



CASE STUDY Gender-equitable participation in wetland co-management shows how synergies can be created between women's empowerment and mangrove conservation

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Since 1989 wetlands in the Xuan Thuy National Park in Vietnam are declared as preserved areas. However, impoverished local fisherwomen still rely on resources from the park's core zone for income and to meet their household's nutritional needs. To synergistically improve women's livelihoods and conserve the area, local women were included in pilot policy design and became co-responsible for the program's oversight. Through capacity building, collective action and enhanced economic opportunities, they were able to build sustainable livelihoods while actively contributing to the park's conservation.

Important Details

time (or time period)	2011-2013
country & region	Northern Vietnam
context & agro-eco landscape type	Mangrove and wetland
key actors, stakeholders & beneficiaries	Fisherwomen
model and/or tools used	Community co-management of local natural resources

Overview

Xuan Thuy National Park (XTNP) is a vast wetland at the estuary of the Red River in Nam Dinh province, about 150 km south-east of Hanoi, Vietnam that provides essential ecological services to the surrounding areas. In 1989, Xuan Thuy was declared Vietnam's first Ramsar site and the government has since established new laws, policies and initiatives to preserve it. However, local livelihoods continue to depend on resource extraction from the wetlands. Fishing and harvesting of shells, molluscs and crabs from the wetland degrade the area's natural resources while simultaneously rendering local people's (particularly poor fisherwomen) livelihoods and incomes increasingly precarious.

Impoverished local fisherwomen rely on shellfish and mollusks in the park's core zone for income and to meet their household's nutritional needs. They lacked support to enhance the sustainability of their harvesting and livelihood activities as well as voice in decisions over mangrove management, including harvesting rules and monitoring.

Lessons Learned & Recommendations

According to IUCN, by pairing efforts to support women's empowerment (through capacity-building, collective action, and enhanced economic opportunity) with those to support sustainable mangrove and wetland management, wetland conservation and the livelihoods of marginalized stakeholders were synergistically improved. "While the capacity of XTNP Management Board is not sufficient to control a vast area of wetland resources, the pilot policy has proved that enhancing local community ownership results in positive change awareness and can help shift behavior towards improved management of coastal resources" (Mangroves for the Future).

Under the project "Sustainable use of mangrove resources to benefit poor women through a co-management pilot in the core zone of Xuan Thuy National Park ", local fisherwomen have been able to build sustainable livelihoods while actively contributing to the park's conservation. Local women have been included in pilot policy design and became co-responsible for the program's oversight. The women included in the program serve as important liaisons, facilitating communication for law enforcement and the local community. They are granted legal access to XTNP lands to support their livelihoods with certain restrictions as to where, when, and how fishing may occur, which is paired with enhanced awareness about mangroves and sustainable fishing methods. The women involved also have access to small loans from the Local Initiative Fund (LIF) to improve their livelihoods and ease the stress on XTNP's resources. A community-based monitoring system includes local women and men in stewardship of the wetland, while expanding vigilance and conservation.

Key references

J. Blum and D. Herr. 2017. Gender equity is key to mangrove restoration. IUCN's Global Marine and Polar Programme

<https://www.iucn.org/news/forests/201707/gender-equity-key-mangrove-restoration>

Mangroves for the Future: Sustainable use of mangrove resources to benefit poor women through a co-management pilot in the core zone of Xuan Thuy National Park, Vietnam.

<http://www.mangrovesforthefuture.org/grants/small-grant-facilities/viet-nam/cycle-1-sgf-projects-vn/sgf-project-in-xuan-thuy-national-park/>