Women waste pickers and community organisations of Bogota building a sustainable and inclusive city

Description of the project: Started in 2012, this initiative shows the way for a sustainable and gender-responsive city, based on formalizing the activities of 26 women waste pickers as recyclers in Suba, in the south suburbs of Bogota. On this basis, ENDA involved 9 community organisations -3,520 citizens- to elaborate a holistic urban concept, including participatory territorial planning, urban gardening, cultural and artistic activities and the creation of 'Bankomunal' - a community savings and credit initiative for women who do not have access to formal banking. Training in environmental management, gender inequalities and masculinities, local public policies and citizen's initiatives, allows beneficiaries to exercise their democratic rights to protect their environment and cultural heritage, contributing to the Peace Process in Colombia.

Climate impact: Thanks to the project 30 tons of paper and 12 tons of plastic are recycled annually, saving 120,000kwh of electricity, avoiding the deforestation of 600 trees and the accumulation of 4,000 kilos of garbage in the sanitary landfill. Paper and plastic are reused in the production of handicrafts for economic empowerment. Through the strengthening of community relations, productive organic terraces have been built, established as training centers for composting, seed banks, waste management and urban agriculture for self-consumption leading to significant climate mitigation results.

Gender impact: Women recyclers have become environmental agents and providers of a public service with equal pay compared to men. Community women are recognized in their role as leaders for the transformation of urban practices having social, cultural and climate benefits. Participation empowers women and youth, as they are elected in the Community Action Board and in inter-institutional working groups. In this way, they contribute to citizen’s monitored municipal budgeting and the implementation of public policies for the improvement of their neighbourhoods.

Scalability / replicability: The project indirectly benefits 9,000 citizens and will be scaled up through partnerships with women and organisations from other suburbs. The urban gardening terraces are being multiplied via trainings of women leaders with the aim of creating a market to sell the vegetables and handicrafts. Establishing citizen’s monitoring of public policies has led to the nomination of a female community leader in the district council. This is key to reducing violence against women and to contribute to the peace building process in Colombia.

Indigenous women designing climate policies in Oaxaca, Mexico

Description of the project: The Ikoots, Mixe, Mixteca and Zapotec indigenous communities of Oaxaca State suffer from marginalization. Since 2011, EECO has been working with women in 28 communities to improve their climate resilience, strengthening their participation in local and State policy processes and their leadership on adaptation and mitigation actions. Community centers for refugees and committees involving 3,330 indigenous women have developed self-built eco-technologies for energy, water and sanitation based on ancestral know-how. They provide input in territorial public policies designed by communities, with a gender responsive, intercultural and rights-based approach. This project, already replicated in other states, contributes to tackling climate challenges with an exemplary governance scheme of co-responsibility between government and civil society.

Climate impact: Women participate in public policy design in Oaxaca, defining specific actions for the State Law and State Climate Change Program initiative. With 1,850 self constructed eco-techniques, i.e. fog condensers, water canals and tanks, they rehabilitate ancestral know-how, capture 54 M liters of rainwater per semester, efficiently responding to droughts and frosts that threaten cultures and saving 85% of the crops. 667 dry toilets, 143 biogas digesters and 511 efficient stoves have saved 5,903 tons of CO2 and reduced deforestation.

Gender impact: EECO uses a gender-based approach with risk and vulnerabilities evaluation. They help transforming marginalized indigenous women in grassroots leaders within the spaces of decision-making and local development. The technologies have been adapted to women’s needs and resolve most problems of health, excessive workloads and economic constraints. More than 3,000 women have been trained directly, creating 3 committees for community management and 9 for risk management; today 357 women have endorsed a leading role in their community.

Scalability / replicability: This holistic project started in 8 communities, rapidly expanding to 28, indirectly benefiting 2,000 villages in Oaxaca State. Training women leaders gives the knowledge a greater outreach at municipal and state levels. A monitoring and evaluation process ensures steady improvements, leading to references in international forums and attracting the academic world. Pedagogical materials and games have been translated into several languages and creative communication campaigns on social media and radio allow for wide, international knowledge dissemination.