Transforming gender relations and turning to sustainable resource use in the Kilum-Ijim Forests of Cameroon

Description of the project: CAMGEW engages local and ethnic women in sustainable forest management, while enhancing their human and socio-economic rights and transforming patriarchal gender relations in the forest communities. Cooperating with Oku local authorities and the government of Cameroon, CAMGEW gives women the opportunity to assume leadership positions of forest institutions and stakeholder platforms. They provide a broad range of trainings to over 2000 people: environmental education for schools and adults, bee farming, agroforestry and organic farming, small livestock breeding and biogas production, entrepreneurship skills with financial assistance. This initiative helps 800 young women fight domestic violence through counseling on their rights, business opportunities and community sensitization to counter early marriages.

Climate impact: Training in agroforestry for 772 community members, two-thirds women, prevents soil erosion and deforestation, while responding to domestic food and firewood needs. Three plant nurseries provided farms at the forest periphery with 150,000 saplings. Forest education was imparted in schools, through social media, radio, social gatherings, men's clubs. 240 Mbororo women gained skills on organic farming to improve fodder for their cattle and sheep, reducing farmer-grazer conflicts. 900 bee hives donated to farmers guard health of the forest.

Gender impact: CAMGEW has applied gender mainstreaming across all it's activities: agroforestry and organic farming with cattle breeding, plant nurseries, beekeeping, business skills trainings for 1580 women, incl. dressmaking & hairdressing for 20 girls; giving loans to 1325 of them. Counseling 800 victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse — including teenage mothers and HIV/AIDS infected - on their social rights, and empowering them with business skills and advice on nutrition and health, working on legalization of marriages, CAMGEW transforms the gender relations in patriarchal Mbororo communities.

Scalability / replicability: The project is a model of constructive cooperation and knowledge sharing with local and national public authorities and a broad range of stakeholders - research institutes, foundations, NGOs - making it replicable and scalable. Train the trainer scheme with use of local experts, enhances continuous learning and sustainability of this model. There are, for example, exchange visits between honey cooperatives, bee farmers and bee farmer groups. The Honeyshop is a demonstration centre for research, learning and marketing.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights as a basis for conservation action

Description of the project: FUNDAECO breaks traditional cultural barriers to ensure the SRH rights of adolescent girls in more than 100 Mayan and Q’eqchi communities of Guatemala, as a fundamental for their involvement in forest conservation. 22 health clinics, established in Protected Areas of Izabal, have provided regular care and counseling to 50,000 patients (2/3 women), significantly reducing teenage pregnancies, and strengthening women’s leadership. Support provided in maternal and infant feeding, and hygiene are linked to environmental protection activities, i.e. good eating habits using natural resources, or sustainable waste management. Strategies were also implemented to prevent forced migration. A scholarship and youth leadership program contributes to end discrimination of women with formal and informal education.

Climate impact: FUNDAECO integrated SRHR in it’s approach to sustainable community development and conservation efforts of the Caribbean Guatemala Protected Areas. Trainings in managing and processing non-timber forest products are offered within a programme supporting more than 500 families of indigenous communities for the creation of 4,000 hectares of agroforestry systems. It includes planting rubber and fruit trees, black pepper, shade trees, and creating live wind barriers to increase the forest cover in agricultural and livestock systems, regenerating the forest’s biodiversity.

Gender impact: The 22 clinics have become a vehicle for women’s empowerment, and mobilised the communities around family planning issues, violence against women and sexually transmitted diseases. 10 community first aid kits were developed. FUNDAECO worked with the Movement for Equity in Guatemala Association (AMIE), to develop training processes about human rights, SRHR and gender based violence. Scholarship support for 48 teenage girls enabled 15 of them to graduate and access new study opportunities. Women’s groups initiated new income generating activities contributing to improved livelihoods and enhanced status in their communities.

Scalability / replicability: From a pilot started in 2014 with 3 clinics, the project expanded to a network of 22 community-based clinics and 3 mobile ones. The success for up-scaling lies in the ability to integrate health care services, human rights and SRHR education into environmental protection activities and policies, taking into account cultural relevance for the Mayan groups - Q’eqchi, Mam, Chuj, Q’anjobal people. The scholarship program in particular has progressively become a multiplier among communities, with empowered young girls actively promoting new models of development.

Cameroon Gender and Environment Watch
www.camgew.com

Organization: Cameroon Gender and Environment Watch (CAMGEW)
Representative: Sevidzem Ernestine Leikeki
Email: leikekit1985@yahoo.com

Mention of Honour
Transformational Solutions

Country: Guatemala
Organization: FUNDAECO
Representative: Rita Mishaan
Email: ritamishaan@gmail.com

FUNDAECO
www.fundaeco.org.gt

Organization: FUNDAECO
Representative: Rita Mishaan
Email: ritamishaan@gmail.com

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