

Women's Political Empowerment

Welcome

To **'Tejiendo Redes'** – empowering women through inter-programmatic networking of networks.



What is the Project about?

Background

'Tejiendo Redes' weaves together women's networks from four SDC programs in the Gulf of Fonseca region 13, namely **1)** The Territorial Water Governance Program in Choluteca-Sampile and Nacaome watersheds; **2)** The Territorial Inclusive Economic Development Program DEIT Sur with interventions in the municipalities of Namasigüe, Santa Ana de Yusguare and El Corpus; **3)** The Transformative Empowerment Program with Psychosocial Approach, EmPoderat with interventions in the municipalities of Namasigüe and Yusguare and, **4)** the Human Rights Strengthening and Social Audit Program FDHAS. Although these programs were conceived and implemented individually, the fact that they converged in the same territory with actors in common the SDC decided to link and align to the same strategy for women's empowerment.

Context

The Namasigüe micro-watershed, located within the Sampile River basin,. It is geographically circumscribed in the municipality of Namasigüe, in the department of Choluteca, bordering Santa Ana de Yusguare and Choluteca to the north, El Triunfo to the south, El Corpus to the east and Choluteca to the west. It is composed of six villages belonging to the Municipality of Namasigüe,. The management of the micro-watershed is the responsibility of the Namasigüe Micro-watershed Council, which includes 80% of the stakeholders active in the watershed. The territorially representative council is made up of public and private entities, including the 2 women's networks, boards of trustees, water boards, parents' societies, rural banks, churches, private enterprise, among others. The 2 women's networks pursue multiple goals, from educating women about their rights and resolving cases of domestic violence, to empowering women and generating employment.

Summary

Theory of change

If women's empowerment is to be supported to be more achievable and sustainable, then a multi-disciplinary approach is needed to address the multiple and interconnected dimensions of women's empowerment.

Overall goal

The fundamental purpose is to address the disparities inherent to gender equality and to guarantee women's economic and human rights in a complex context characterized by conflicts, insecurities, discrimination, fears, and uncertainties.

Specific objective(s)

To diminish, address, and overcome barriers and conditions which limit women from being empowered and exercising their full potential in the public, social, economic and political spheres.

Expected results

- Generate learning and new knowledge from the inter-programmatic perspective, and to identify the factors that are contributing to women being able to generate power from within, gain power with others and acquire power to transform reality in the territory of the micro-watershed.
- Identify the contributions of the integrated collaborative approach facilitated by the 4 programs, and its effects on the women's networks and their ability to transform the situation of women for their empowerment.
- Specifically identify practices, instruments, lessons learned and recommendations for sharing, adaptation and replication.

Stakeholders

Project partners

- 4 SDC programs in the municipalities of Namasigüe and Santa Ana de Yusguare of the Gulf of Fonseca region 13.
- The micro water basin council/ management committee
- Municipal Women's Offices and mayors

Project primary stakeholders (priority target group(s))

- Women's networks of Namasique and Yusguare, and the regional southern women's network, and women's community groups
- SDC staff and implementors of the four programs
- Primary stakeholders of the four programs.

Project secondary and boundary stakeholders (system actors, duty bearers, service providers etc.)

- Ministries, departments, civil society actors of the four programs
- SDC staff at head office and in country offices



The Four SDC Programs:

- The **EmPoderat** Program implemented by OCDIH focuses on Transformative Empowerment via Psychosocial Approaches.
- The **Territorial Water Governance Program** is implemented by a consortium including IDE, GFA y ECOPIS.
- The **DEIT Sur** Program is implemented by Ayuda en Acción and Technoserve. It helps vulnerable and excluded families to equitably participate in the cashew and livestock value chains and ecotourism in coastal region.
- The **FDHAS** program is implemented by OCDIH to strengthen the rule of law in Honduras with emphasis on the fulfillment of rights, justice, and a more transparent and participatory institutional framework.

What did the project do and learn?

Design and Implementation

Key design and implementation features, included:

- Three main interconnected processes/milestones including design and planning, participatory research and experience analysis and documentation, starting off with smaller pilots.
- Delegation of one program to act as the 'facilitating unit'. In this case EmPoderat.
- Inventory, consolidation and prioritization of instruments, documentation, tools, and processes between the four programs
- Consultation and participatory workshops with not only implementors but also the primary stakeholders and partners of the four programs
- Integration of a gender approach applying a psychosocial and inequality analysis, which informed the program cycle management and enhancement of women's networks, in turn their networking and self-advocacy.
- The inter-programmatic collaboration directly contributes to the strategic objective number 2 of the micro-basin action plan aimed at "strengthening the water management capacities of the member organizations and institutions of the Micro-basin Council".

The training plan for organizational leadership and development is oriented by 5 learning axes that support women to 1) learn to be, 2) learn to do, 3) learn to live together, 4) learn to learn, and 5) manage and lead.

The 5 modules include gender training, intergenerational relations, empathetic communication and political participation among others.

Key Achievements and Good Practices

- **Guidelines** produced for mainstreaming an integrated vision and design of inter-programmatic processes which tackle inequalities, inequities, asymmetries and social exclusions.
- **Clear criteria** and justification for an inter-programmatic approach: 1) The fact that they were implementing their programs in the same territory; 2) The fact that they were targeting the same actors and particularly approaching women from different perspectives; and, 3) The programs were accompanying processes based on complementary objectives and oriented to the same end. Since its emergence, the discussion of the inter-programmatic team focused on empowering women in the micro-watershed networks from the economic perspective, from the environmental perspective, focusing on water resource management, on the exercise of their human rights, and on aspects of transparency and citizen participation.
- The **psychosocial approach** was not limited to the women themselves or their networks, but included their families: family psychosocial diagnosis, family psychosocial action plan, self-support family groups, and exchange between participating families. This helped address and enhance women's own power, women's power with other women and allies, and women's power to lead, decide and manage in their homes, and communities.
- The psychosocial diagnosis made it possible to prioritize three interdependent operational dimensions for planning actions to strengthen women's networks: 1) Component of well-being and individual and collective strengthening of the women's network; 2) Component of organizational strengthening of the network; and, 3) The component of strengthening inter-organizational relations.
- **Economic empowerment**: 22 livelihood initiatives with individual business profiles, in addition to 3 collective business initiatives
- **SDC's commitment** and active role to enable the inter-programmatic initiative



For more on the project, and SDC Gender in LAC experiences

- <https://www.shareweb.ch/site/PGE/Gender/Pages/Toolbox/Knowledge%20sharing/Gender-experiences->

Key Lessons Learnt and Recommendations

- All 4 programs need to agree on common goals and synergies, which they commit to according to their organizational mandate, expertise and experience in the territory. Additionally, this involves an ongoing & institutionalized process of consultation, joint reflection and co-decision making between the four programs. The fact that the inter-programmatic experience was not included in the operational plans of some of the programs made the process somewhat complex.
- The more systematic integration of psychosocial and gender approaches, linked to the areas of economic development, environment, human rights and governance. This integration of approaches facilitates accompaniment with a more innovative gender perspective. This needs to be shared beyond the core actors for scale and impact.
- Having three interconnected levels of action for change is key: "individual and collective well-being"; Organizational development; and Strengthening inter-organizational relations"
- Ensure that business investments planned as part of women's economic empowerment, which require land and other 'public' infrastructure resources, are not dependent on individuals or policies which may change.
- The importance that each business initiative returned a flexible percentage of their income to the network of women in their jurisdiction, thus creating a capital fund within each network for sustainability.
- Accompaniment of individual women entrepreneurs versus collectives or cooperatives of women, requires methodologically differentiated strategies.
- Co-developing proposals with the networks of women integrating their needs and interests, guarantees the active engagement and commitment of the women.