

8. CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNT

8.1 DIFFERENT NEEDS AND PRIORITIES

It has been consistently shown that men and women have different needs and priorities in relation to natural resource management and ICDPs. Gender analyses are important in identifying these differences so that a more equitable process can be initiated.

For example, a gender analysis of the USAID funded Rwenzori ICDP, Uganda (Larson and Nzirambi, 1996) determined that:

Men's NRM Priorities	Women's NRM Priorities
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agroforestry/tree planting 2. Soil conservation 3. Beekeeping 4. Zero grazing 5. Improved stoves 6. Tourism 7. Women's activities 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contour bunds 2. Off-farm activities 3. Agroforestry/treeplanting 4. Beekeeping 5. Zero grazing 6. Conservation education

If these differences are ignored it can have an adverse impact on natural resource management (see Section 4.1) and create a divide in the support for conservation projects. Box 8.1 describes different views and perceptions found around the Selous Game Reserve, Tanzania. Women possessed less knowledge than men concerning conservation and the ICDP – Selous Conservation Project. In addition they were less aware of benefits from the project and, consequently, were less supportive of it. Women's relationship with wildlife and natural resources was more determined by everyday interaction and direct costs and benefits, than by any perceived long-term benefits and/or cultural or aesthetic linkages.

Critical factors related to the differences between men and women, in relation to natural resource management and conservation, are:

- Gender divisions of labour and responsibilities mean that men and women have different relationships with natural resources and their use.
- The different relationships that men and women have with natural resources and their environment produces different views and perceptions of the value of resources, the environment and landscape, and the costs or benefits of using and/or protecting them.
- Gender differences related to natural resource use are heavily embedded in cultural, social, geographical and historical contexts. However, they are not static and are continuously being renegotiated and restructured to different degrees.
- Environmental change impacts on engendered roles and responsibilities. Often women bear a heavier cost due to environmental degradation.
- Other social divisions such as age, status and ethnicity are also important for defining who has access to resources and power over their use.
- Though women's use of natural resources may be considered to be 'minor' because it has a lower profile than men's, in reality this is not the case. Although women normally collect for subsistence purposes they can be heavily involved in processing and trading too.
- Women are more restricted by time than men because of a heavy and consistent workload.

- Men still dominate decision-making processes despite legislation and informal support for women's participation. In addition women have less control over resources and less access to them. This is particularly true where land is concerned.
- Women have less access to education and health services than men. This has a debilitating impact on their potential input to conservation and development processes.
- Women, rather than men, tend to be more easily mobilised into groups and keen to cooperate with others. Women have realised the advantages of 'group power'.
- Though conservation restrictions impact both men and women detrimentally, they can affect women more because women's responsibilities for fulfilling everyday needs depend on natural resources.
- Many women continue to be marginalised from participation in conservation processes and practices. Their views and priorities fail to be incorporated and their relationships with natural resources are ignored.

Box 8.1 Gender Differences and the Selous Conservation Project

A study carried out within the Megata River Buffer Zone of the Selous Game Reserve (SGR) highlighted the different views and perceptions between men and women of conservation, the Selous Conservation Project (SCP), and the use of natural resources.

For example:

- 52% of women, compared to 20.3% men, did not know why the SGR was established.
- Only 27.8 % of women, compared to 47.8% men, preferred the SGR to be kept for wildlife conservation.
- 22.2% of women, compared to 10.3% men, wanted the area to be converted to cultivation and grazing.
- Only 40.3% of women, compared to 50% of men, had experienced problems with wildlife.
- 70.2 % of women, compared to 91.1% of men, felt that it was important to protect wildlife for their children.
- 40% of women, but only 19% of men stated that villagers should be allowed to hunt as many animals as they need for food.
- Equal numbers of men and women felt that people who poach wild animals should be punished, but that wild animals that caused crop damage should be shot.

Regarding the perceived benefits of wildlife and the SCP:

- More women than men gave 'don't know' answers to the question of perceived benefits of wildlife for Tanzania as well as perceived benefits for communities and households.
- 36.6% of women, compared to 64.6% of men, felt that wildlife benefited those living around the SGR.
- 34.7% of women, compared to 53.9% of men, felt that wildlife benefited them.
- A greater number of women did not know about the activities of the SCP, and those that did gave more negative responses than those given by the men.

Age and status also influenced the responses. Those in the younger and older age brackets tended to be more positive about the SGR and benefits from wildlife, as did those of a higher status within the village.

It is suggested that the identified gender differences reflect the pattern of social stratification in the predominantly Muslim study villages, where public life and political activity are considered to be primarily male responsibilities. Not only is involvement in public village life considered inappropriate behaviour for women, but their heavy domestic and agricultural workload also precludes them from becoming active participants in that predominantly male domain. This, together with the lower standards of education among women than men, means that women tend to be less knowledgeable than men with regard to the wider issues of wildlife management and conservation. Accordingly, conservation attitudes among women are largely determined by the direct experience of the costs and benefits of their effects on domestic life and farm work.

(Gillingham, 1998:21.)

8.2 ENCOURAGING WOMEN TO PARTICIPATE IN CONSERVATION

It has been determined that women are still not participating in conservation and development processes and projects as much as men. Before addressing how this can be overcome it is important to understand why. Through this study a number of key areas of concern have been identified.

8.2.1 Why Women Are Not Participating in Conservation and Development

There is still a lack of understanding about the differences that exist between men and women in relation to natural resource use and conservation, as summarised in Section 7.1. As a result, ways to overcome such differences and take account of them in conservation and development processes have not been initiated.

Women, more than men, have failed to make the link between conservation and development. In addition there is little recognition of the linkages between rights to resources and conservation responsibilities. In the Kiunga Marine Reserve ICDP one woman declared that the conservation practices they now carry out, such as the protection of turtles, are highly dependent on the financial payments they receive from the ICDP for the work. If they did not get paid then they would not protect the nest. In fact, it is more than likely that they would eat the turtle! Though this may be a somewhat generalised and exaggerated statement and there is also some community pressure to protect the local resources, it does question the sustainability of conservation ethics being promoted by conservation organisations such as WWF, both here and in other situations (Flintan, 2002a).

Over the last 20 years the Luangwa Integrated Rural Development Project (LIRDP) in Zambia has initiated a number of different approaches that have focussed on women and/or gender to different degrees. During the initial stages of the project a Women's Programme was initiated, a large part of which was conducted through women's clubs. Although not accessible to all women due to workload and/or attitude of both men and women towards them, the women's clubs provided opportunities for dissemination of information and provision of support specific to women's needs that were more appropriate to women. This included literacy development, vital to women's effective participation in both Education Days and AGMs, and skills and knowledge development for income generation, health and nutrition. However, due to changes in staff, strategies and priorities, by 2000 there were no specific activities incorporating gender issues within the programme (see Table 8.2).

Project Stage	Establishment (1986)	Implementation and Review (1986-96)	Rationalisation and Refocusing (1996)	Transition to SLAMU*
Activities relating to women	Women's Programme initiated in 1987. Nine female extension workers. - Focussed on crop, poultry, vegetable production & home economics. - Over 50 women's clubs with over 1,000 members.	- 68 women's clubs providing forum for family planning info, credit schemes for agriculture, adult literacy classes, siting of wells etc. - Workshop on integration of women into all LIRDP programmes recognising problems of working separating with women.	Mainstreaming of the participation of women through the policy so that all sections of the project incorporate gender considerations into all aspects of their activities. Particularly the Community Liaison Section in local level institutional development and administration to employ 30% females.	No specific activities, responsibility for incorporating gender considerations remains with individual sections of LIRDP. Little evidence of women being taken into account or benefiting from the Project.

Table 8.2 Women and LIRDP, Zambia

* SLAMU - South Luangwa Area Management Unit

Today in Luangwa, the lack of participation of women in conservation activities has resulted in the loss of the sense that mutual long-term benefit is possible through joint responsibility and co-operation in carrying out sustainable management of the forests. The increasing demands placed upon women for their time and effort mean that they have become self-centred, which has long-term consequences for the community. In addition, the position of women in the community, the influence of many external agencies attempting to implement projects, and changes which appear

beyond their control, mean that women feel helpless in the face of forest destruction. Women believe that initiative and ability to improve their quality of life only comes from others – men, extension workers, NGOs and donors. This means that women do not take responsibility for, or believe that they have the ability to achieve, successful management of natural resources. Consequently, improved management does not occur unless it is strictly enforced by those with the power to do so, such as Chiefs or LIRD, or if an outsider with new resources and ideas arrives (Barnes, 2000).

Past experiences have also influenced the participation of women in the Kiunga Marine Reserve ICDP where resistance to join women's groups was found. This was greatly due to past experiences of a WB funded project, which focussed on the formation of women's groups that were given 'hand-outs' for activities such as income-generation. The groups tended to be dominated by 3 or 4 influential or powerful women in each village who dominated decision-making processes and income distribution. Jealousy, division and friction surfaced between the women and between the groups. In addition there was an expectation amongst some that the function of any NGO project is to provide hand-outs only, and the idea that development should be a joint effort or community-driven is somewhat alien. These attitudes and past experiences were not a good basis upon which to build further work and it has proved difficult to reform the groups. It is hoped that the 'new' groups being established will be more democratic and sustainable with each group producing a constitution and electing representatives such as Head and Treasurer (Flintan, 2002a).

Men can prove resistant to women participating in conservation and development processes and initiatives. They may feel threatened or they may feel that women's participation will result in neglect of their other duties and responsibilities. To overcome this, ways must be found to reassure men that women's involvement does not necessarily undermine men's status and is likely to benefit the whole of the household and community. This can be achieved through encouraging an inclusive effort in the process. Involving and informing men of the benefits and elements of women's involvement is important and it may be useful to have a male who is trusted and known to the community particularly the male members, on the project team, to promote women's inclusion.

Participation in ICDPs and decision-making processes requires a certain level of education, for example to understand written documentation and budgets: an often necessary prerequisite for election onto village conservation committees. Women's lack of education is a debilitating factor that limits their participation in many elements of ICDPs and natural resource management. Women are often very aware of this and as a result lack confidence and self-esteem and feel incompetent and diffident. As a result, though mechanisms and legislation may exist that support women's participation in village committees, the required quotas will often not be met, and if they are, the quality of their participation must certainly be questioned. As Box 8.2 shows, despite their physical presence women can remain marginalised and excluded. Men can dominate conversations, believing that their views are more important. Women can lack confidence and self-esteem and believe that there is little value in their contribution. Nevertheless, their presence is one step forward from their complete absence.

Other experiences also offer useful insights. Hilary Solly (1998) has explored the difficulties that confront the formation and continued functioning of community-based groups in the area of an ICDP working within the Dja Reserve, south Cameroon. People in the area found it enormously difficult to work together, largely due to lack of experience and mutual mistrust and suspicion. One woman's association there, though initially dynamic and motivated, encountered problems that included theft of group funds; local corruption; family feuds; mistrust and disagreement between the women; a lack of experience and history of such associations in the region; and the borrowing and non-repayment of loans by local men. Today the association has lower expectations and is less active

Box 8.2 Marginalisation from Decision-Making Processes

Within the LIRD in Zambia, for the majority of community members their opportunity to participate in decision-making about the use of wildlife revenue is through attendance at the Annual General Meetings (AGM). These are held in each village action group to determine the projects and their budgets for the coming year. In 1998-9 attendance of women was 48-49%. However, women rarely participated in the meetings to the same degree as men. In general, they were excluded from many of the decision-making processes. As these comments from local women confirm:

'women are not given a chance to say things at meetings, or if at AGMs they are given a chance their ideas are not discussed or considered.' ... 'the woman speaking is not listened to, the Vice-Chair just carries on'.

(Barnes, 2000)

A study of community organisations on Mount Kilimanjaro showed that the NGO sector has become viewed as one of the major ways to access scarce resources and thus to finance modern, socio-economic development. At the same time involvement within NGO projects has taken on a means of gaining status within the local communities. People perceive involvement in women's groups, for example, as related to education, modernity and industriousness, and often the poorest and/or less prominent women do not participate, because they feel inferior and looked-down upon. The social position of a woman and the household from which she comes is therefore central to an understanding of the ways in which participation in local women's organisations is structured. Women are differentiated according to age, marital status, religion, wealth and social status. Hierarchies of prestige are thus produced according to local norms and values, which heavily influence a woman's opportunities to engage with the NGO sector (Mercer, 1999).

Conflicts can exist between traditional and modern institutions and structures. In most countries in Africa there is legislation and institutional backing for more equitable gender representation and participation. However, such provision often conflicts with the still predominantly male-dominated traditional institutions that exist, particularly at the community level. Change cannot be forced, but it is possible to support more equitable decision-making processes by encouraging a recognition, acknowledgement and incorporation of elements of the modern within the traditional. Traditional institutions are not static and over time have developed and adapted to different pressures, including, for a large period of their development, colonial (male-dominated) powers.

Gender still tends to be given a low priority within ICDPs and even where originally supported, can be superseded by what are perceived to be more important issues. For example in the Awash ICDP, Ethiopia, though the inclusion of women was an important objective for the project, there were more immediate problems of getting the project to function as an ICDP rather than an 'old fashioned' rural development project. Simultaneously, the ICDP was attempting to address a major conflict between the different pastoral communities living there and to build up a functioning relationship between the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Organisation and CARE (Dawn Hartley, *personal communication, 2001*).

8.2.2 Ways to Encourage the Participation of Women and Increase their Benefits

Many women, particularly poorer women, are most concerned with fulfilling the basic needs of the household on a day-to-day basis. Therefore, short-term needs are a priority and may conflict with the long-term objectives of conservation and natural resource management. For example, in Uganda the HIV/AIDS pandemic has increased poverty and the instances of women and child headed families. There is no way they can be convinced not to encroach on the forest when they have nothing to feed on. The family leaders, especially the women need to be empowered financially to enable them to feed their families (Ngece and Nafuna, 2002). Therefore, increasing women's security and reducing

the time that they spend fulfilling basic needs can be an important factor in providing time for women to focus on more conservation-oriented activities.

Rights and responsibilities of men and women in relation to natural resource use must be more clearly linked and defined. Communities should be encouraged to reflect on their relationship with their environment and to take responsibility for it. A culture of dependence should be avoided by methods such as avoiding hand-outs or paying community members to protect resources. A culture of reciprocity, responsibility and cooperation has been lost in many communities as competition for resources has increased and modern economic and social processes have encouraged individualism or privatisation. Such a culture must be revitalised if communities are to take responsibility for their own development in a more sustainable manner.

The importance of knowledge, awareness and information flow within natural resource management has not been sufficiently recognised. All knowledge should be valued, including women's knowledge. Women in particular often 'miss out' because they are unable to attend meetings and decision-making forums. If women feel that their knowledge is of value and it can contribute to conservation and development processes then they are more happy and confident to share it. Such sharing draws women into the conservation process and increases their 'ownership' over it and its impacts. This can then increase their sense of responsibility. In addition if they are not aware of decisions made, new legislation introduced and the opportunities that ICDPs offer, then they are not able to react and participate in them. Some ICDPs have realised the importance of providing forums for information sharing and structures or measures for information flow. Networks have been established, community facilitators supported and exchange visits facilitated.

Projects need to be better linked to the region within which they are situated and understand the ripple effects of their impacts. The greater political, social and economic contexts must be realised and accommodated. Better working and supportive relationships should be facilitated between conservation organisations and other groups working in the same region, particularly those focussing on poverty alleviation, food security and equity issues. National Parks and other protected areas do not exist in a vacuum, and ICDPs should not try to do so either. Those projects that take a more holistic and integrated approach to conservation and development are generally those that are more successful in including and benefiting a greater proportion of the community (Abbot *et al.*, 1999; Solly, 1998).

National policies in support for women and more gender equitable society can be a useful entry point and reference for the promotion of such issues in ICDPs. For example, much constitutional reforms and new legislation has been enacted in eastern and southern Africa in recent years (Flintan, 2000; Leonard & Toulmin, 2000; Larson and Nzirambi, 1996). A provision requiring that both spouses must consent to any transactions relating to land that is considered matrimonial property has been enacted in Uganda (Land Act 1988 art 40) and Tanzania (Land Act 1999 art 165 (3)). In South Africa this was provided for in 1984 under the Matrimonial Property Act (Leonard & Toulmin, 2000). In addition, women's groups are increasingly aligning themselves to broader platforms of interests such as land and politics.

Some have suggested that improved natural resource management will only take place when there is a closer link between those who control and those who use resources. Where gender issues are concerned this raises a number of difficult questions as to how women should gain more control over resources, as they are major users. Direct intervention is difficult and can cause conflict within communities. However, the strengthening and empowering of women can be supported, through education, for example, and the promotion of a more gender-equitable property rights policy.

Questions still arise as to whether a 'gender' or a 'women's' approach should be the focus of ICDPs. In many cases it has been shown that in general it is more successful to take a gender approach: an approach that focuses on the relationships between men and women and how those affect natural resource use and conservation processes and practices. It should not be assumed that gender issues will be taken care of by having a woman on the team – many women know little of women in development or gender analysis. Gender issues should be more strategically approached and incorporated from the design and planning of projects, rather than being 'added on' as the need is perceived.

However a 'women-only' component may be necessary where:

- There are strong taboos against unrelated males and females working together.
- The effects of past discrimination need to be overcome.
- Many households are headed by women.
- Women specialise in tasks that could be made more productive with outside help.
- Women and men have clearly defined roles and responsibilities in relation to natural resource utilisation.
- Where women request a measure of self-reliance to avoid conflict or competition with men.

8.3 SUMMARY OF WAYS TO ENCOURAGE WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION.

- Both women's and men's knowledge needs to be valued and incorporated. Awareness building and information flow is important in encouraging participation in conservation and development processes and in encouraging a feeling of 'ownership' over the process.
- Increasing women's security and reducing the time that they spend fulfilling basic needs can be an important factor in providing time for women to focus on more conservation-oriented activities. More time should be invested in encouraging women's attendance at meetings and providing 'space' for a higher level of qualitative participation.
- Rights and responsibilities of men and women in relation to natural resource use need to be more clearly linked and defined. Communities should be encouraged to reflect on their relationship with their environment and to take responsibility for it. The rebuilding of a culture of reciprocity, responsibility and cooperation may need to be achieved.
- Projects need to link more strongly with the greater context in which they work, taking into account larger social, economic and political issues. Those projects that tend to take a more holistic and integrated approach to conservation and development are those that are more successful in including and benefiting a greater proportion of the community. Projects need to be flexible and able to adapt to change as it occurs.
- Supportive and non-conflicting ways must be identified that will support women in obtaining more power and control over, and access to, resources. To do this it is important to understand the local social and political dynamics and power relationships that exist within communities prior to intervention. It should be recognised that usually men still have 'power over' women which compromises women's 'power to' achieve or gain.
- Change cannot be forced, but opportunities can be facilitated that provide space for women to initiate change at a pace that they feel comfortable with. Women can be exposed to modern life skills, roles and responsibilities without forcing them to take up such things against their will.
- A gender approach to conservation and development should be incorporated from the outset of ICDPs. In some instances where large gender imbalances already exist or there are opportunities to support women as a natural resource user-group, it may be more successful to support 'women only' components. Attitudes do not change instantly and addressing gender issues must therefore be seen as a long-term process. For both women and men some of the concepts may seem alien and thus should be introduced slowly.

- The contribution of existing and traditional institutions and village (women) groups should be recognised. They can be strengthened and built upon. At the same time modern institutions can also provide opportunities for supporting more equitable conservation and development. A merging of the two and the opportunities that they present can be an important part of ICDP development.

ICDPs that have been particularly successful in including and benefiting women as well as men include:

- Kilum Ijim Mountain Forest ICDP, Cameroon (Abbot *et al.*, 1999).
- Kiunga Marine National Reserve ICDP, Kenya (Flintan, 2002a).
- Udzungwa Mountains ICDP, Tanzania (WWF-Tanzania, 2001).
- Mount Elgon ICDP, Uganda (Scott, 1998).
- Gashaka-Gumti ICDP, Nigeria (Dunn *et al.*, 2000).
- In the past, though less so now - LIRD, Zambia (Barnes, 2000).

8.4 ROLE OF COLLABORATORS AND DONORS

A number of ICDPs have recognised the advantages of working with a range of local partners (Abruquah, undated; Scott, 1998). This spreads the 'ownership' of the process and also allows skills and expertise to be shared. Where gender issues are concerned it opens up opportunities to link with gender-focussed or women's groups that can provide critical input into the achievement of more equitable conservation and development.

Donors have played a primary role in encouraging NGOs, particularly conservation NGOs, to include and take account of gender issues within ICDPs. For example:

"WWF has undergone significant changes in recent years...although biodiversity concerns remain paramount, it is realised that these objectives will only be achieved by linking conservation with human needs. The involvement of UK's Department for International Development (DFID) as a donor at Gashaka Gumti is also significant because of its emphasis on poverty elimination, gender-sensitive development and participation" (Dunn *et al.*, 2000:143).

However, though this has meant that 'gender' and 'equity' are commonly cited within project proposals and strategies, in reality they still tend to be marginalised by other 'more pressing' and/or less political, less resource-demanding issues. If a more equitable and sustainable conservation and development process is to be achieved gender must be a central element of ICDPs. Donors should apply more pressure on projects they fund to achieve this and promote monitoring and evaluation that measures results not only quantitatively but qualitatively too.

That is not to say that change should be forced: it should not. Indeed, one must be careful not to set men against women for the sake of pursuing abstract notions of justice. Activities that appear to stem from an externally driven agenda, not clearly shared by a substantial proportion of the population concerned, can cause resentment amongst both men and women. Local level advocacy work is very important together with the provision of discussions that begin with local concerns and address issues of practical relevance to women in the community (Leonard and Toulmin, 2000).

8.5 CONCLUSION

Historically, conservation processes in Africa have been heavily influenced by male-dominated colonial powers. Even today, conservation organisations remain dominated by men. Community-based conservation on the continent initially focussed very much on CWM particularly of big game, which linked with men's roles and relationships with natural resources but marginalised women who had closer relationships with other resources such as plants. In addition the gender differences inherent in local communities were not understood and accounted for. As such decision-making processes failed to be inclusive and represented only the more powerful voices in the community – the men.

Men and women in Africa are still highly dependent on the collection of natural resources for fulfilling household needs and food security on both a constant and temporary basis. The collection of such resources is gender differentiated in relation to socio-economical, cultural, ethnic and geographical contexts (see Section 2.0). Both environmental degradation and enforced protection and conservation have limited communities' access to resources. Due to women's greater reliance on the collection of resources on a day-to-day basis, such limitation has had a greater negative impact on them, resulting in greater time and physical input. Often women will risk danger and undergo great hardship whilst attempting to continue resource collection.

Women have less access to education and health as well as security of resources such as land. Though women are most active around the household they still do not tend to control household resources, particularly cash transactions. In addition men have undermined women's use of resources as they have been further integrated into the cash economy. Women's lack of control over resources and decisions pertaining to them limits positive relationships with the environment.

Women's share of decision-making power at both macro and micro levels remains low – it remains dominated by men. Women are compromised by a power structure which in rural communities is heavily loaded in favour of the male. Women may be farmers, but they are rarely field managers. This is particularly true in Islamic regions where culture and religion deny women participation in public life.

Women, rather than men, tend to be more willing to form cooperatives and self-mobilise themselves as a group to share responsibilities, provide support, and perhaps to initiate change. Women have seen the advantage of 'group power'. They will often attend meetings *en masse* and sit together in a group where they feel less vulnerable. Single women, particularly divorced or widowed, tend to be more mobile, confident and able to participate in activities. In many countries there are strong networks of women's groups or 'self-help' groups and/or government supported Women's Associations. They offer great opportunities as a foundation for more formal institutions that could be involved in conservation activities and provide 'space' for a focus on women's interests and needs. However their contribution has yet to be fully recognised and utilised

Poverty and the need to fulfil daily needs are major constraints for women in terms of finding time or resources to invest in conservation and environmental practises. Women prioritise on a short-term basis, rather than thinking long-term. This tends to directly conflict with conservation and environmental objectives that are more long-term in nature. However, in some cases both women and men have realised the long-term advantages of conservation and the opportunities that exist. They have become increasingly involved in project activities and even self-mobilised themselves and made demands from authoritative parties for support (see Section 3.4). While male and female interests with regard to environmental management and biodiversity conservation may be compatible,

this is not always the case. A sensitive institutional understanding of gender relations is critical. In many countries of Africa this is still rare.

Inaccurate assumptions have been made about the involvement of women in ICDPs – this has been presumed to be of an equal level to men, however in many cases it has been realised after project initiation that this is not the case. Staff have failed to achieve a common understanding of gender issues nor agreed upon an approach to address them. There is a failure to develop strategic frameworks and policies for the mainstreaming of gender issues, particularly at the country/regional level. As a result, as gender issues arise they are then, and only then, addressed, if at all. In general, gender is not approached in a knowledge- or experience-based, strategic and organised manner, but has relied more on a haphazard ‘muddling through’ and the use of skills and resources available at the time.

Projects in the past have tended to emphasise a ‘welfare approach’ focussing on women in their capacity as mothers and carers - seen as central to both social and economic development. It identifies women, as opposed to a lack of resources or access, as being the problem. As a result projects have tended to target women's perceived practical needs as opposed to their strategic ones. This has since developed into a greater emphasis on women's empowerment and more recently, an emphasis on a ‘rights-based’ approach (see Section 5.2).

Despite a growing emphasis on ‘participation’, in general, ICDPs still fail to involve local communities within project planning and implementation. Where they are involved, the inequitable social and power dynamics found in many rural areas compromise women's contribution in favour of men's. In practice a number of different focal areas have been initiated to encourage the involvement of women (see Section 6).

Many ICDPs on the continent focus specifically and/or mainly on women in their support of income-generating activities. Many women tend to be more easily mobilised and have a greater entrepreneurial spirit than men. Women's groups have proved an important factor in the implementation of such schemes. Their formalisation (for example in response to legislation) can improve their sustainability. The importance of transportation to markets and the marketing of the products have been taken into account in some projects. However many still fail to contribute significantly to the resolution of the problems that arise due to the lack of knowledge, power and connections that local people hold outside their close vicinity and the often scattered and non-cooperative nature of production.

Micro-credit and savings schemes are often supported by ICDPs in conjunction with income generating projects (Section 6.6). The schemes are seen as an entry point to other activities; able to bring social cohesion; build up mobilisation; and open up other opportunities. Women are more often targeted than men as in general women have less access to financial resources and loans. Several ICDPs have recognised the importance of working with local NGOs and/or governmental structures. Non-monetary based schemes are also being encouraged and proving successful. Training elements within ICDPs have increased. It has been realised that due to a lack of education and capacity, training is vital and must accompany other activities.

Despite these more successful elements it remains the case that many ICDPs in the region have failed to benefit women to any great degree. This is particularly the case where projects have focussed on wildlife and wildlife management. Though today ICDPs are indeed focussing on a more inclusive, integrated approach and have recognised the need to address gender issues, they still have a long way to go before they achieve more gender equitable conservation and development. Only a handful of ICDPs identified during this study showed really positive results.

Important lessons can be learnt as to why this is still the case from the increasing number of more development-oriented CBNRM programmes found in Africa, particularly southern Africa. These have been detailed in Section 7. In addition the experiences of those ICDPs that have both accounted for gender and women's issues, and those that have not, provide a good foundation for achieving more equitable results.

There is still a lack of understanding about the differences that exist between men and women in relation to natural resource use and conservation (as summarised in Section 8.1). As a result, ways to overcome such differences and/or take account of them in conservation and development processes have not been initiated. Women, more than men, have failed to make the link between conservation and development. In addition there is little recognition of the linkages between rights to resources and conservation responsibilities. In some cases, the lack of participation of women in conservation activities has resulted in the loss of a sense that mutual long-term benefit is possible through joint responsibility and co-operation in carrying out sustainable management. Short-term priorities override long-term perspectives.

In addition women's lack of education is a debilitating factor that limits their participation in many elements of ICDPs and natural resource management. Women are often very aware of this and as a result lack confidence and self-esteem and feel incompetent and diffident. Also the social position of a woman and the household from which she comes from can also be important in understanding the ways in which women participate in community life and activities. Women are differentiated according to age, marital status, religion, wealth and status. Hierarchies of prestige are thus produced according to local norms and values, and can heavily influence a woman's opportunities to engage with the NGO sector and other organisation/institutions.

Increasing women's security and reducing the time that they spend fulfilling basic needs can be a critical factor in providing time for women to focus on more conservation-oriented activities. Support should be concentrated on empowering women to improve their ability to negotiate their rights and influence management decisions, rather than focusing too exclusively on pushing through legislation to enshrine more formal rights. Women in particular often 'miss out' due to not being able to attend meetings and decision-making forums. If women feel that their knowledge is of value and it can contribute to conservation and development processes then they are more happy and confident to share it. Such sharing draws women into the conservation process and increases their ownership over it and its impacts. This can then increase their sense of responsibility.

National policies in support of women and more gender equitable society can be a useful entry point and reference for the promotion of such issues in ICDPs. In addition projects should work more closely with local NGOs addressing equity issues and women's networks. The strengthening and empowering of women can be better supported through for example education. This can go hand in hand with the promotion of more gender-equitable rights and policies.

Questions still arise as to whether a gender or a women's approach should be the focus of ICDPs. In many cases a mixture of the two is most beneficial. However, gender issues should be more strategically approached and incorporated from the very design and planning of projects rather than being added on as the need is perceived. This should continue throughout the life of the projects with time for adequate monitoring and evaluation, followed by reflection, adaptation and re-strategising as required. Local communities including women should be a part of this process.