

Activity Handbook: interactive methods for collecting gender-related information for conservation projects

Men and women interact with their environments in different ways, and are impacted by conservation and environmental change in different ways. It is important to understand these differences when designing and implementing conservation projects. Conservation International has designed guidelines¹ to help staff integrate gender into their projects; this activity handbook serves as an addendum to those guidelines and provides activities that can be used with community members, partners, and CI staff.

This handbook provides general guidance on selected activities, users should feel free to pick and choose those that are most relevant to their work and adapt the activities to their context. The more relevant to your work, the more useful these will be in collecting the right information.

Remember that the facilitator's role is to nurture discussion in an open and safe environment/ space (recognizing that gender can be a sensitive topic), with the goal of generating different ideas and opinions from as many different people as possible. A few suggestions for successful facilitation:

- Be sure to explain the purpose of the activities and how the information will be used; be sure everyone has consented before continuing
- Consider that some participants may feel uncomfortable in a mixed-sex workshop. It may be important to ensure a female facilitator works with women while a male facilitator works with men. Understand these complexities before the workshop begins.
- Activities should be conducted in a participatory manner, with open-ended questions. Facilitators must be prepared to ask uncued questions, and should use leading questions such as: "Can you talk about that more? Can you give an example?"

Ice breakers/get-to-know-you

This set of activities will help get participants to reflect on gender, what it means in their lives and learn more about each other.

Bingo

- Create bingo cards with 9 spaces. Think of 4 gender-typical activities (e.g. a woman who does the food shopping) and 5 gender a-typical activities (e.g. a man who likes to cook).
- Hand out a card to each participant and ask them to search for those people within the group. The first person to get three across wins.

Musical chairs

- Create a circle with chairs all facing the center of the circle, using one less chair than there are people.
- Facilitator starts by standing in the center while participants sit in the circle of chairs, and says something that is true about themselves. If the statement is true to other people sitting in the circle, those people stand up and all of them, including the facilitator, must find a new chair. The person without a chair provides the next statement.

¹ http://www.conservation.org/publications/Documents/CI_Gender-Integration-Guidelines-EN.pdf

- Statements made by those standing in the center of the circle should reflect daily roles and responsibilities of men and women (e.g. everyone who washed dishes today; everyone who has ever changed a diaper; everyone who has worked in the field; everyone who has carried water, etc.)

Exploring gender norms and perceptions

This set of activities helps participants to reflect deeper on gender norms and the beliefs they carry.

I'm glad I'm a...

- Break the group into groups of men and women, each group with a flip chart. On the flip-chart of the men's group, write down "I'm glad I'm a man because...", and on the women's chart "I'm glad I'm a woman because..."
- Give participants 15 minutes to make a collective list of why they're glad to be men and women.
- Keep everyone in the same groups, and on a fresh flip-chart paper, write down "If I were a woman, I could..." on the men's flipchart, and "If I were a man, I could..." on the women's.
- Give participants 15 minutes to make a collective list of what they could do if they were women and men.
- Come back together as a large group and hang the four flipchart papers up – with the "I'm glad I'm a woman because..." next to "If I were a woman, I could" and the "I'm glad I'm a man because" next to "If I were a man, I could".
- Allow the participants to observe in silence for a few minutes, then ask:
 - How did you feel completing these lists?
 - Are there any surprises?
 - Were there any similar responses for both genders?
 - Was it harder to come up with answers for your own gender or the other?
 - Is there overlap in terms of the lists for women and men? (i.e. are there similarities between what women are glad they can do and what men would like to do if they were women?)
 - Are any of the responses stereotyped? Why do they exist? Are they fair?

Vote with your feet

- Have the group stand in the center of the room and explain that they are on a spectrum – to the far right means they 100% agree, to the far left is no agreement, and where they currently stand is neutral.
- You will read out a series of statements (about 8-10), and participants are to move along the spectrum depending on how they respond to the statement. Pause after each one to discuss and get more information from certain people. (*this is a sample of statements, you may choose others*):
 - Some jobs are more appropriate for men, while others are more appropriate for women
 - Men are more rational than women; women are more emotional
 - Men should have most of the economic responsibility for the household
 - Men cannot adequately care for babies
 - A couple can maintain harmony with the man staying at home and the woman working outside the home
 - Housework should be paid
 - Women can be trusted more than men in the management of community funds
 - Men are more capable than women and have more credibility during negotiations

- Men are better than women at activities that involve responsibility and decision-making
- Women are more honest than men
- Men should represent the family in decision-making about the household
- Women with small children should not take part in community activities outside of the house
- Women are not good at handling power
- Women are closer to nature than men
- Conservation (or climate change) has the same impact on men and women
- Access and rights to resources are the same for men and women
- Men's and women's roles don't change over time
- Only women benefit from gender equality
- Development should not change cultures
- Discussion questions for after each statement:
 - Why are you standing where you are? Did you have difficulty deciding where to be? Why or why not? What are you basing your answer on?

Baby boys and girls

- Take two flipchart pieces – at the top of one, write “boy”, at the top of the other “girl”
- Ask participants to list the long-term goals and hopes that the community would have for a newborn girl and a newborn boy.
 - Do men and women participants have different or similar hopes for girls and boys?
 - What do these differing hopes say about our perceptions of males and females in society?
 - What would need to happen in order for the boy and girl to achieve these goals?

Privilege walk

- Take 5-7 index cards and on each one write down a stereotypical character relevant to the group (e.g. male elder, widow, young boy, young girl, female schoolteacher, etc.). Hand out these cards to selected participants and ask them to come to the front of the group and stand on a straight line (with at least 10 paces of space free in front of them).
- Explain that you will read out statements, and if the participants believe his/her character would agree with the statement then step forward one step; if the character would NOT agree, then they stay put. Make it clear to participants that the answers are not on their card, and that they must imagine what this character would do or think in these situations, based on experiences from their own lives.
- Read off a series of statements (roughly 5-10) that are relevant to the group's work, such as:
 - CI and the Ministry of Fisheries are coming to the community for a stakeholder consultation on a new community marine area. Are you invited?
 - Will you attend?
 - Are you going to speak at this (the above) meeting?
 - Related to the new marine area, CI is conducting a survey with all heads-of-households to understand uses of the marine area. Are you interviewed? Are your uses/priorities and interests vis-à-vis the marine area properly and fully relayed to the surveyor? If the surveyor is of the opposite sex, do you feel comfortable speaking in private with him/her?
 - Do you qualify for a loan at the local bank?
 - Do you own fishing equipment?
 - Your community has decided to introduce restrictions on harvesting fuelwood from the mangrove forest. Are you able to buy a gas stove to cook on instead?

- CI is holding a three-day workshop on improved sustainable fishing methods in the capital city (a 3hr drive away) – are you able to attend?
- In the local newspaper, CI has advertised that they are seeking applications for small marine projects. Are you able to read this advertisement?
- At the end, ask people to look around and comment on what they observe. Who is ahead, who is behind? Why? What would those characters in the back need in order to move forward? Is that something the CI can provide or help with?

Gathering gender information for conservation projects

This set of activities helps to begin gathering information that can inform CI projects or programs. Adapt as needed to get the most relevant information.

24-hour life clock

- Give each participant (or small same-sex groups) a flip-chart paper and have them write down the 24 hours of the day on the left (from midnight to midnight) and explain that they should consider this a ‘typical day’.
- Next, have participants list what they would normally do for each hour of the day (e.g. prepare & eat breakfast, laundry, go fishing, etc.)
- Ask for a couple examples (from both men and women) of what they listed. Then ask the whole group:
 - Highlight work that is paid vs. unpaid, is it evenly divided between men and women? If not, why? How does society view unpaid work?
 - Is there a difference in work between men and women?
 - Is anyone surprised at amount of work of the other sex?
 - Is the division of labor overall fair?
 - How does this affect the possibilities and opportunities for engaging in additional activities (such as a CI training or project)?
- Next, ask the participants to turn back to their clocks and consider how it might look different if they were doing it for previous generations:
 - How does men’s and women’s work change over time? How would this clock look different for your mother/father? For your grandmother/father? Why are these changes happening? Do you consider them to be positive or negative changes?

This can be a good activity for you to understand what work men and women do, and understand the time constraints that may keep them from engaging in CI activities. Note down if there are times of day when men or women might be more able to participate.

Ownership, control + decision-making:

- Before you begin, design a set of cards (or make a list) of different assets used and activities done traditionally by men and women and which are relevant to your project (e.g. machetes, pots, land, forests, house, water, money, cows, sheep, goats, fishing boat, fish processing, hunting, logging, attending village meetings, spending on household needs, phone, etc.)
- Either in small groups or as a large group (you can divide groups into men and women separately if necessary), go through each and ask:

- Who does this belong to? Who uses it? Who decides how it is used or spent? Can you give it away or sell it? Who has legal ownership? In whose name is it?

This can be a good activity to understand how your conservation project may affect or impact men and women differently, and provide insight into how project activities and assets may be observed.

Communication avenues:

- Prepare a chart listing different communication methods on the left column (e.g. radio, newspaper, community meeting, informal through friends, phone, internet, other, etc.)
- At the top of column two, write “women” and on the top of column 3, write “men”
- With participants, go through each communication method and put a check under “women” if it is a mode of communication that women typically use, and under “men” for men.
 - Ask participants to tell you who *receives* information for each particular communication method. Is it just men? Just women? Both? Why?
 - Ask to participants to tell you who *gives* information for each particular communication method. Is it just men? Just women? Both? Why?

This activity helps to clarify the best ways to communicate with men and women in your project.

Community mapping of resources

- Separate men and women (and young men and women if they are present) into different groups. Ask each to draw a map depicting their community and surrounding lands (or, if relevant, the area where your project is going to take place). Ask them to focus in particular on the natural resources that they use most often.
- Bring the groups back together and have them present their drawings. Ask:
 - Are the maps different? Why or why not?
 - Are there certain resources or areas that were highlighted in one but not another?

This is a good activity to understand what resources men and women use, and therefore how the project may impact their livelihoods.

Seasonal calendar

- Separate men and women into different groups of 2- 4 people. Ask them to list the months of the year on the left column.
- After each month, have participants list the main activities that they are responsible for (or participate in) on a monthly or seasonal basis (e.g. planting rice, harvesting water from farther away, hunting, wedding parties, etc.)
- Bring the groups back together and have them present their calendars. Ask:
 - Are the calendars different for men and women? Why or why not?
 - When are some of the major seasonal stressors (e.g. drought, famine, etc.)? And how do they affect men and women differently?

This is a good activity to understand what time of the year men and women are particularly busy or free. It is important to consider these responsibilities when planning project activities. It also is a good way to understand how conservation activities or environmental change may impact men’s and women’s lives differently.