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# GENDER AND CONSERVATION: EMPOWERING PEOPLE TO CREATE SOLUTIONS

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is addressing the world's greatest conservation challenges. By empowering people to create solutions that work, we can inspire the kind of action that brings lasting prosperity for people and nature.

TNC's conservation work focuses on five global themes: Lands, Oceans, Freshwater, Climate and Cities. For each of these themes, we are working to protect nature while improving human well-being. A key part of this work involves empowering women to become meaningfully involved in decisions related to conservation and sustainable management of their resources.

TNC is partnering with communities and local women's groups to support women's involvement in conservation, economic development and decision-making. We do this by investing in strong leaders and diverse and inclusive work environments. This approach helps women create more prosperous and healthy futures for themselves, their children, their environment and their communities.

## WOMEN AND CONSERVATION

In many of the countries where TNC works, women are the primary resource managers for their families, growing and harvesting food and gathering water and firewood. In fact, women account for 60 to 80 percent of all food production in developing countries, yet they are often left out of decisions about how to manage the very natural resources on which they rely.

At the same time, the loss of natural resources is often felt disproportionately by women. When food, fuel and water resources become scarce, women and girls must travel farther and work harder, which can place them in unsafe situations and lessen the time and resources available for them to access

education and economic opportunities. All of these factors perpetuate gender inequality.

A growing body of scientific evidence shows that increasing women's ability to participate in natural resource management creates a win-win situation for nature and people. It can empower women, increase employment opportunities, improve women's ability to plan for their families and result in more positive outcomes for conservation.



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## OUR APPROACH

TNC is working to advance women’s empowerment through a wide range of projects and programs across the globe. In the Asia Pacific region we are:

### SUPPORTING A NEW GENERATION OF WOMEN LEADERS

In Solomon Islands, we are working with local women to increase their involvement in decision-making about natural resources. In collaboration with a local women’s network, the Isabel Mothers’ Union, we have trained 40 community facilitators who are raising awareness about the importance of well-informed and inclusive decisions around big issues such as mining and logging. To date, their work has reached over 12,000 people in remote communities, and their inputs are informing the national mining policy reform process.

### WORKING TO IMPROVE LIVELIHOODS AND FOOD SECURITY

In Papua New Guinea, TNC developed a range of activities with the Manus Women’s Environment and Development Forum to involve the group in managing their near shore fisheries and mangrove habitat. The forum is also actively promoting atoll gardening amongst its members to help ensure food security. Manus women have already seen first-hand the benefit of sharing lessons, knowledge and external ideas on food security with other women across the province. For example, local women from Powat village began promoting seaweed as compost to improve soil quality for gardens. This atoll farming has proven very successful—women in Powat were able to grow edible food crops to sustain the daily diet of their families.

### CO-FOUNDED A REGIONAL WOMEN LEADERS’ FORUM

TNC helped establish the Women Leaders’ Forum within the Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI) on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security in order to:

- Provide a peer-learning network for women who are playing key leadership roles in sustaining the marine resources of the Coral Triangle region;

- Recognize the achievement of grassroots women leaders who are championing marine conservation in the six Coral Triangle countries; and

- Serve as a platform to build the capacity of women from the Coral Triangle to take leadership roles in preserving and sustaining the region’s unique marine and coastal resources.



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**HELPING TWO WOMEN RANGER GROUPS IN NORTHERN AUSTRALIA**

Together with partners in in Southeast Arnhem Land, TNC is working with women rangers to:

- Build community support for and awareness of women’s role in Indigenous land management;
- Facilitate the intergenerational transfer of women’s traditional knowledge and leadership development; and
- Share lessons learned with the community and other ranger groups in Northern Australia.

**SHOWING HOW NETWORKS OF WOMEN ARE IMPROVING CONSERVATION AND THEIR LIVES**

At the upcoming World Conservation Congress TNC will bring together representatives from Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, the CTI Women Leaders’ Forum and our Northern Australia program to learn from one another and share their stories at this global conservation event, held once every four years.

**CONDUCTING SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH**

As a science-based organisation, TNC is investigating the benefits of integrating consideration of gender into conservation efforts. For example, we:

- Published a study that showed convincing evidence that including women in forest management groups in India and Nepal led to better resource governance and conservation outcomes;
  - Began exploring ways to extend this research to other geographies to see if similar outcomes arise; and
  - Launched a project to study existing TNC projects to determine the role of women in bringing about natural, social and cultural outcomes.
- As a part of the Nature Conservancy’s Science Impact Project, Robyn James, Conservation Director Melanesia, has trained in communicating science through storytelling . The focus of her Science Impact Project work is on Gender in Conservation.



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***“Through this partnership with TNC, the women are very happy and very proud. We are no longer merely women in the kitchen. We are stepping up to speak for our nation as a whole and our own future generations to come.”***

Mrs Moira Dasipio, Vice President, Isabel Mothers Union (Solomon Islands) pictured with Robyn James (right), Conservation Director Melanesia for The Nature Conservancy

**ESTABLISHED 1951**

**OUR MISSION**

TO CONSERVE THE LANDS AND WATERS ON WHICH ALL LIFE DEPENDS.

LARGEST CONSERVATION NONPROFIT IN THE WORLD

**50** U.S. STATES | **40+** COUNTRIES | **6** CONTINENTS

**THE PEOPLE** **3,700** STAFF MEMBERS **600** SCIENTISTS  
**1M** MEMBERS **22K** LEGACY CLUB MEMBERS **1,350** ACTIVE VOLUNTEERS

WORLD'S LARGEST PROTECTOR OF FRESHWATER & MARINE WATERS

**\$6B** TOTAL ASSETS | **\$1B** ANNUAL REVENUE

**OUR STRENGTHS**

**26 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE** IN THE ASIA PACIFIC REGION

**AN INNOVATIVE, SCIENCE-BASED APPROACH** TO SOLVING CHALLENGING CONSERVATION ISSUES

**A COLLABORATIVE, NON-CONFRONTATIONAL STYLE** THAT FOCUSES ON SOLUTIONS

**STRONG PARTNERSHIPS** WITH GOVERNMENTS, BUSINESSES AND COMMUNITIES

**SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS** AND THE ABILITY TO REPLICATE ON A LARGE SCALE



**OUR ORGANISATION**

TNC cares about diversity and inclusion in all our work and at every level of our organisation. We are rolling out an organisation-wide Diversity Initiative, being led by our recently appointed Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer. We understand that an inclusive workplace, a more diverse workforce and organisational competence are critical to the achievement of our organisation's mission to preserve the lands and waters on which all life depends.

To ensure we are able to work across differences with respect, we are:

- Supporting a Women In Nature Steering Committee, to leverage the full potential of women at TNC in both conservation and leadership roles;
- Integrating gender into our conservation work, including through some of the examples outlined above;
- Conducting organisational-wide trainings to teach employees how to interact more effectively and inclusively across differences. The training provides skills on appreciating and leveraging differences by exploring the meanings of diversities of experience and identity; and
- Rolling out a revised version of Conservation by Design, the guiding framework for how we design and conduct conservation around the world. Well-being and prosperity for people is the centrepiece of CBD 2.0.

**MOVING FORWARD**

We are only at the beginning of our journey to make sure everyone has an equal voice in ensuring a healthy planet and creating a happy life. To build a more sustainable future where nature and people flourish together, we are:

- Gathering data to test the hypothesis that engaging women improves conservation outcomes in additional geographies where we work;
- Building key partnerships with development organisations such as Care and Red Cross;
- Expanding the gender focused aspects of our conservation programs;
- Building an appreciation of diversity into everything we do as an organisation; and
- Planning our gender training to enable systematic application of our policies and procedures related to gender.