



SPC/GEF-R2R/RSC.1/13

Date: 26th September 2016

Original: English

Inception Workshop and 1st Regional Steering Committee Meeting for the GEF/SPC/UNDP Project Entitled: “Ridge to Reef – Testing the Integration of Water, Land, Forest & Coastal Management to Preserve Ecosystem Services, Store Carbon, Improve Climate Resilience and Sustain Livelihoods in Pacific Island Countries”

Nadi, Fiji Islands, 10th– 14th October, 2016

GEF RIDGE TO REEF GENDER MAINSTREAMING STRATEGY

This document contains an overview of gender mainstreaming approaches in the GEF and UNDP. It outlines strategic entry points for advancing gender equality and mainstreaming gender in each outcome of the GEF Pacific IW R2R regional programme results framework. Indicators for success that can be used in each National IW and STAR Project are presented for consideration. Effective measures for implementing gender mainstreaming into the projects is presented focusing on roles and responsibilities, capacity building, partnerships and knowledge management and communication. An implementation plan is presented to guide initial activities in gender mainstreaming.

The Gender Mainstreaming Strategy and implementation plan for the GEF Pacific R2R Programme is presented. The Regional Steering Committee is invited to review and endorse

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1. Introduction

The Ridge to Reef (R2R) management approach is a process that promotes the coordinated development and management of water, land, forests, coasts and related resources in order to maximise economic and social welfare in an equitable manner without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems and the environment. Discussing and creating equity, not just in gender but across all societal groups, is a key aspect to successful R2R. Women play an important role in water, land and coastal management, this strategy identifies this and reinforces that role.

Gender perspectives in development look into the different needs women and men may have and the unequal power and access to choices and resources that contribute to inequalities between women and men. Women have always played a critical role in water, land and coastal management; but their role is rarely recognized by decision makers and remains invisible. This results in women having less access to resources (financial, natural, information) and their needs and priorities being ignored in programs design and decision making. The consequence of overlooking women's contribution in natural resources management is also that programs looking to improve conservation and sustainable use of natural resources do not benefit from women's knowledge and experience which can contribute to a successful program. Moreover, programs that fail to acknowledge gender inequality issues often contribute to maintain inequalities and can even widen gender gaps and deprive women from their rights to access natural resources.

Gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing the differing implications for women and men of a project's intended outcomes and integrating the diversity of needs of different segments of the population – women and men of different ages - into the planning and implementation of a project to better reflect the whole community's development aspirations, and to benefit from a diversity of knowledge and skills that contribute to project sustainability.

Having a strategy for mainstreaming gender in the Pacific R2R Programme has a number of broad benefits including:

- Enhance capacity of R2R partners to address the social dimensions of natural resources management
- Create more targeted services that suit R2R Programme stakeholders
- Increase participation of women and men in the programme activities and draw on a diversity of skills and knowledge to support programme sustainability
- Improve the governance of the programme by more inclusive participation of women and men
- Expand benefits and equal outcomes on women and men from the programme
- Promote gender equality and human rights

1.1. The Scope and Purpose of the Strategy

The **scope** is to provide a clear gender mainstreaming strategy for the GEF Pacific R2R Programme that will serve as guideline to support the implementation of all dimensions of the programme. This document also provides information about what gender is, and what it is not.

The **purpose** of this strategy is to guide the work of the GEF Pacific R2R Programme to have effective and appropriate mechanisms to support gender mainstreaming. This is a critical component of the R2R Programme's broader policy processes and will ensure that the R2R Programme continues to meet best practice in this area.

The strategy sets out entry points for gender mainstreaming initiatives, key steps required for implementation and proposed indicators for success.

2. Commitments to Gender Mainstreaming

2.1. GEF Pacific R2R Programme

The GEF Pacific R2R Programme Gender Mainstreaming Strategy is based on the premise that the development objective of gender equality is indivisible from the development goal of improvements in people's lives and the environments they depend on. It is guided by the commitments that countries made in the Revised Pacific Platform for Action for the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality (RPPA), the 2012 Pacific Island Forum Leaders' Gender Equality Declaration, and the prominent regional and global conventions to gender equality, including the Sustainable Development Goals. Moreover, all countries where the R2R project will be implemented have made commitments to progress gender equality and support women's empowerment through their national gender policies and national sustainable strategies.

Gender equality is the overarching and long-term development **goal**, while gender mainstreaming is the set of specific, strategic approaches as well as technical and institutional processes adopted to achieve that goal.

The **objectives** of this strategy are to:

- Increase the effective representation of women, and women's interests, through leadership at all levels of decision-making
- Ensure women's and men's equal participation in project processes, and their equal benefits from services and outcomes
- Enhance government and program partner's capacity to effectively mainstream gender
- Enhance the gender evidence-base knowledge to inform policy and practice.

Gender mainstreaming is one of the Guiding Principles of the GEF Regional R2R Programme and is embedded thoroughly throughout the results framework as a combination of targeted gender analysis and gender mainstreaming in programme activities along with the systematic collection of baseline and ongoing sex-disaggregated data. These are detailed in Section 3.

Gender Mainstreaming in the Regional R2R Programme Document

107. (vi) Gender Mainstreaming in R2R: Assessing the different implications for women, men and vulnerable social groups of planned policy and project objectives and action is central to mainstreaming gender. Valuing the diversity among these groups involves the process of integrating their different needs into any development planning and decision-making processes. It is an attempt to take gender equality and social inclusion issues into the 'mainstream' of the project objectives and activities. The integration of Water, Land, Coast and Fisheries management impacting as it does on livelihoods, food and water security must ensure that the measures taken, ideas and decision-making reached are arrived at through the participation of men and women, and to the equitable distribution of improved infrastructures and management structures.

108. Increasing gender and diversity mainstreaming means increasing attention to gender perspectives and the goal of gender equality and strives to enhance the inclusion of women at all levels. In this regard lessons learned from the GEF Pacific IWRM project will ensure best practice in gender mainstreaming:

- Advance gender equality and social inclusion (gender awareness)
- Balance women and men's participation in decision making
- Respect the different roles and responsibilities of men and women and the different values they may hold
- Strive for inclusiveness and cooperation/partnerships
- Document how gender and diversity concerns were made central
- Provide for appropriate implementing of arrangements at all levels (planning, management, monitoring and evaluation)

2.2. The GEF: Gender Mainstreaming Policy

The GEF is dedicated to the improvement of gender equality and through the GEF Gender Mainstreaming Policy 2012, has committed itself and Partner Agencies to this end. The GEF recognises that gender equality is an important goal in the context of the projects that it finances because it advances both the GEF's goals for attaining global environmental benefits and the **goal** of gender equity and social inclusion.

The **objectives** of the GEF Gender Mainstreaming Strategy are:

"...to attain the goal of gender equality, the equal treatment of women and men, including the equal access to resources and services through its operations. To accomplish this goal, the GEF Secretariat and GEF Partner Agencies shall mainstream gender into their operations, including efforts to analyze systematically and address the specific needs of both women and men in GEF projects."

The policy acknowledges that the degree to which gender is addressed may vary across the wide range of focal areas and/or engagement, but emphasises that accounting for gender equity and equality is an important consideration, because gender relations, roles and responsibilities exercise important influence on women and men's access to and control over environmental resources and the goods and services they provide. Thus project results can be superior when they are taken into consideration and addressed.

2.3. UNDP: Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017

The prominent global commitments guiding UNDP efforts to advance gender equality include: the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); the Beijing Platform for Action; the Millennium Declaration and Development Goals; the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women; the International Conference on Population and Development; the United Nations Gender Assembly resolutions addressing gender equality issues; United Nations Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security; the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; the Hyogo Framework for Action; aid effectiveness commitments, and a range of regional commitments

Since the launch of its first gender equality strategy, 2008-2013, UNDP has developed the institutional framework for ensuring gender equality results and has invested in building capacities to bring gender analysis into all areas of its work. The UNDP Gender Mainstreaming Strategy 2014-2017 provides strategic guidance for UNDP offices by providing detailed strategic entry points for integrating gender equality into outcomes areas. This is done through a set of development parameters, rather than a prescriptive one-size-fits-all approach. A similar approach has been adopted for the regional R2R outcomes.

The UNDP strategic plan, 2014-2017, outlines three main areas of work: (a) sustainable development pathways; (b) inclusive and effective democratic governance; and (c) resilience-building. The relationship to gender mainstreaming is shown in Figure-1.



Figure 1: Gender equality in UNDP Strategic Plan

3. Integration of Gender Mainstreaming with the Pacific R2R Programme Results Framework

This section of the gender mainstreaming strategy outlines strategic entry points for advancing gender equality and mainstreaming gender in each outcome of the regional programme results framework.

Outcome 1.1: Successful pilot projects testing innovative solutions involving linking ICM, IWRM and climate change adaptation [linked to national STAR projects via larger Pacific R2R network]

Outcome 1.1 is about the testing of innovative approaches and measures to integrate land, forest, water and coastal management, including climate change adaptation (CCA) via the establishment and operation of national pilot projects at priority locations in the 14 countries

Strategic entry points

- a. The R2R programme and pilot projects will involve women and men and assess the potential impacts and benefits of the projects on women and men and in reducing gender inequality. (see output 1.1.2)
- b. The R2R National Projects will conduct gender analyses and develop country/project specific Gender Action Plans (see output 1.1.1)
- c. The RPCU will support national IW and STAR Project teams to collect and report sex-disaggregated data of pilot project coordinating committees and stakeholder engagement activities (see output 1.1.2)

Outcome 1.2: National diagnostic analyses for ICM conducted for prioritizing and scaling-up key ICM/IWRM reforms and investments

Outcome 1.2 will build on the objective approach to site selection initiated by the GEF Pacific IWRM Project by constructing an objective and scientifically sound procedure for the identification of priority R2R sites within the 14 countries

Strategic entry points

- a. The development of a diagnostic approach to guide the identification of required R2R reforms and actions at the priority sites will include gender analysis of the issues and impacts (see output 1.2.1)
- b. The diagnostic procedure to select priority sites will recognize the different roles, knowledge and priorities of women and men and through gender analysis set the baseline for gender-responsive management in the 14 countries (see output 1.2.2)

Outcome 1.3: Community leader roundtable networks established for strengthened 'community to cabinet' ICM/IWRM

Outcome 1.3 is about effective community leader engagement in efforts to strengthen the integration of management and coordination across sectors and adequately reflecting complex land and marine tenure and local governance systems in the management of PIC coastal systems

Strategic entry points

- a. Support an equal, equitable or fair representation of women and men in community leader participation (see output 1.3.1)

- b. The RPCU will support national IW and STAR project teams to collect and report sex-disaggregated data on national networks of community leaders and local government officials in the 14 countries (see output 1.3.1)

Outcome 2.1: National and local capacity for ICM and IWRM implementation built to enable best practice in integrated land, water, forest and coastal management and CC adaptation

Outcome 2.1 is about the development and delivery of an innovative post-graduate training program in Integrated Water and Coastal Management for project managers of the pilot activities and national STAR projects. This will be complemented with a community-based certification programme in R2R planning and CC adaptation for stakeholders at project sites.

Strategic entry points

- a. The R2R Programme will conduct regional gender-responsive analysis to identify appropriate programs to support effective professional development (see output 2.1.1)
- b. The design of the community-based certification program will include a Rapid Social Assessment of each project site to ensure maximum participation of women and men (see output 2.1.2)
- c. The R2R Programme will conduct gender analysis and implement targeted capacity building programmes at priority communities in the 14 countries (see output 2.1.2)
- d. The RPCU will support national IW and STAR project teams to collect and report sex-disaggregated data on capacity of training programme participants, and community stakeholder understanding of and capacity for R2R management. (see output 2.1.1 and 2.1.2)

Outcome 2.2 Incentive structures for retention of local 'Ridge to Reef' expertise and inter-governmental dialogue on human resource needs for ICM/IWRM initiated

Outcome 2.2 will identify the required functional competencies of national and local personnel for environment and natural resource management

Strategic entry points

- a. The R2R Programme will conduct and report on an assessment, including gender assessment, of national and local government competencies and capacity development needs for IWRM/ICM, including the development of supporting communications tools for use in various national, sub-regional and regional dialogues on capacity retention and needs (see output 2.2.1)
- b. The R2R Programmed will identify and recommend through gender analysis the differing needs and priorities of women and men and in particular identify what are the obstacles and opportunities to retaining women in technical and managerial roles (see output 2.2.2)
- c. The RPCU will support national IW and STAR project teams to collect and report sex-disaggregated data on tracking competencies and Public Service Commission employment conditions (see output 2.2.1 and 2.2.2)

Outcome 3.1: National and regional strategic action frameworks for ICM/IWRM endorsed nationally and regionally

Outcome 3.1 will support the participating countries in the identification of nationally relevant coastal policy, legal and budgetary reforms for R2R integrated approaches in the 14 countries

Strategic entry points

- a. The R2R Programme will review and analyse existing relevant policies, laws, Executive Orders, Presidential Decrees, and departmental strategic plans, and local/municipal by-laws and regulations in 14 countries including analysis of objectives for their attention to gender considerations (see output 3.1.1)

- b. Gender responsive development and operation of a program of national leader and stakeholder consultations on efforts to harmonize governance frameworks and strengthen evidence-based planning to initiate dialogue on Strategic Action Framework development in 14 countries (see output 3.1.2)
- c. The R2R Programme will include gender equality and mainstreaming principles in the development of draft regional Strategic Action Plan for ICM, including gender responsive outcomes and indicators (see output 3.1.2)
- d. The R2R Programme will include gender equality and mainstreaming principles in the development of State of the Coast Reports for 14 countries, including gender responsive outcomes and indicators (see output 3.1.3)

Outcome 3.2: Coordinated approaches for R2R integrated land, water, forest and coastal management and climate change adaptation achieved in 14 pics

Outcome 3.2 is about the establishment of effective coordination mechanisms to facilitate cross-sectoral engagement and inter-linkages between national governments, provincial/local governments and communities to integrate land, water, forest, and coastal management

Strategic entry points

- a. The R2R Programme will support gender inclusive membership in national ICM/IWRM pilot project inter-ministry committees, in particular Director of Women/Gender, National Council of Women representative and/or National Gender Experts (see output 3.2.1)
- b. The R2R Programme will support gender inclusive development of Terms of Reference for national Inter-Ministry Committees (see output 3.2.2)
- c. The R2R Programme will develop and implement a system for identification and annual reporting, including sex-disaggregated data, on best practice community-level inputs to execution of pilot activities and national STAR projects in 14 countries (see output 3.2.3)
- d. The R2R Programme will promote gender sensitive approaches to gauge learning and change in perception among inter-ministry committee members in 4 pilot countries (see output 3.2.4)
- e. The RPCU will support national IW and STAR project teams to collect and report sex-disaggregated data on membership and attendance in committees,

Outcome 4.1: National and regional formulation and adoption of integrated and simplified results frameworks for integrated multi-focal projects

Outcome 4.1 is about developing a harmonized multi-focal area results framework and analytical tool for use in tracking the progress and results of individual projects and the overarching Ridge to Reef programme

Strategic entry points

- a. Sex-disaggregated data will be collected throughout various activities of the project for inclusion in monitoring and evaluation allowing gender considerations to be reflected in reporting
- b. National planning exercises will be conducted in selected PICs to explore the alignment of national indicator sets with convention reporting and to investigate the inclusion of gender-responsive indicators (see output 4.1.3)

Outcome 4.2: National and regional platforms for managing information and sharing of best practices and lessons learned in R2R established

Outcome 4.2 will support development of national and regional platforms for managing information and sharing best practices and lessons learned from efforts of this project to test the integration of water, land, forest and coastal management.

Strategic entry points

- a. The R2R Programme will collect and report sex-disaggregated data in monitoring the effectiveness of communications efforts (see output 4.2.1)

Outcome 5.1: Effective program coordination of national and regional R2R projects

Outcome 5.1 will establish and operate an overarching Ridge to Reef program coordination unit tasked with facilitating the timely delivery of Ridge to Reef program targets and outcomes via the provision of technical, operational, reporting and monitoring support as requested by participating countries.

Strategic entry points

- a. The R2R Programme will support the collection, distillation and communication of best practices in promoting gender equality, supporting women's empowerment and mainstreaming gender from the national IW and STAR projects (see output 5.1.1)
- b. The R2R Programme will provide targeted support to 14 PICs for STAR project planning, monitoring and evaluation, results reporting and gender mainstreaming (see output 5.1.3)
- c. The R2R Programme will provide support to national IW and STAR project teams capacity for gender mainstreaming and support the collection and communication of gender equality and mainstreaming data (see output 5.1.2)

3.1. Indicators for Success

Without meaningful indicators incorporated in national adaptive management frameworks, many efforts toward gender mainstreaming will be lost. The following is a list of potential gender responsive indicators that can be incorporated into the Regional Program framework and into the National IW and STAR R2R Project frameworks. It is not exhaustive and is meant as a guide for project staff when reviewing project frameworks and for debate at the Regional Steering Committee inception meeting (October 2016).

- Attendance at stakeholder engagement is at least 30% women
- Attendance at participatory environmental monitoring is at least 30% women
- Number of independent consultations for women held to elicit their input into project activities (where culturally appropriate)
- Increased participation of women
- Increased proportion of women attending decision making events
- Number of times women's needs and priorities are included in decisions
- Amount of resources allocated to address women's needs and priorities
- Capacity to participate in decision making at the community level
- Access to environmental information
- Membership in steering committee
- Membership in Project Board
- Membership in project related community group
- Access to relevant information to make meaningful contributions to project activities
- % of the budget/investments benefitting women directly
- % of increased access of productive resources, proportion of women
- Hours of work – reduced or increased (if reduced it can be positive indicator; if increased, need to measure the benefits versus the increased work)

- Benefits of the projects on women and on men
- Increased access or loss of access to (natural) resources

4. Institutional Effectiveness for Gender Mainstreaming

Through the successful delivery of the IWRM Project capacity was built amongst project management teams for the inclusion of gender mainstreaming principles in project design and delivery. Building on these lessons learned the R2R Programme will continue to adapt reporting frameworks to increase accountability and oversight of mainstreaming initiatives in gender equality to ensure the gender goals are met. It is recommended that each national IW and STAR Project develop a gender action plan that is incorporated into their national Logframes.

The implementation plan for gender mainstreaming is in development and is not exhaustive (Appendix 1). It is subject to ongoing review and revision against the needs of the projects. National feedback will be sought and included on the strategy and plan and national projects will be notified of updates.

4.1. Roles and Responsibilities

Effective implementation of the GEF Pacific R2R Programme Gender Mainstreaming Strategy is a joint responsibility between the Regional PCU and National PMU's of both IW and STAR projects. The Regional PCU has a key role in coordinating implementation and gender mainstreaming in Regional outputs and takes the lead on developing and adapting reporting mechanisms. The coordination role also includes annual regional reporting on the actions taken and progress made on the implementation of the regional strategy.

The National PMUs have a key role in gender responsive project design; collecting and reporting on gender mainstreaming nationally; identifying areas for strengthened gender mainstreaming; and for sharing lessons learned through gender mainstreaming actions. Each national IW and STAR project will identify country specific entry points for gender mainstreaming in their national project results frameworks and through gender analysis, incorporate gender responsive activities with associated indicators.

4.2. Capacities for Gender Mainstreaming

All staff should have basic understanding of and adequate technical capacity in gender mainstreaming. To ensure this, all R2R national IW and STAR project staff are required to complete an online training in gender equality and mainstreaming.

The Pacific Gender and Climate Change Toolkit will be used by all project staff to incorporate gender responsiveness into national project frameworks. This toolkit supports managers in integrating gender as part of their national IW and STAR R2R Projects. The inception Regional Steering Committee meeting will provide initial facilitation on its use for all participating national staff. It is at this event that a gender action plan will be developed and incorporated into national Logframes.

Regional and national training events will include a session on gender mainstreaming where expert facilitators are available. Targeted gender mainstreaming training will be supported through the RPCU when identified by IW and/or STAR projects and can include facilitation of country trainings for project teams and community groups. These trainings can be targeted to the focus of the project e.g. gender and water, gender and climate change etc. for a deeper insight into the issues at play.

4.3. Partnerships

Regional, national and local partnerships are essential to sustain activities that promote change over the long term and to foster support and resources for new ICM approaches. National IW and STAR project teams are expected to establish partnerships with their respective national Department for Women or Gender (as relevant) as well as with non-governmental organisations in country that work with women's empowerment and equality. Through these organisations project teams are able to tap into refined

knowledge of women's issues in their geographic area as well as gender equality and mainstreaming principles more broadly.

At the regional level the RPCU will establish partnerships with regional women's organisations to continue dialogue about the changing landscape of gender equality and ensuring advances in international best practice are routinely reviewed for adoption into the programme. These partnerships have the potential to provide capacity training in country for project teams and community groups. Potential partners include:

- SPC – Social Development Programme
- UN Women
- WOCAN
- Women in Fisheries Network

4.4. Knowledge Management and Communications

The Regional R2R Programme knowledge management function provides an opportunity to extract lessons learned and knowledge on what works or not and thereby helps to support countries with further refining their gender equality and mainstreaming approaches. The R2R Programme will seek out specific examples of lessons learned in mainstreaming gender and empowering women through project delivery and nourish these to grow into good practice examples for the region. These examples may be found in project management and delivery, particular community member or group participation, technical capacity development or other areas. These good practice examples are a fundamental aspect of a successful project and will show how to institutionalise the changing model of natural resource management in the Pacific islands region.

Appendix 1: Gender Mainstreaming Implementation Plan

	YEAR	RESPONSIBILITY	RESOURCES	INDICATOR
Develop, review and endorse gender mainstreaming strategy	April-July 2016	Regional PCU and SPC-Gender, RSC	RPCU	Endorsed and published Gender Mainstreaming Strategy
Face-to-face gender equality and mainstreaming planning workshop	October 2016	Regional PCU, SPC-Gender, IW and STAR Project managers/coordinators	RPCU	National gender action planning incorporated into Logframes Gender training workshop report
Online Gender mainstreaming training	2016	National Projects	National Projects	Certificate of Completion
Develop, review and launch of gender reporting process for National Projects	2016 – March 2017	Regional PCU, National Projects	RPCU	Tested and functional Gender Reporting Requirements for national projects
National projects review and update where necessary gender aspects of logframe	Early 2017	National Projects, Regional PCU	National Projects, RPCU	Updated national IW (and STAR) Logframes
Develop full and costed gender mainstreaming implementation plan (this plan) for Regional IW Ridge to Reef	Early-mid 2017	Regional PCU	RPCU	Full costed Regional IW R2R gender mainstreaming implementation plan

Appendix 2: Gender Equality and Gender Mainstreaming - Key Issues

Participation and decision making in development projects requires the meaningful and engaged input from community members from all levels of the social structure. In order for projects to be successful, communities need to actively take part in designing, implementing and shaping the projects that affect them.

Equity in decision making is not just about having an equal number of men and women, youth and elderly, able and disabled present, though that is often the starting point; it is about all members of a community having equal opportunity to be informed, raise and discuss opinions and be meaningfully involved in decisions that will affect their lives. Project activities such as community meetings, policy planning, construction, or ecological and social surveys should be equally offered and available to all members of a community. A gender responsive project not only encourages women's participation but takes into consideration the power dynamics and gender related issues within communities – recognising that gender issues differ across communities and countries. For example, in Fiji women may not feel free to speak in a community gathering if men or male chiefs are present. A solution could be to hold separate sessions for men and women so that both may speak freely, then convene a facilitated joint consultation to share and discuss outcomes.

Gender: what it is and what it is not

Gender refers to the social roles of men and women, and boys and girls, as well as the relationships among them, in a given society at a specific time and place. Biological differences can create different needs and capacities for women and men, but these differences do not 'naturally' lead to or justify unequal social status or rights.

In broad terms, gender norms define and differentiates what women and men, and girls and boys, are expected to be and do (their roles, responsibilities, rights and obligations). Gender norms also governs how girls, boys, men and women are expected to relate to one another. It is a key determinant of who does what, who has what, who decides and, importantly, who has power over others. The issue of power is critically important in understanding gender relations, as discrimination and subordination persist because powerful groups in society benefit from it and act to maintain their privileged position in relation to others.

Gender roles and relationships are not fixed. Such roles and relationships can and do change in response to evolving circumstances, needs and opportunities. Technological change, economic shifts, new information, government policy, development projects, social and political movements, migration, environmental pressures and crises often spur changes in gender norms.

Gender does not refer to women or girls only; men and boys also have a gender and are expected to conform to expectations of the society related to what a man is supposed to do and how he is supposed to behave. It has however become shorthand for women, women's empowerment, and women's rights. In some ways, this imprecision is understandable, stemming as it does from the simple fact that girls and women suffer more varied and intense forms of discrimination than boys and men. As a result, taking a gender perspective often does require targeted interventions to promote women's empowerment, protect girls' rights and the like, in order to level the playing field. Nonetheless, promoting equality for girls and women is difficult if the boys and men they live with at home and in the larger society are left out of the equation.

Gender Equality

Gender equality means that women and men, and girls and boys, enjoy the same rights, resources, opportunities and protections. Gender equality does not require that girls and boys, or women and men, be the same, or that they be treated exactly alike, but rather implies an absence of bias or discrimination. Equality between women and men is both a human rights issue and a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable, people-centred development.

For the most part, equality between girls and boys cannot be achieved by providing them the same set of services, opportunities and protections, delivered in the same ways. Equality of opportunity often will not create equality of outcomes given the significant disadvantages and status differentials that girls face. Targeted interventions that promote the empowerment of girls and women are often a precondition for true equality.

Gender equality is not a ‘women’s issue’. The issue of men in development is critical because ending women’s subordination involves more than simply reallocating economic resources – it also involves redistributing power. There is a strong case to be made that transformed gender relations will benefit men as well as women.

Engaging Boys and Men to Promote Gender Equality

Engaging boys and men in gender-equality efforts is critical to lasting social change for several reasons:

- Men wield disproportionate political, religious, economic and social power, and convincing them to use this power to advance rather than obstruct gender-equality objectives is vital.
- Gender is about the relationships between and among women and men, and girls and boys; transforming these relationships requires the involvement of all of these groups of people, not just half of them.
- Despite the privileged position that gender norms accord males in most respects, these norms nonetheless create distinct vulnerabilities and negative outcomes for boys and men. In addition, not all boys and men enjoy a privileged position based on their gender, particularly those who do not conform to gender norms about masculinity.
- Because gender norms are created and perpetuated from birth onward by families, communities, schools and other social institutions, it is key to work with men (e.g., fathers and teachers) in order to change the way in which girls and boys experience childhood and grow to adulthood.
- The more men see gender issues as ‘their’ issues, the less such issues will be marginalized.

Gender Mainstreaming

Mainstreaming is the concept of assessing the different implications for women, men and vulnerable social groups of any planned policy or program action. Essentially it is about valuing the diversity among these groups and involves the process of integrating their different needs into any development planning and decision-making processes. It is an attempt to take gender equality and social inclusion issues into the ‘mainstream’ of the project objectives and activities. In this context mainstream consists of the directions, ideas and decision-making inherent in the project lifespan. Increasing gender mainstreaming does not simply mean increasing the gender balance, but means increasing attention to gender perspectives and the goal of gender equality.

It is important to understand and account for the different roles and responsibilities that women and men have in society and that they may attach different values to natural resources and the benefits derived from them. Without specific attention to gender issues, development interventions can reinforce inequalities. By contrast, paying attention to gender differences can facilitate greater gender equity, mediate enhanced access to and control over natural resources and in so doing contribute to the achievement of social equity and poverty reduction

Women must be actively participating in decision making regarding project development and implementation so that their particular views may be addressed as well as their skills and knowledge captured. In Pacific Island Countries there are many women who hold traditional knowledge of coastal, water and land resources. Their traditional resource management skills often include how to locate and protect water sources, hydrology of groundwater for horticulture, as well as providing effective water management in their communities.