



# Understanding gender and empowering women in East Africa

In collaboration with our Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund partner, BirdLife International, CI is supporting five innovative research projects in several Key Biodiversity Areas in Uganda and Kenya to better understand gender dimensions of conservation and to further support women's involvement in environmental decision-making.

## ***Supporting Women in Conservation and Development Policy and Governance***

Located in Uganda's Bwindi Impenetrable Forest, the **Institute of Tropical Forest Conservation** is exploring how indigenous Batwa men and women are involved in forest-derived revenue and governance, and how they have benefited from conservation and development interventions. Their research focuses on evaluating the governance and distribution of forest revenue through analysis of community engagement policy guidelines, local knowledge about forest revenue decision-making, and identifying gender gaps. This information will directly influence how local communities are involved and enhance policy and practices that support women's participation in conservation.

## ***Capacity building and women's empowerment for sustainable conservation and livelihood improvement***

In the Echuya Forest of southern Uganda, recent legislation allows local communities to take formal management responsibility for forest resources. **Kigezi Initiative for Women and Children Empowerment and Development Uganda**, serves as an community-based umbrella organization of many local women's groups and is working to increase the capacity of women to engage in natural resource management projects and to participate in the forest management processes and livelihood projects.

### ***Understanding how Maasai men and women use forest resources***

In collaboration with the **British Institute of Eastern Africa**, researcher Miriam Westervelt is studying the relationship between gender and sustainable forest-based livelihoods of indigenous Maasai in the Loita Forest of southern Kenya. The forest, used primarily by women, is one of the last indigenous-owned ungazetted forests remaining in the country, providing water, firewood, construction material, drought refuge, seasonal grazing, medicine, fruits and honey, as well as deep spiritual value for local people. Through interviews and surveys, this research focuses on gendered patterns of forest use that have not yet been investigated, and which are key to the long term conservation of the forest.

### ***Supporting women to engage in natural resources management and forest conservation***

Although Kenya has embraced participatory forest management that allows communities to manage their local resources, women are rarely adequately involved, even in issues that have direct impacts on their lives. A local organization working in the Kikuyu Escarpment Forest, **Kijabe Environment Volunteers**, is collaborating with local groups to support women's involvement in local management committees. Through research, capacity building, partnership development and advocacy, the project contributes to the long term conservation of the forest by empowering women to take an active role in decision-making in natural resource management and environmental protection. The project advocates for the inclusion of more women in governance structures of community institutions and provides a platform for women to be heard, to collaborate, and to exchange experiences in natural resource management and decision-making.

### ***Creating an enabling environment that empowers women to participate effectively in community conservancy decision making***

Across the vast drylands of northern Kenya, **Fauna and Flora International (FFI)** is working with the **Northern Rangelands Trust** to ensure that pastoralist women can participate in, and benefit from, community rangeland management. This research focuses on three community conservancies, covering an area of 1 million hectares with a population of over 50,000. To sustainably manage this landscape for the benefit of people and wildlife in times of socio-economic and environmental change, it is vital that both women and men are able to actively participate in resource management decisions. This project systematically addresses gender inequalities and improving women's participation in conservancy decision-making in order to improve conservation outcomes and the well-being of pastoralist households .



### **OUR VISION**

We imagine a healthy, prosperous world in which societies are forever committed to caring for and valuing nature, our global biodiversity, for the long-term benefit of people and all life on Earth.

### **OUR MISSION**

Building upon a strong foundation of science, partnership and field demonstration, CI empowers societies to responsibly and sustainably care for nature, our global biodiversity, for the well-being of humanity.



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