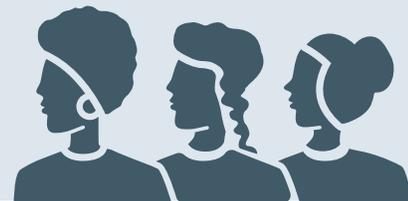


Strengthening Indigenous and Rural Women's Rights to Govern Community Lands

Ten Factors Contributing to Successful Initiatives



Download the brief online:

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Across the globe, indigenous and rural women make invaluable contributions to their communities and toward global sustainable development and climate goals. They use, manage, and conserve the community territories that comprise over 50 percent of the world's land and support up to 2.5 billion people. Yet, the land tenure rights of indigenous and rural women remain constrained by unjust laws and practices, and they are often locked out of decision-making processes regarding community lands at all levels.

A 2017 global analysis entitled *Power and Potential*¹ found that governments' laws are failing to protect indigenous and rural women's rights to community forests. **Protections for women's decision-making power, such as voting and leadership rights, are particularly inadequate—even as indigenous and rural women continue to take on greater leadership responsibilities due to men's out-migration from communities and mounting external threats to community lands.**

Land governance rights underpin women's ability to participate in decision-making affecting their personal agency and economic security, their children's future, and the future of the planet. More critical reflection on **why** and **how** some initiatives succeed in strengthening these rights can help unpack lessons for future engagements impacting community lands. A recent RRI analysis aggregates learning from 18 organizations² work in 10 low- and middle-income countries across Africa, Asia, and Latin America to distill **10 contributing factors underlying successful initiatives that strengthened women's governance rights regarding community lands.**

FACTORS 1–4

Maintaining a Community-Wide Focus

1. Approach women's empowerment through inclusive, collaborative processes that engage entire communities.
2. Engage community leaders.
3. Activities implemented by non-community members are culturally appropriate and developed alongside communities in order to prioritize their agency.
4. Recognize that social change takes time.

FACTORS 5-7

Using Information and Learning to Further Empower Women and Their Communities

5. Render visible the valuable contributions that women already make to their communities.
6. Demonstrate the community-wide advantages of securing women's governance rights.
7. Use information to empower women as community leaders and decision-makers.

FACTORS 8-10

Establishing Strategic Networks and Alliances at All Levels

8. Establish meeting spaces, activities, networks, or institutions that are exclusively for women.
9. Create self-sustaining, multilevel networks of women leaders.
10. Build and leverage strategic relationships with a wide variety of stakeholders outside of communities.

¹ Rights and Resources Initiative. 2017. *Power and Potential: A Comparative Analysis of National Laws and Regulations concerning Women's Rights to Community Forests*. Rights and Resources Initiative, Washington, DC. Available at: <https://rightsandresources.org/en/publication/power-and-potential>.

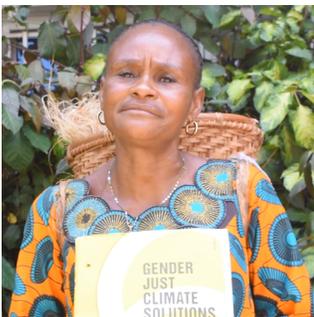
² REFACOF; Cameroon Ecology; CIFOR; RECOFTC; The Community Self Reliance Centre; CFLEDD; COICA; FECOFUN; The Foundation of Indonesia Legal Aid Institute – YLBHI (Indonesia); ILC; JMPPK/Community Network for the Care of Kendeng Mountains; AMPB; Namati; ONAMIAP; Open Society Justice Initiative; Research, Advocacy and Education Institute; People's Process on Housing and Poverty in Zambia; and Vasundhara.

Spotlight: *Contributing Factors in Action*



Strengthening community-level governance rights for indigenous women in Peru

Across Peru, the National Organization of Andean and Amazonian Indigenous Women of Peru (ONAMIAP for its Spanish acronym) is **supporting indigenous communities** (both women and men) to reflect on gender roles and revise their community statutes. As a result, several communities have changed their local statutes to include women as bona fide community members, and adopted quotas for women's leadership on community boards. ONAMIAP's work is **prefaced by awareness-raising campaigns, informational workshops, and alliance building at all levels** designed to **demonstrate women's contributions to their communities and receive community leaders' early endorsement** of proposed activities. Leaders from ONAMIAP emphasized that, in addition to this **multi-phase approach carried out over time**, facilitators and other partners **earn the respect of community members before any intervention is carried out**. These critical changes strengthen women's ability to contribute meaningfully to decisions that may affect their lands and livelihoods for generations to come.



New provincial legislation recognizes women's land and forest rights in DRC

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the Coalition of Women Leaders for Environment and Development (CFLEDD for its French acronym) organized **multi-stakeholder dialogues** on indigenous and local community land governance with provincial leaders, local political leaders, chiefs, and indigenous and rural men—contributing to the passage of a new provincial regulation. The regulation, Edict No. 002/2018, broadly affirms indigenous and rural women's rights to govern and benefit from community lands, in addition to emphasizing the importance of collaboration between indigenous and rural women, customary chiefs, and local political leaders. These dialogues were prefaced with **capacity-building trainings for indigenous and rural women**, and focused on recommendations from CFLEDD which reflected the organization's review of literature and legislation on women's land governance rights in DRC.



Supporting indigenous and local community members in Southeast Asia to contribute as key actors in discourse and policy-making surrounding REDD+

The power of information to enhance women's leadership and benefit entire communities is exemplified by the "Grassroots Capacity Building for REDD+" projects employed by RECOFTC in Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, and Vietnam. This multi-country project implements a "cascade training program" combining **capacity-building programs for grassroots community members** (to equip them with essential information about climate change, REDD+, social safeguards, and the prevention of environmental degradation) with a **multi-level network of women leaders**. This approach has allowed women to participate in decisions regarding community forest governance at the community, national, and regional levels in a more informed manner.

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