⁴ In contrast to a positional leader, anyone can become a relational leader irrespective of their gender, position, age or background. A leader is not about who the leader is but how the leader should be. A relational leader is someone who is self-aware, reflective and sensitive.
- Gender training should not end after the training but should be continued with long-term support, as in the case of the WAVES approach with systematic mentoring, coaching, budget and backstopping support. The male gender leader explained that to be supported and closely guided after the training made him feel secure: “It made us feel we are not alone. It’s not a big investment, but it’s a big support for us. It gives us more confidence to know that somebody is there for us.”
- Support to develop and strengthen women’s and other networks for gender equality is critical. It helps women and technicians organize themselves and take collective action. It provides safe spaces for dialogue and discussions, particularly on understanding and applying the gender concepts, which is important for promoting relational leadership. It also helps to attract new partners and amplify changes made, for example, by bringing in men and high-level policymakers to work on gender equality.
- Strong and specific policies and strategies on gender is an effective entry point to advocate and to mobilize all levels in the forest bureaucracy to plan and invest on gender.

Recommendations

- The contributions made by the WAVES leaders have helped trigger several processes and platforms for gender equality, including the interventions made in the technical sectors, such as the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the Ministry of Environment. Strategies to sustain the momentum is critical to expand these processes within and across sectors. These could be done either through direct support or in collaboration with like-minded organizations. For example, some small-scale activities started by the partners, such as the following, should be continued.
 - Support the Ministry of Women’s Affairs to implement the second group of the Youth Leadership Lab and to publish training materials on leadership for gender equality.
 - Develop strategies to continue the gender-related programs within the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, including the Community Protected Area Women Network, by supporting discussions and workshops with the government and development partners to collaborate and scale up these interventions. For example, support development of a training manual on leadership for gender equality in Community Protected Area management (test the draft materials and finalize the manual); complete the case studies on gender in Community Protected Areas; develop and complete the Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Plan Phase 3 for the Ministry of Environment, and help translate and publish the plan; support the translation and publication of the Forestry Administration’s gender mainstreaming strategy; and contribute to the gender working group via WAVES gender leaders to implement activities in the Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Plan in the Forest Sector by the Forestry Administration.
- Coordinate with the government partners, such as the Ministry of Women’s Affairs, the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, development partners and like-minded international and local NGOs, to bring in more and diverse partners to promote the WAVES training approach, and seek support to create a critical mass of knowledgeable and skilled people.
- Review the WAVES training package to include psychosocial support for gender leaders, and expand and strengthen the component on engaging men and youths and their allyship.

Endnotes

1. Pretty, J.N., Guijt, I., Thompson, J., and Scoones, I., *Participatory Learning and Action: A trainer's guide*, IIED Participatory Methodology Series. London: Sustainable Agriculture Programme, IIED, 1995; WOCAN, *Training Manual-Gender Integration in Planning*, 2011.
2. Gurung, B., and Menter, H., *Mainstreaming Gender-sensitive Participatory Approaches: The CIAT case study*. In *Scaling Up and Out: Achieving Widespread Impact Through Agricultural Research*, D. Pachico, ed. Cali, Colombia: Centro Internacional de Agricultura Tropical, 2004; WOCAN, *Framework for Assessing Participatory Action Research Program Activities*, 2010.
3. A “positional leader” works on the basis of authority from the person’s position rather than the respect or trust their peers have in them.
4. “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 then is different from positional or managerial ideas of leadership but is about how people relate to each other to influence each other. Everyone can learn these skills and every one can be a leader to influence. The relational leadership skills mainly entail being a participatory, collaborative, active and empathetic listener.

Annex: Actions undertaken by the gender leaders

	Activities	With whom
1.	With gender leaders from the Ministry of Women's Affairs, developed and applied training materials on leadership for gender equality adapted from WAVES regional materials; with youth of the Youth Leadership Lab for Gender Equality program, developed and applied materials (September 2019–December 2020)	Ministry of Women's Affairs WAVES gender leaders and officials from the General Department of Gender Equality and Economic Development
2.	In 2020 initiated and successfully ran the first group of youth under the Youth Leadership Lab: 18 university students and young government officials were trained on gender equality-related topics; improved their skills in facilitation and communication; obtained experience working with Ministry of Women's Affairs partners through internship programs, including with RECOFTC (January–December 2020)	Ministry of Women's Affairs WAVES gender leaders, Ministry of Women's Affairs officers and Ministry partners, such as the Cambodia Development Resource Institute, the United Nations Development Programme, Oxfam and RECOFTC
3.	Initiated and ready to implement the second group of the Youth Leadership Lab; the second group will learn from experiences and lessons from the first group, to be implemented in 2021–2022 (May 2021)	Ministry of Women's Affairs WAVES gender leaders, Ministry of Women's Affairs officers and Ministry partners, including RECOFTC
4.	In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, initiated a capacity-building program on digital and online application use for the Ministry of Women's Affairs (May 2020)	Ministry of Women's Affairs-WAVES gender leaders, Ministry of Women's Affairs young official network and Ministry partners, including RECOFTC
5.	Developed and finalized the first Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Plan in the Forest Sector 2021–2025 for the Forestry Administration. The final draft of the strategy is ready for submission for final review and approval by the Forestry Administration Director General (June 2020, final draft)	Forestry Administration WAVES gender leaders, Forestry Administration gender working group, Forestry Administration departments, local Forestry Administrations and local authorities, international and local NGOs, including RECOFTC and community forestry groups
6.	Initiated and facilitated the informal Community Protected Area Women Network, comprising 25 women from Community Protected Areas around the country; regular face-to-face learning events conducted (three months); and ongoing communication via Telegram chat group of the members (July 2019)	Ministry of Environment WAVES gender leader, the Ministry of Environment gender working group, Community Protected Area women members and RECOFTC

	Activities	With whom
7.	Conducted a rapid internal survey within the Ministry of Environment departments on achievements of implementation of Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Phase 2 (September 2020)	Ministry of Environment WAVES gender leader, the Ministry of Environment gender technical working group and RECOFTC
8.	Adapted training materials on leadership for gender equality (for the Ministry of Women's Affairs) into leadership for gender equality in Community Protected Area management (October–November 2020)	Ministry of Environment WAVES gender leader and RECOFTC
9.	Developed Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Plan Phase 3 for the Ministry of Environment (January 2021)	Ministry of Environment WAVES gender leader, the Ministry of Environment gender technical working group and RECOFTC
10.	Documented case study from Community Protected Area on gender equality and women in Community Protected Area management (October 2020); still in the process (delayed due to COVID-19)	Ministry of Environment WAVES gender leader, the Ministry of Environment gender technical working group and RECOFTC



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.



RECOFTC

P.O. Box 1111
Kasetsart Post Office
Bangkok 10903, Thailand
T +66 (0)2 940 5700
F +66 (0)2 561 4880
info@recoftc.org

    @RECOFTC



recoftc.org

Our sponsors



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC



Sweden
Sverige

RECOFTC's work is made possible with the support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).