

## RESEARCH AND LEARNING ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GENRE+ Phase II PROJECT

Ségou region, Mali



## GENRE+ Phase II PROJECT

*Strengthening climate resilience, social cohesion and gender equality in Ségou, Mali*

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March 2024

Care International in Mali

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## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>CCVCA</b>	<i>Conflict and climate capacity and vulnerability analysis</i>
<b>COFO</b>	<i>Land Commission</i>
<b>CPS Mali</b>	<i>Planning Unit for Statistics in Mali</i>
<b>CSSF</b>	<i>Conflict Stability and Security Fund</i>
<b>ELIM</b>	<i>Integrated light survey of households in Mali</i>
<b>FCDO</b>	<i>Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office</i>
<b>NRM</b>	<i>Natural Resource Management</i>
<b>GRN</b>	<i>Natural Resources Management</i>
<b>PDSEC</b>	<i>Social, Economic and Cultural Development Plans</i>
<b>PACA</b>	<i>Community Adaptation Action Plan</i>
<b>RGA</b>	<i>General Census of Agriculture</i>
<b>RNA</b>	<i>Assisted Natural Regeneration</i>
<b>VSLA</b>	<i>Village Savings and Loan Association</i>
<b>WLIE</b>	<i>Women lead in Emergency</i>

## Executive summary

African women are an integral part of the agricultural sector. The food crisis of 2012 has shown that, in many ways, women have gained in responsibility. Their contribution to the upkeep of the household in times of crisis is tacitly expected, even if this increase in responsibility within the household does not always translate into an increase in power within the community. In the eyes of communities, women remain under the guardianship of their husbands or, in his absence, their brothers or eldest sons (Oxfam, 2014<sup>1</sup>). This social perception of the role and place of women in these communities has ultimately influenced everyone's attitudes regarding access to factors of production.

The Genre + Phase II project, following a first phase, was designed and implemented over 15 months by CARE MALI and its partners in 48 villages, in order to bring about change through the equitable management of natural resources for resilience, social cohesion and peace in the Ségou Region. Research was initiated to understand the changes in behaviour observed and the factors underlying them as a result of more active participation by women in Natural Resource Management (NRM) and the development of local management agreements in the Barouéli, Bla and Ségou circles. The survey involved 143 people, including 72 women, and 24 focus groups, including 12 women focus groups, on women's active participation in NRM and broader local NRM approaches. The main findings of this research were as follows:

- **Changes in community adaptation to climate change :** Thirty-three per cent of respondents (32% W/33% M) reported behaviour changes in relation to community adaptation to the effects of climate change. Forty-five per cent of respondents (49% W/ 41% M) thought that the Genre + Phase II project had made a 'major contribution' to community-based climate adaptation and resilience, though this was mainly in the communes that benefited from the first phase of the project. Thirty-five per cent (36% W/ 33% M) believed the project has made an 'average contribution', while 20% thought that it had made a 'minor contribution', mentioned by more men than women (15% W/ 26% M).
- **Shifts in attitudes and behaviours on women's participation in NRM:** One third (34%) of respondents (33% W/ 35% M) reported changes in behaviour in the last six months in relation to women's participation in NRM and conflict resolution. This includes greater consideration of issues such as: women's access to land (affirmed by 68% respondents: 79% W/ 57% M), women's participation in decision-making processes (27% in total: 21% W/ 32% M) and recognition of women's rights (6% in total, mentioned by 11% of men only).
- The majority of respondents feel that changes in behaviour have been observed mainly among community leaders and decision makers (44%: 49% W/ 39% M), followed by heads of households 27%: 26% W/ 28% M). Nineteen per cent (19%) of respondents (15% W/ 23% M) reported that greater awareness among women of their rights and duties in the management of natural resources has been a motivating factor in their becoming more involved claiming their place in decision-making processes.

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<sup>1</sup> Food crisis, gender and resilience in the sahel: lessons learned from the 2012 crisis in BURKINA FASO, MALI and NIGER; OXFAM June 2014

**More women in leadership positions:** In the past six months, there have been eleven new appointments of women to positions of responsibility. This includes three as women's representatives on the village council, one as a representative on COFO, six as representatives on pump, water or forest protection committees and one as 3rd vice-president of the farmers' organisation. Seventy-three (73%) of respondents (69% W/ 73% M) felt that the Genre + Phase II project had made a 'significant contribution' to achieving the appointment of women to positions of responsibility. This change was attributed mainly to awareness raising and advocacy among decision makers on the participation of women in NRM decision-making processes, and training to build women's knowledge and skills to take the initiative to ask local leaders to include women on the relevant committees. **Main recommendations of the analysis for project adaptations in the final year:**

Based on lessons learned from the first fifteen months of project implementation, including information gathered during this research, the project team plans to integrate the following recommendations for project adaptation and implementation in year 3 (FY3):

1. **Increase focus on awareness, training and skills development of men for gender equality.** For FY3, the project plans to organize quarterly exchange and awareness sessions per village, targeting Producer Organizations (POs), Village Savings and Loan Groups (VSLA) and community leaders. These sessions will address equitable and inequitable gender attitudes, female leadership, and women's rights to further build an enabling environment for women's participation and leadership in NRM.
2. **Invest more in addressing barriers to women's participation, and opportunities for women's direct engagement in NRM through the project's WLiE activities:** Women demonstrated strong engagement in implementing WLiE activities in FY2. For FY3, the project plans to support WLiE groups by facilitating them to update their WLiE action plans, develop progress markers (to better envision and evidence impact) and provide them with more financial support to carry out their activities.
3. **Increase support to commune authorities to revise their Communal Development Plans (PDSECs) to integrate Community Adaptation and WLiE Action Plan priorities:** Despite the efforts made during FY2, including the development of Community Adaptation Action Plans (PACA) and the organization of dialogue frameworks between elected officials and communities to integrate PACA actions into the PDSEC, only one commune out of 12 has succeeded in integrating the actions of the PACA. For the year FY3, it is planned to use available resources to support communes in revising their PDSEC to facilitate the integration of PACA actions. It is essential to provide significant support to municipalities in updating or revising their PDSEC so that PACA and WLiE priorities can be better integrated. This will ensure greater, more sustainable impact in the delivery of inclusive NRM from a community-based perspective.
4. **Expand geographical inclusivity (and conflict sensitivity) in the development and validation of local conventions for consensual management of natural resources:** The development and validation of local conventions for consensual management of natural resources requires the involvement of all villages in the commune during these processes, even villages not being the project intervention areas. In FY3, the project will ensure that all villages in a commune, including those not directly affected by

project interventions, are involved in the consultation and validation processes of local agreements consensual management of natural resources. While these villages will not have benefitted from wider project activities to date (including the focus on enabling women's participation), efforts will be made to ensure women and marginalised groups are actively included, wherever possible.

5. **Ensure effective response to Do No Harm and protection needs:** During the bi-monthly meetings with key stakeholders organized by the project in FY2, it was difficult to obtain information in terms of safeguarding in a confidential manner. For FY3, the project plans to establish accountability and feedback mechanisms within the 48 intervention villages in order to facilitate the collection of confidential safeguarding information.

## I. Introduction

The Ségou region is Mali's fourth administrative region, located in the centre of the country. Its population is made up of different ethnic groups (mainly Bambara, Peuhl, Miniaka, Bozo, Somono, Dogon and Sarakole), as well as different social groups (mainly farmers and livestock breeders). The population's main activities are farming, fishing, livestock rearing, gathering and trading.

In recent years, conflicts between farmers and herders, as well as between various ethnic groups, have intensified, exacerbated by the security crisis. These conflicts mainly concern access to natural resources and can be attributed to a number of key factors.

Demographic growth has impacted on the availability of resources, mainly agricultural land, leading farmers to encroach on pastoral land, including pastures and transhumance corridors. The inability of current land legislation to reconcile pastoral and agricultural land use lies at the heart of the problem, although the recently adopted Pastoral Charter (law N°01-004 of 27 FEB.2001) should, if properly implemented, specifically address this issue. Hence the origin of the majority of conflicts in rural areas.

### Key terms :

The term **GENDER** refers to the differences, roles and expectations assigned by society to women and men. These roles are learned, can change over time and are influenced by culture, education, class, economic and political environments, the media, crises and conflicts (UNESCO, 2000).<sup>2</sup>

**Conflict management** is broadly defined as encompassing a wide range of mechanisms and institutions for both the prevention and peaceful resolution of conflict, including negotiation, facilitation, conciliation and arbitration.

**Natural resource governance** refers to the norms, institutions and processes that determine how power and responsibility over natural resources are exercised, how decisions are made and

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<sup>2</sup> 20.22. UNESCO (2000): Gender equality and equity: an overview of UNESCO's achievements since the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing 1995; Paris.

how people, including women, men, young people, indigenous peoples and local communities, participate in the management and benefit from natural resources.

### **Gender and decision-making**

In terms of gender, most women are excluded from public decision-making, including in the area of conflict management related to Natural Resources (NR), mainly due to a division of roles along gender lines, responsibilities related to the home and children, culture/tradition as well as exclusion from access to and control over natural resources,<sup>3</sup> while a study conducted by OXFAM in June 2014 showed that in Mali, the proportion of households headed by women is 29% of which 21% are widows and 8% divorced. Women generally gain access to land through their husband, who is obliged to make part of his agricultural plot available to his wife or wives. The woman's plot of land has a mixed status, part gift, part loan. In some cases, it becomes the wife's property, particularly on the death of the husband. In other cases, the plot is transferred to the estate to be divided on the death of the husband, or it is returned to the husband on the death of the wife.

Whether in terms of the division of roles, matrimonial practices or the management of and access to resources, social norms generally assign women the status of subordinates to men, especially in rural areas, although there are some differences from one ethnic group to another (Bilampoa, 2014<sup>4</sup>). Women face social, cultural, economic and legal barriers that affect the equitable governance of natural resources. Despite women's unique and important responsibilities in the use and management of natural resources, they generally participate less in formal governance processes, with the result that their interests, objectives, knowledge and capacities are under-represented and under-utilised.

### **Gender and Access to land**

Mali's agricultural policy, adopted in 2014 aims to ensure fair and secure access to land for all producers, particularly those in rural areas. The aim was also to strengthen women's access to land by requiring the allocation of 15% of public land to women's associations and other vulnerable groups. However, many constraints (institutional, socio-political and financial) weigh on its effective implementation. According to the Malian household survey (ELIM 2006), 63.7% of working women aged 15 were involved in agriculture, livestock farming, forestry and fishing, and the number of women working in this area continues to rise. In terms of access to land, inequalities persist, insofar as less than 20% of those in charge of agricultural plots are women (Recensement générale de l'Agriculture, 2004).<sup>5</sup>

Gender inequalities in land rights are widespread. Not only do women have less access to land than men, but their access is also often restricted to what are known as secondary land rights, meaning that they hold these rights through male family members. Women therefore risk losing

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<sup>3</sup> Food crisis, gender and resilience in the sahel: lessons from the 2012 crisis in BURKINA FASO, MALI and NIGER; OXFAM June 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Gnoumou Thiombiano, B. (2014). Gender and decision-making within the household in Burkina Faso. Cahiers québécois de démographie, 43(2), 249-278. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1027979a>

<sup>5</sup> CPS, 2008. Recensement général de l'Agriculture (RGA) - Campagne Agricole 2004-2005. Final results - Volume I Summary Report. Planning and Statistics Unit of the Ministry of Agriculture. Bamako 2008. 139 p

their rights in the event of divorce, widowhood or the migration of their husbands. The evidence also shows that women's plots are generally smaller and of inferior quality.

## **II. Background and justification for the study**

Care International in Mali, in collaboration with Care UK, has secured funding from the FCDO for the project **Gestion équitable et transformatrice du Genre pour la résilience, la cohésion sociale et la paix Phase II**. Genre+ Phase II is the second phase of a pilot project aimed at strengthening resilience and social cohesion by ( i ) improving governance in natural resource management (NRM), making it more inclusive, consensual and collaborative, (ii) revitalising traditional conflict prevention and management mechanisms and strengthening community adaptation to reduce vulnerability to climatic and social shocks, and (iii) transforming negative social gender norms to ensure the inclusion of women in strategic decision-making spaces linked to NRM and peacebuilding.

Over a 15-month period, forty-eight (48) villages benefited from the project's intervention through women's groups (VSLA), producers' and breeders' organisations, leaders and power-holders in certain communes in the cercles of Ségou, Bla and Barouéli in the Ségou region. Several gender and climate change adaptation initiatives have been implemented through the Women Lead In Emergencies (WLIE) and Community Adaptation Action Plan (PACA) approaches, as well as capacity-building actions for participants and stability factors. Through its transformative approaches, the Genre + Phase II project intends to contribute to the dynamics of change to strengthen the voice of women in leadership, social cohesion and equitable access to natural resources in its areas of intervention.

As part of project output 4 and planning for the second fiscal year, the project team organised workshops to identify and validate research and learning themes with project stakeholders in the 12 communes of project intervention. These themes provided a solid basis for guiding research and learning initiatives that respond to the expectations and needs of stakeholders. The themes also provide evidence of the most successful interventions and changes achieved among participants.

This document presents the results of this research. It presents a description of the study methodology, the results and interpretations of the data, as well as recommendations to guide decision-making on the inclusive management of natural resources and women's participation in decision-making in the project areas.

## **III. Research methodology**

### **a. Research objective**

The aim of this research is to gain an in-depth understanding of changes in behaviour and the factors underlying them among participants in the Genre+ Phase II project in the cercles of Bla, Ségou and Barouéli.

## **b. Identifying research and learning themes with stakeholders**

Based on the issues raised during the workshops to identify and validate the research and learning themes with stakeholders, two themes were selected for research purposes. These themes are as follows

- a) Analysis of the changes observed in community resilience and social cohesion when women occupy positions of leadership/responsibility in natural resource management and conflict prevention and management.
- b) Impact of securing women's access to land in the long term on community resilience, natural resource management and social cohesion.

## **c. Research questions**

- a) What evidence is there that more active participation by women in decision-making contributes to more resilient and cohesive communities?
- b) How can the development of inclusive and consensual approaches to natural resource management promote social cohesion and community resilience in the face of conflict?
- c) How can women's sustainable access to land reduce gender inequalities and promote better representation of women in decision-making processes relating to natural resources? What evidence is there that this contributes to more resilient and cohesive societies?

## **d. Research hypotheses**

- a) Involving women in decision-making processes helps to ensure that the needs of the community are better represented, thereby contributing to more comprehensive and sustainable solutions to conflicts linked to natural resources and climate shocks.
- b) Inclusive approaches to natural resource management encourage participation and collaboration between community members, thereby strengthening social cohesion.
- c) Local initiatives guaranteeing women's sustainable access to land reduce gender inequalities and improve women's participation in decision-making processes relating to natural resources. Increased security of tenure for women contributes to more resilient and socially inclusive communities.

To answer these questions, the methodology was qualitative and included individual interviews with key informants and discussions with homogeneous groups (men and women) using tools developed for this purpose. The research also drew on secondary data from previous studies and monitoring reports on routine activities to enable cross-validation of the interview findings.

## **e. Study area and research sample**

The sample was constituted as follows:

- 24 villages were selected at random from a total of 48 villages, i.e. 8 villages per circle and 2 villages per commune (project intervention areas only);
- 6 key informants were interviewed, including 3 women and 3 men, project participants only;

For triangulation purposes, focus group discussions were held in 12 villages with representatives of VSLA groups (focus on women) and members of POs, livestock farmers, the forest protection brigade and young people (focus on men). These informants were selected on the basis of their involvement in the project's activities and their membership of specific groups.

The sample consisted of 143 people, 50% of whom were women, 12 women focus groups with VSLA groups and 12 men focus groups with representatives of specific groups.

Table 1 Summary of the sample

Circle	Number of people			Focus on women	Men's focus	Number of villages
	Woman	Men	Grand total			
Barouéli	24	23	47	4	4	8
Bla	24	24	48	4	4	8
Ségou	24	24	48	4	4	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>24</b>

Respondents' ages ranged from 18 to 60 and over. The table below shows that 58% of respondents were aged between 36 and 59.

Table 2 Breakdown of respondents to the individual interview by age group and gender.

Gender	Age range			Grand total
	18 to 35	36 to 59	60 and over	
<b>Woman</b>	13%	31%	6%	50%
<b>Men</b>	10%	27%	13%	50%
<b>Total</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>100%</b>

A total of 217 respondents took part in the various focus groups, broken down as follows:

Table 3 Number of participants per focus group by village and gender.

N°	Villages	Men	Women	Total
1	Fambougou	9	8	17
2	Diassébogou	8	8	16
3	Farissoumal	8	7	15
4	Konodimini	8	10	18
5	Keména	8	9	17
6	Welégara	8	8	16
7	Tjilla	8	10	18
8	Koni	8	8	16
9	Touna	8	16	24
10	Toukoro	8	8	16
11	Dakoumana	15	10	25
12	Kamplosso2	8	11	19
<b>Total</b>		<b>104</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>217</b>

## f. Data collection tools

Three tools were developed to carry out this research, which consisted of in-depth understanding of behavioural changes and the factors underlying them among participants in the Genre+ Phase II project . These tools are :

- Individual interview guide for VSLA women,
- Individual interview guide for men,
- Discussion guide for men's and women's focus groups.

The development and validation of these tools was made possible thanks to collaboration between the CARE Mali and CARE UK teams.

## g. On-site collection procedure

In order to carry out this research, 3 data collectors were recruited and trained, one for each circle. The orientation on the tools and the test phase took place from 02 to 05 January 2024, the field phase from 06 to 13 January and the transcription of the focus group data from 15 to 18 January under the supervision of the Research and Learning Officer. During the 8 days in the field, each agent administered the tools via the Kobo collect digital platform, which made it possible to centralise the data as the survey progressed.

During the data collection, the agents did not encounter any major difficulties in the villages. However, they did report a high number of transcribed focus group discussions, at two (2) per day.



Figure 2 Individual interview with a woman, Sakoïbouyou.



Figure 1 Focus group men, Kampołosso 2.

## **h. Data processing and analysis**

Once the data had been centralised on Kobo and the focus groups transcribed, the processing and analysis focused mainly on :

- Cleaning (removing duplicates and correcting certain missing values) and processing the data in order to highlight the main trends in the different variables covered by the tools.
- Once the data had been prepared, two types of analysis were carried out: a content analysis to make explicit the continuity of the interview guides for processing the qualitative data, and a descriptive analysis to calculate the frequencies and score ranges of the quantitative data.

## **i. Limits of the study**

This research has two limitations:

- **Internal validity:** "Internal validity" refers to the extent to which the results of a study reflect the true cause and effect relationships within the study. The limitation of the results of this research stems from the nature of the research, which is cross-sectional, so the methodology allows little assertion of causality.
- **External validity:** "External validity" refers to the extent to which the results of a study can be generalised to other populations outside those studied. As the beneficiary communities of the Genre + Phase II project were the setting from which the sample for this study was drawn, the results can only be generalised to these communities/villages in the cercles of Barouéli, Bla and Ségou and not to all communities in the Ségou region.

## **IV. Main research results**

This section presents the main results obtained through the data analysis; it is structured as follows: (1) an overview of local approaches to natural resource management, examining how communities approach and make decisions about the use and conservation of their environmental resources; (2) the role of women in these decision-making processes and the impact of their participation; (3) the changes in behaviour observed and the contributing factors; (4) women's advocacy and participation and the impact of their sustainable access to land.

### **A. Analysis of approaches to the rational and consensual management of natural resources**

#### **I. Local approach to NRM decision-making**

In relation to the data, the results indicate a similarity in local approaches to NRM decision-making, with a predominance of groupings of community leaders, followed by the village council, while specific committees are less common but can also be important in addressing specific needs within communities.

When it comes to decision-making, community leaders are the most common grouping, with **59% of** respondents saying this (*71% of women and 41% of men*). By community leaders, respondents mean religious leaders, neighbourhood chiefs, representatives of youth and women's associations, all under the authority of the village chief. Next came the village council, with **32% of** respondents (*25% of women and 39% of men*). According to respondents, although less widespread than community leaders' groups, village councils remain important structures for local governance and decision-making at community level. Finally, specific committees such as Cofo, the forest protection brigade and the water management committee account for around **9%** of the overall total (*4% among women and 14% among men*). This suggests that specific committees are less common than other types of entity in decision-making, but they can nonetheless play a crucial role in the management of particular areas, as the following statement indicates: "For each natural resource in the village, there is a committee appointed to manage it, whether it's the river, the pump, the forest, and so on. Whenever a decision has to be made about a resource, this committee then informs the village council for a consensual decision (focus group, Toukoro man)", which means that whatever approach is used to make a decision, it is always validated by the village chief before being implemented.

Table 4 Local approach to NRM decision-making :

Communes	Village Council	Existence of specific committees	Grouping of various community leaders
<b>Baroueli</b>	17%	0%	83%
<b>Beguené</b>	0%	33%	67%
<b>Bla</b>	8%	17%	75%
<b>Cinzana</b>	33%	8%	58%
<b>Kalaké</b>	8%	0%	92%
<b>Kemeni</b>	8%	0%	92%
<b>Konobougou</b>	33%	8%	58%
<b>Konodimini</b>	67%	0%	33%
<b>Sakoïba</b>	83%	8%	8%
<b>Saminè</b>	100%	0%	0%
<b>Sanando</b>	25%	0%	67%
<b>Touna</b>	0%	33%	67%
<b>Package</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>59%</b>

## 2. Resolving disagreements

The table below shows the different methods used to resolve disagreements over control/access to natural resources, expressed as a total number of occurrences and as a percentage:

- **Intervention by the village council:** This method is the most frequently used, accounting for **46%** of the overall total (*63% among women and 39% among men*). This means that the resolution of disagreements is often initiated by the village chief and his councillors. They play a central role in mediating and resolving conflicts.
- **Involvement of specific groups:** such as caste men, griots, religious leaders, close friends or cousins of the two protagonists. This method is also common, accounting for

**26%** of the overall total (17% among women and 38% among men). This indicates that specific groups play a significant role in some communes in resolving disagreements over access to natural resources. As we saw from the focus group data, these specific groups make it easier for people to resolve certain conflicts without going through the village council.

- **Recourse to specific bodies:** such as COFO, the forest protection brigade, the water management committee; this method is also used by around **25%** of the overall total (21% of women and 23% of men). This suggests that, in the event of disagreements, the communities turn to the specific body linked to the resource to resolve the problems, which also facilitates mediation.
- **Recourse to the town hall:** This method is the least used, with only 3% of the overall total (6% of women, men did not mention this method as a means of conflict resolution). This suggests that recourse to the town hall as a means of intervening in community affairs is relatively rare (only when local mechanisms fail) compared with the other methods mentioned, which reflects the communities' desire to settle disagreements at local level.

This statement made during the focus group discussion with a man (Toukoro village) shows that communities rarely consider resorting to external bodies to resolve their differences: *"during the past winter, two herders clashed in the pasture, unfortunately one was seriously injured by a machete. When the problem reached the village council, the village chief called on certain leaders in addition to his councillors. The problem was solved by the community and the people concerned. The other farmer also paid for the treatment."*

Table 5 Resolution of disagreements over control/access to natural resources.

Communes	Speech by the village chief and his councillors	Intervention by specific groups	Recourse to specific bodies	Recourse to the Town Hall
Baroueli	67%	33%	0%	0%
Beguené	25%	0%	50%	25%
Bla	25%	17%	58%	0%
Cinzana	50%	19%	31%	0%
Kalaké	50%	50%	0%	0%
Kemeni	31%	8%	62%	0%
Konobougou	33%	27%	40%	0%
Konodimini	50%	50%	0%	0%
Sakoïba	83%	8%	8%	0%
Saminè	58%	42%	0%	0%
Sanando	55%	36%	9%	0%
Touna	42%	33%	25%	0%
Package	<b>46%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>3%</b>

### 3. Inclusiveness and consultation in relation to NRM approaches

Analysis of the data collected shows that current approaches to NRM in localities are perceived to be inclusive (i.e. including a wide range of voices from men, women, different ethnicities, age groups, professions and socio-economic groups) by 95% of respondents, with 65% saying this all the time and 30% saying this often (see graph below for disaggregation). However, there are

differences between men and women: 45% of men say that inclusive approaches are adopted 'all the time', compared with 15% of women - although, of both sexes, the majority think that a consensus-based approach is used (all the time): 67%, often 20% and sometimes 13%. However, 5% of respondents disagreed with the use of inclusive approaches because, in their view, in most cases, decisions are taken by village chiefs or headmen, and then a general assembly is held to inform the rest of the community, gather their opinions and make a final decision.

For example: "Once, in our village, the village council decided to organise collective fishing. They called an assembly to inform the other members of the village. We expressed our opinion that it was a bit premature, which led to the project being postponed. In our village, although the chief and his councillors make the decisions, they then organise an assembly to inform all the members of the village and gather their opinions before making a final decision. In everything, some people don't necessarily agree, but all the time we manage to take decisions with the agreement of the majority. Some people who are in the minority will end up supporting the majority decision", individual interview, man, Diasseboungou.

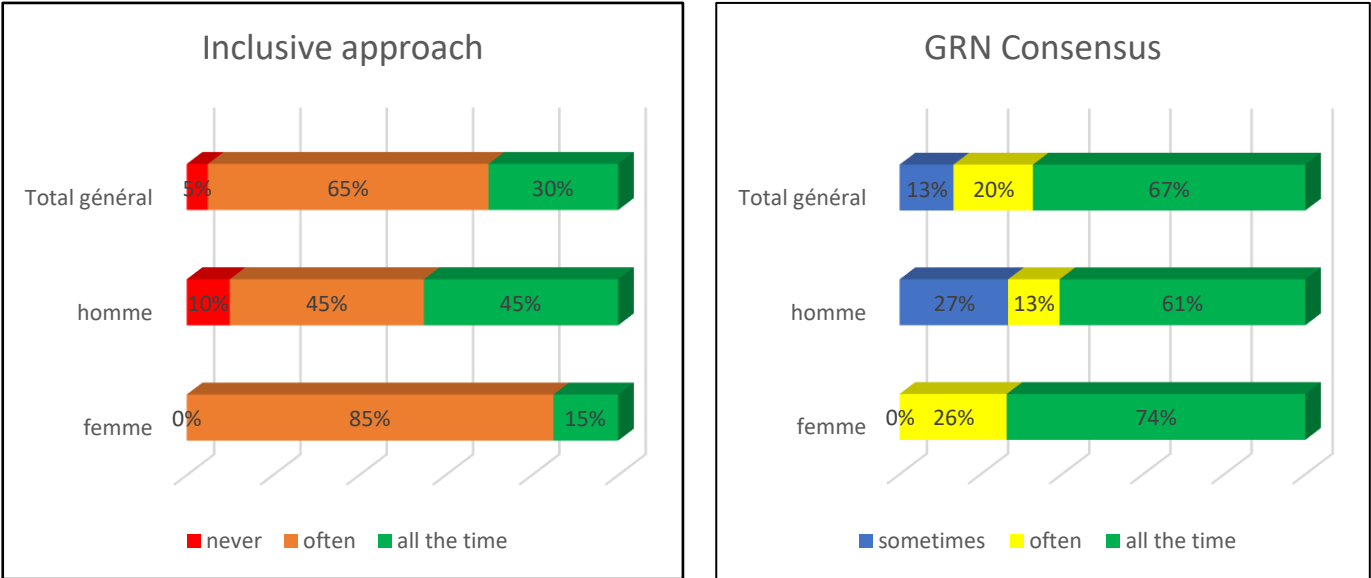


Figure 3 Inclusive and consensual NRM

Despite this disparity in responses, the vast majority of respondents report that current NRM approaches promote inclusion through consensual dialogue, which the project sees as an indicator or prerequisite for social cohesion and community resilience to conflict. This is also supported by anecdotal evidence. In a one-to-one interview with a woman from Sakoibougou, she said: "We have a cereal bank in our village, it's an initiative to help us get through the lean period. So both men and women are entitled to cereals stored in case of need before the planned sharing time. The cereals are given on condition that for every 100kg you repay, you add 10kg as interest. This initiative has helped to strengthen social cohesion between the communities and to promote inclusion, because the women are involved in the management of this cereal bank.

**4. The project's contribution to more effective or more inclusive NRM processes**

All of the participants interviewed for this survey believe that the project has made a contribution in their locality to making NRM processes more effective and more inclusive. In the explanations provided by the participants to underpin this contribution by Genre+ Phase II, 5 major sets of

project activities were highlighted, including: awareness-raising on the involvement of women came in first place with the respondents, representing 65% of the overall total (58% among women and 73% among men). This was followed by training in conflict prevention and management, which was mentioned by 26% of both male and female respondents (32% of women and 22% of men), in order to equip communities with the knowledge they need to prevent and mitigate conflicts linked to natural resources. The respondents also mentioned strengthening women's leadership, capacity building in ANR and women's access to land, although the proportions were minimal.

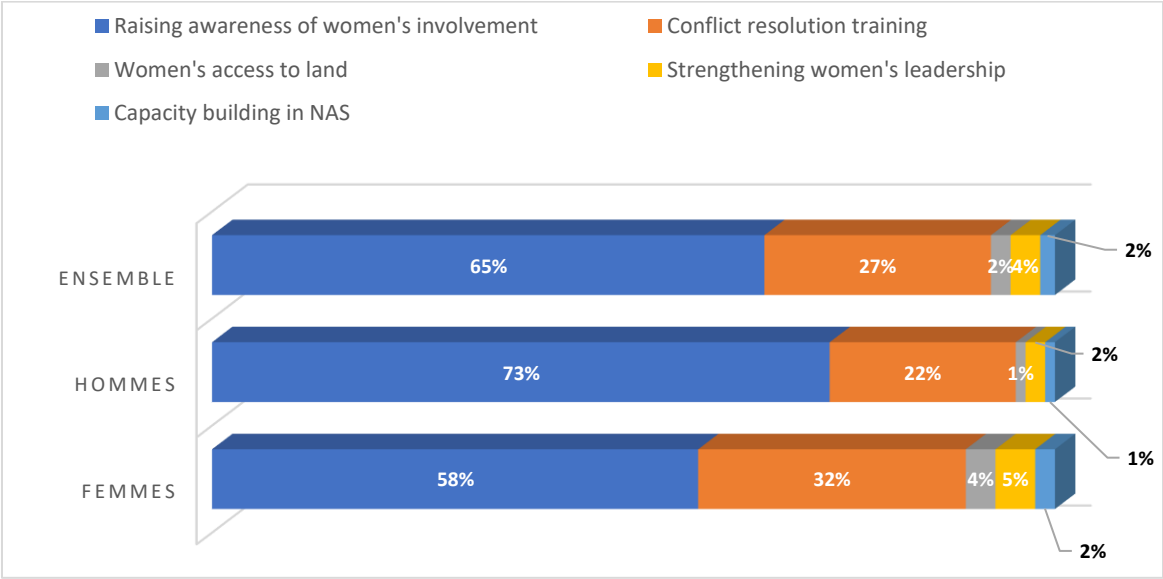


Figure 4 The project's contribution to NRM processes

**B. Analysis of the role of women and changes in behaviour over the last six months**

**I. The roles of women**

Respondents see women's involvement in decision-making processes concerning natural resources, conflict resolution and even resilience to the effects of climate change as important, for a number of reasons:

The involvement of women in NRM is seen as necessary to guarantee equal representation in decision-making processes and to ensure that the interests and needs of all stakeholders, men and women, are taken into account. To this end, in the majority of villages, decision-makers first meet with a female representative, who will defend the women's cause at these meetings and then report back to the other women. For example: "When the women want to take any action, they delegate the women's president and other women to bring this to the attention of the village chief. Or when important decisions are taken, the men call on a women's representative, who in turn informs the other women of the activity or decision that has been taken. We then support the decision taken by our men and these women representatives, whatever the decision. Often we even delegate a man to speak on behalf of women at certain men's meetings. Generally, we get our grievances met through this process, but if we don't get

*up as a group and talk to the men about it, it's less likely to be successful", focus group women, Diasebougou.*

With regard to the involvement of women in conflict resolution, respondents also acknowledged that women often bring different ideas and perspectives to the table than men. They are seen as good mediators who can resolve conflicts quickly and effectively, which is why women are represented on COFO. As stated during the men's focus group in Tjilla: *"a conflict arose between a farmer and a herder when the herder's animals damaged the farmer's field. The initial compensation offered was 75,000 CFA francs, which the farmer had to pay or risk having his animals taken to the pound. At a COFO meeting to settle the dispute, a female representative was present. Thanks to her interventions and negotiations, the amount of compensation was reduced to 35,000 FCFA. The crucial role played by this woman was decisive, because without her intervention, the farmer would never have accepted this sum"*.

In terms of resilience to the effects of climate change, women are not being left out, given that they are the primary forest users. According to the respondents, they are involved in market-gardening activities as a means of economic empowerment, in order to reduce the pressure on forest resources. They take part in organising traditional and cultural practices (collective prayer sessions) to ensure good rainfall, and are also involved in RNA and tree planting in collaboration with the men, making improved stoves and using biogas (mainly in the village of Touna).

In addition, the women are members of the forest protection brigades, in which they carry out awareness-raising activities on the effects of climate change and help to make compost. These activities are supported by : *"Every year, just after the rainy season, we used to cut down a lot of trees and store them as firewood for cooking. Now we've realised that we need to change our behaviour, so we leave one year out of two without cutting any wood, and if we don't respect this rule, we risk being punished"*, focus group woman, Kampolosso 2.

## **2. Changes in behaviour**

Respondents' answers regarding changes in behaviour observed over the last six months are almost identical, with 99% stating that they have observed these changes. The table below shows the types of change, expressed in terms of gender, total number of occurrences and percentage:

**Women's participation in NRM and conflict resolution:** this change was mentioned most by respondents representing around 34% of the overall total (*i.e. 33% of women and 35% of men*). This means that women are beginning to play an important role in NRM and in mediation and conflict resolution, as the men in the Toukoro focus group put it: *"Before, we used to seek the advice of our wives discreetly at home in order to deal with a problem. Nowadays, women play this role directly in the COFO or as female representatives on the village council in order to resolve conflicts"*.

**Community adaptation to the effects of climate change:** Community adaptation to the effects of climate change represents 33% of the overall total (*32% of women and 33% of men*). The initiatives implemented by the community to combat or mitigate the effects of climate change include: planting and maintaining trees (*29%, 25% of women and 33% of men*) to restore the forest and fill the gap left by deforestation; reducing abusive logging (*28% overall, 31% of women and 25% of men*); using improved seeds and organic fertilisers (*27% overall, 26% of women and 28% of men*) to improve yields and avoid exposure to chemicals. The use of stone barriers to reduce soil erosion was also mentioned by 9% (*6% of women and 12% of men*), and the use of clay or biogas stoves by 7% (*12% of women and 2% of men*) as an alternative to firewood.

**Resolving community conflicts by using traditional mechanisms:** Over the past six months, 18% of respondents (20% of women and 17% of men) said they had used traditional mechanisms to resolve community conflicts. These mechanisms include the village council, joking cousins, caste men, community leaders and Cofo.

**Natural resource management that takes into account the needs of women and minority groups 15% of the overall total (15% of women and 15% of men):** the last change observed was that respondents said that some of women's needs were not taken into account before, but now they are. Among the 15% who made this statement, the needs that have been taken into account over the last six months are: women's access to land (68%) (affirmed by 79% of women and 57% of men), participation in decision-making processes (27% overall, 21% of women and 32% of men) and recognition of women's rights (6%) mentioned by only 11% of men. One example of these considerations being taken into account is the granting of land to women for market gardening, but some husbands also delegate part of the collective fields to their wives in order to empower them, as they say: "before we needed land but we weren't even afraid to talk about it, but now the women have asked the men and they have taken it into consideration", individual interview, Tjilla.

Table 6 Behaviour change in the last six months according to respondents :

Observed changes in behaviour	Women	Men	Total
Women's participation in NRM and conflict resolution	33%	35%	34%
Community adaptation to climate change	32%	33%	33%
Community conflict resolution using traditional mechanisms	20%	17%	18%
Natural resource management that takes into account the needs of women and minority groups.	15%	15%	15%

### 3. Contribution to the changes observed

The changes observed over the last six months in natural resource management and conflict resolution were the result of a combination of several factors. In fact, the reasons for these changes in both the individual interviews and the focus groups are quite similar. These changes were mainly due to the training and awareness-raising sessions provided by the Genre + Phase II project (first and second phases combined), which accounted for 64% of the overall total (67% of women and 61% of men), accompanied by the initiatives of community leaders and women's advocacy for their involvement, which accounted for 24% (20% of women and 28% of men). As they say: "We can even say that the actions of the GENRE + PHASE II project have contributed a great deal to changing behaviour and attitudes, because through the training we receive from the project, and the feedback we give to others, we can see that many have understood and are in the process of changing. The women themselves have realised that they have the right to defend their interests, even within traditional structures such as chieftaincies. This is why they have expressed their desire to have female representation in the forthcoming elections for "Haut du formulaire" councillors, focus group man Farissouma I.

As for the actions implemented to adapt to the effects of climate change, in addition to the efforts of the Gender++ project, some respondents mentioned the support of other actors 12% in total (13% of women and 11% of men) such as the NGO CARITAS, the GEWEP project (Care) in

connection with the economic empowerment of women to reduce pressure on forest resources and the NGO GFORCE with awareness raising and capacity building mainly on the use of bio gas. *We've just started using bio-gas for cooking," says GFORCE, an initiative from another donor. Since I've started using it, the amount of trees I used to cut down has gone down a lot and I have more time for my other occupations"*, focus group woman, Touna.

In relation to these changes, some respondents think that the Gender++ project has made a major contribution, i.e. 45% (49% of women and 41% of men) mainly in the former communes that benefited from the first phase of the project, a medium contribution, i.e. 35% (36% of women and 33% of men) and others think that it has made a minor contribution, i.e. 20% (15% of women and 26% of men).

**4. Actors or groups that have changed**

The figure below highlights the actors or groups among whom changes in behaviour have been observed over the last six months. According to the respondents, the actors who have changed the most are community leaders/decision-makers, i.e. village chiefs and religious leaders, who account for around 44% of the overall total (49% among women and 39% among men). These stakeholders have changed their perspective on the role of women in natural resource management. They increasingly recognise the importance of women's involvement and accept their participation in decision-making. The change in heads of household (27%, 26% of women and 28% of men): according to the respondents, some heads of household have become more understanding of their wives' involvement in the decision-making process. Awareness among women was also mentioned, accounting for 19% of the overall total (15% of women and 23% of men). Women have gradually acquired a better understanding of their rights and duties in the management of natural resources, which has motivated them to become more involved and claim their place in the decision-making process. Finally, some 10% of respondents believe that these changes in behaviour can be observed across the whole population: men, women and young people (9% of women and 10% of men).

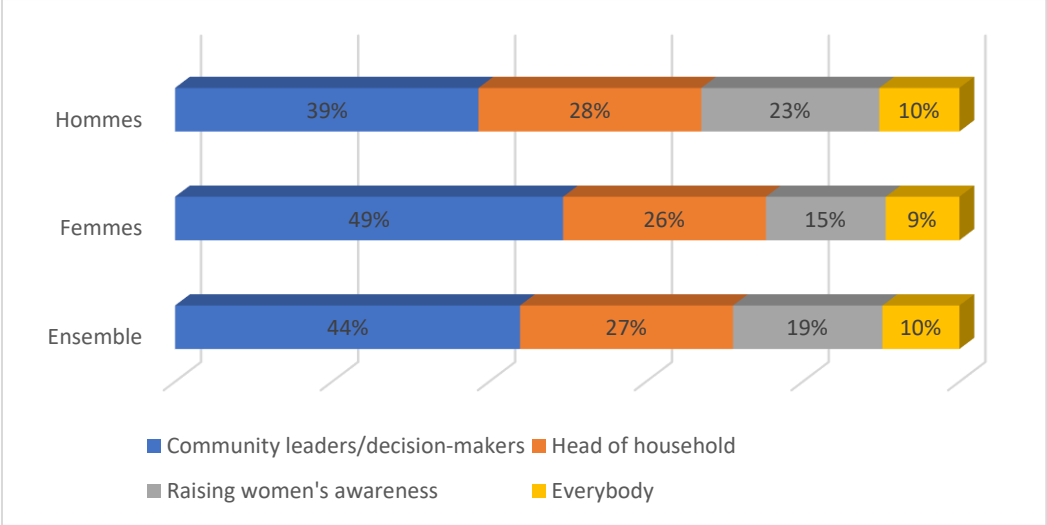


Figure 5 Breakdown of respondents by gender and their perception of players or groups who have changed their behaviour in the last 6 months

## 5. Women appointed in the last six months

Only 23% of respondents said that women had held positions of responsibility in strategic decision-making bodies relating to NRM and conflict resolution in the last six months.

Most of the responses highlighted the importance of the training and awareness-raising (45%) provided by projects such as Genre + Phase II in bringing about a change in behaviour among village leaders and decision-makers (*affirmed by 24% of women compared with 21% of men*). These training sessions helped to raise awareness among participants of the importance of involving women in decision-making processes relating to natural resource management.

In some cases, according to the 27% of respondents (*18% of men compared with 9% of women*), it was the explicit request of the Genre + Phase II project that was a determining factor in the appointment of women to positions of responsibility. The project advocated the involvement of women in the management of natural resources, thus encouraging local leaders to take steps in this direction, especially during forums on the participation of women in decision-making.

Finally, some respondents (27% of the total, *i.e. 15% of women and 12% of men*) stressed that the involvement of women in the committees was made possible thanks to the initiative of the participants trained by the project. After acquiring knowledge and skills during the training courses, these participants took the initiative to ask local leaders to include women on the relevant committees.

Furthermore, 73% of respondents (*69% of women and 73% of men*) thought that the Gender++ project had made a major contribution to achieving this change, compared with 27% who thought it had made an average contribution (*31% of women and 24% of men*).

The participation of women in decision-making processes has led to more effective solutions to conflicts over natural resources, as confirmed by around 66% of respondents (*85% of women and 53% of men*). Some conflicts find a different solution, as the following statement illustrates: "*My husband and one of his brothers quarrelled over the family land, I managed to calm my husband down and he dropped the matter. After he died, the children took up the dispute again, and his brother went to see the village chief, but unfortunately the council couldn't resolve the conflict. I had to intervene again, I spoke to my children and the matter was resolved. I'm sure that without my intervention, the conflict would have ended up in court and the family would have broken up as a result*", said a participant in the focus group, a woman from Dakoumana.

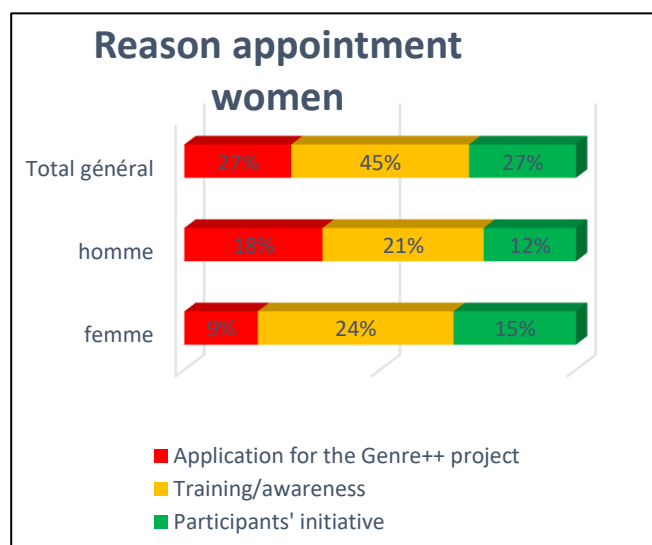
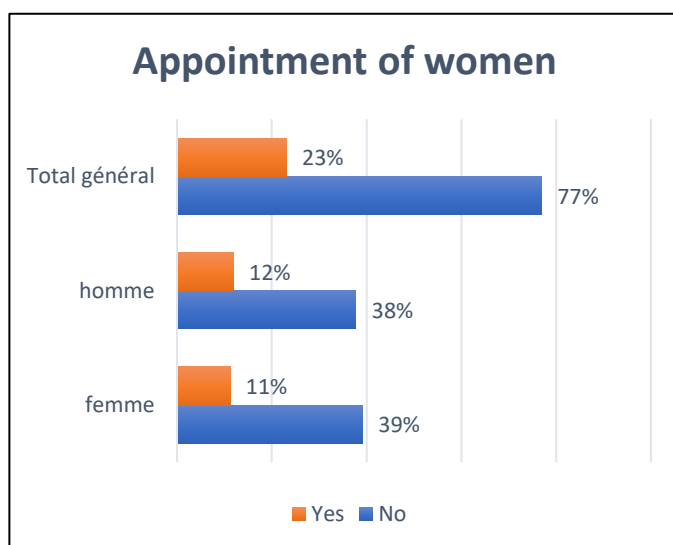


Figure 6 Women appointed in the last six months.

## 6. Women's appointment challenges

Despite the changes observed over the last six months, some respondents believe that there are still challenges in appointing women to positions of responsibility in NRM and conflict resolution. Some respondents (22% of the overall total, 19% of women and 6% of men) said that they had encountered challenges in integrating women into decision-making processes relating to NR.

The challenges are resistance (47%) or reluctance on the part of certain leaders to appoint women to positions of responsibility. Then there is a lack of understanding on the part of the stakeholders concerned (29%), probably regarding the role or suitability of women for certain positions, and finally obstacles linked to traditions, social norms or customs (24%) that are against appointing women to positions of responsibility.

According to the respondents, these challenges will be overcome mainly through awareness-raising sessions, i.e. organising more awareness-raising sessions and training for community leaders/decision-makers and village chiefs to inform them about the importance of gender equality and the advantages of including women in positions of responsibility without undermining tradition.

Table 7 Challenges for nominating women over the last six months.

Types of challenges for women's nomination	Frequency	Percentage
Reluctance on the part of certain leaders	16	47%
Misunderstanding	10	29%
Customs	8	24%
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100%</b>

- ❖ List of women who have held positions of responsibility in the last six months :

Table 8 List of women nominated in the last six months.

N°	Village	First name and surname	Position	Appointment period
1	Kampolosso 2	Kotimi Sogoba	Women's representative on the village council	June 2023
2	Kampolosso 2	Bintou Coulibaly	Vice-Chair of the PMH pump management committee	June 2023
3	Kampolosso 2	Djeneba Sogoba	PMH pump maintenance assistant	June 2023
4	Dakoumana	Minata Coulibaly	Women's representative on the village council.	September 2023
5	Pinguala	Bandjeni bouaré	Treasurer of the Water Management Committee	September 2023
6	Fambougou	Nafi Coulibaly, Kadiatou Doumbia	Members of the Forest Protection Committee	September 2023
7	Toukoro	Fanta tangara	Women's representative on the village council	September 2023
8	Dakoumana	Minata Coulibaly	Women's representative on COFO	The COFO was renewed in June 2023
9	Fambougou	Bandjeni bouaré	Treasurer on the water management committee	September 2023
10	Fambougou	Nafi Coulibaly,	Information officer on the water management committee	September 2023
11	Bla	Aby Diarra	3rd Vice-President of the farmers' organisation.	August 2023

### C. Advocacy and women's participation

All the women surveyed said they had attended at least one of the training courses organised by the Genre + Phase II project during 2023. Training on climate change accounted for 35%, followed by training on the WLIE approach and conflict management (26%) and participation in the CCVCA process (14%). The main things they learnt from participating in these training courses are as follows:

#### Training on climate change (35%) :

- Learning about the effects of climate change on the environment, natural resources and local communities.
- Acquiring knowledge about strategies for adapting to and mitigating the effects of climate change.

### **Training in the WLIE approach (26%) :**

- Developing the leadership skills needed to take the initiative and play an active role in community development.
- Strengthening literacy skills.

### **Conflict management training (26%) :**

- Acquiring the skills to identify, manage and resolve conflicts peacefully within the community.
- Learning mediation and dialogue techniques to encourage the peaceful resolution of disputes and promote social cohesion.

### **Participation in the CCVCA process (14%) :**

- Identifying the village's natural resources, the effect of climate change on these resources and proposing mitigation strategies.

Table 9 Training courses taken by women in 2023.

<b>Training courses taken by women in 2023</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Adapting to the effects of climate change</b>	64	35%
<b>Conflict prevention and management techniques</b>	48	26%
<b>Women's leadership through Women Lead in Emergencies (WLIE)</b>	47	26%
<b>CCVCA process</b>	25	14%
<b>Total</b>	184	100%

### **I. Advocacy actions undertaken for women's participation in NRM.**

When analysing the data, 49% of the women surveyed said that in their locality advocacy actions had been undertaken in the last six months in favour of women's involvement in NRM, compared with 51% who thought the opposite.

Successful advocacy actions have improved women's access to land, as confirmed by 49% of the women who have carried out advocacy actions. Thanks to the Genre + Phase II project, several localities now have access not only to agropastoral development areas, but also to market garden areas, thereby promoting their economic empowerment. Concrete examples of this progress can be seen in villages such as Tingoni, Marobougou and Ouendebougou. Through their lobbying efforts, the women have succeeded in acquiring communal land dedicated to market garden production, an opportunity that was previously unavailable in these villages.



Figure 7 Agro-pastoral perimeter of the women of Toukoro (commune of Bla).



Figure 8A farmer in her onion plot (rehabilitated market garden in Farissouma).

In addition, some women (35%) said that they had held meetings with local decision-makers to improve their participation in NRM and were awaiting their feedback. However, some women (16%) have not carried out any advocacy activities because, in their view, women are already involved in NRM.

#### **D. Women's access to land**

Twenty-seven percent 27% (23% of women and 31% of men) of respondents said that women's access to land had not improved or had deteriorated. However, 63% (77% of women and 69% of men) of respondents (both men and women) felt that women's access to land had improved.

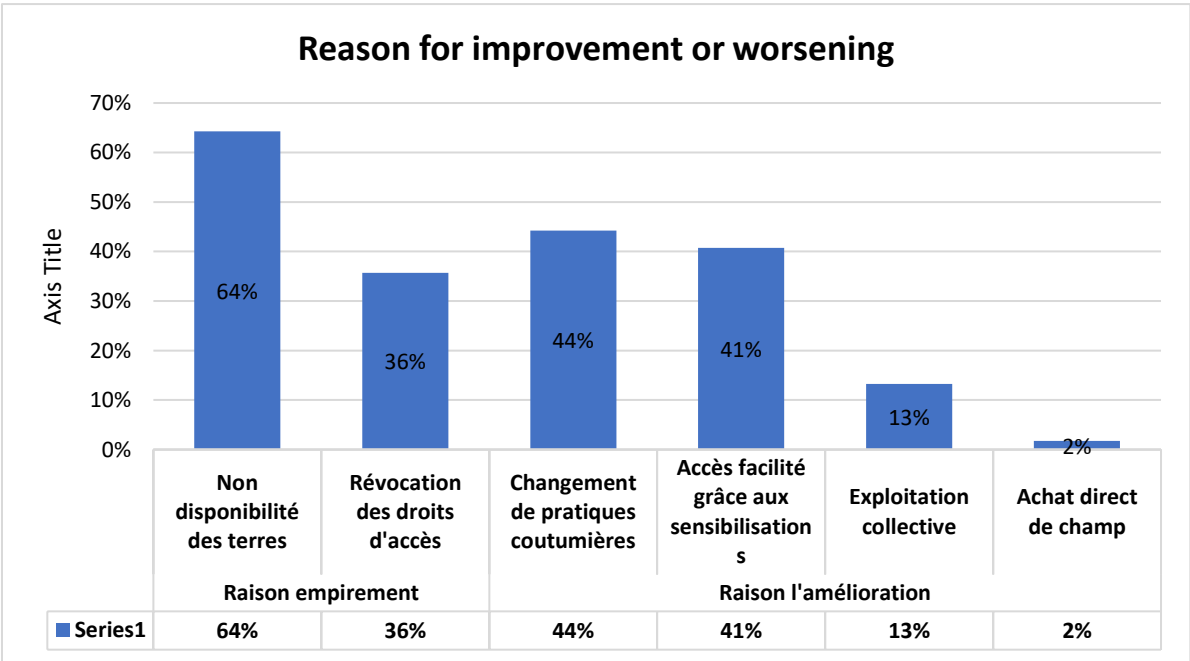
The main reason for improved access was a change in customary practices that were not sufficiently favourable to women (44%, 40% of women and 49% of men). Access was also facilitated by awareness campaigns, 41% of the total (37% of women and 45% of men). These reasons highlight the positive impact of awareness campaigns on women's access to land. Some respondents mentioned collective farming, i.e. in several localities, collective access to land is the only way for

women to own land in the long term (13% of the total). Moreover, women reported this reason more than men (20% compared with 6%). Unless they have money and can buy it directly (2%). It should be noted that this access is temporary, except in the case of direct purchase or in the case of certain market garden areas wholly owned by women. For example: "Women generally have access to land in the form of a loan, but inheriting land is always a tricky business in our village, given the weight of tradition, because traditionally women don't inherit land here. Nevertheless, some women have been able to buy land that they are still cultivating", focus group man, Cinzana.

Access to land also differs according to a woman's social status: a married woman is more likely to have access to land than a divorced or single woman. In the words of this man: "Every man gives a portion of land to his wife to cultivate, but not to appropriate. Over the last six months, all the young women who have recently married have received land from their husbands, but if they divorce, the land is taken away from them", individual interview, N'djella.

However, some respondents disagreed and reported that women's access to land had deteriorated, believing that there was not enough land for everyone, i.e. 64% of the total (100% of women compared with 44 of men). In such cases, it is impossible for women to have land, as these women put it: "Women are fed up with asking for land to cultivate because they don't get it. There isn't enough land for the men, let alone some for the women. Some men can't feed their families with what they produce because they don't have enough land. Even if women manage to get land here, they give it to their husbands out of compassion. There has been no improvement in the land situation for women over the last six months", focus group woman, Diassebouyou. Finally, some (mainly men 56%) cited the revocation of access rights as an obstacle to women's access to land, at 36%.

Table 10 Reasons for women's improved or poorer access to land



Despite these reasons for improvement, 86% of people (85% men and 88% women) say that there are no initiatives in their community to improve women's sustainable access to land. The remaining 14% cited the following initiatives: securing collective fields such as market gardens and agro-pastoral areas (75% of initiatives). The other initiatives (25%), according to the respondents, involve

a rental contract between the women who want the land and the landowners, with the involvement of COFO.

**I. Barriers to participation**

The table below shows a variety of potential obstacles to women's participation in NRM according to all respondents. The majority of respondents do not consider themselves to have any obstacles to women's participation in NRM, representing 60% of the total (67% of women and 70% of men), which means that the majority of respondents do not encounter any significant barriers to women's involvement in decision-making in their locality.

However, 19% of respondents (18% of women compared with 10% of men) cited lack of education as a barrier to women's participation, indicating that the level of education can be a barrier to participation, particularly for women. 9% highlighted potential tensions or conflicts between the sexes that can hinder participation. The lack of self-confidence among women, the weight of customs and the importance of land security were mentioned by some respondents.

Moreover, 73% of all respondents (men and women) said that all women experienced these obstacles in the same way, while 27% noted a disparity. In other words, some women come from wealthy families, so their husbands can easily grant them land without this having an impact on family production, or women who are members of VSLAs can easily obtain land through their groups than others who are not members.

*Table 11 Barriers to women's participation*

Barriers to participation	Women	Men	Overall Total
No obstacles	67%	70%	60%
Lack of education	18%	10%	19%
Men's lack of understanding	4%	6%	9%
Women's lack of self-confidence	6%	3%	5%
Non-permanent landowners	3%	6%	4%
The weight of customs	1%	4%	3%

**2. Necessary changes**

Although there were not enough barriers still limiting women's participation, here are a few recommendations that were made by respondents in relation to the barriers formulated (see figure below for disaggregation). Firstly, literacy, which accounts for 44% of the total, underlines the importance of basic education in overcoming barriers linked to the level of education. This is followed by information and awareness-raising sessions on the issues and opportunities at stake (33%) to encourage women's participation. Finally, we have training for women in law and leadership to strengthen their initiative-taking skills (11%).

However, some respondents (11%) do not know what changes are needed to remove the barriers. This category indicates uncertainty or a lack of clarity about what needs to be done to promote women's participation in NRM.

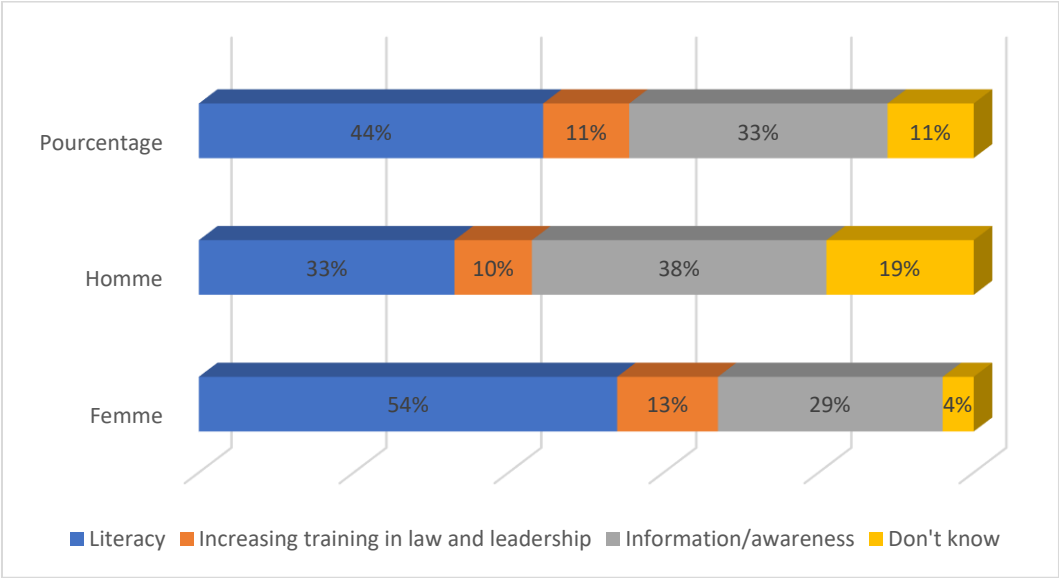


Figure 9 Changes needed to remove obstacles

## V. Project successes

According to the project participants, some of the successes achieved by Genre + Phase II in the intervention areas can be listed:

Women's literacy thanks to the WLIE approach: in certain localities, illiteracy was a major obstacle to women's active participation in the management of their VSLA and in decision-making within their community. Literacy initiatives have enabled women to acquire essential skills and boosted their self-confidence. For example: *"Thanks to the project's support, 30 women benefited from literacy courses over 45 days in February 2024. These courses enabled the women to take charge of the administrative and financial management of their VSLA, but also boosted their self-confidence. The group's administrative secretaries now carry out their duties effectively, and the women no longer need to depend on a man to keep the accounts. What's more, when we are invited to meetings or events, we can now write our own information, which was previously unthinkable for most of us"*. (Atoumata Traoré, VSLA President, Beyan village)

Rehabilitation and development of market gardening and agro-pastoral areas: Thanks to the capacity-building and advocacy carried out by the WLIE activities, all the project villages where women did not have collective spaces (such as market gardening areas) were encouraged to find solutions to provide appropriate spaces for women. This has promoted women's economic empowerment by enabling them to access productive resources and contribute to family income.

Forums focusing on women's involvement: Genre + Phase II organised forums aimed at strengthening women's involvement in decision-making processes. These forums offered women a platform to express their opinions, needs and aspirations, thereby helping to increase their participation and leadership in community life.

## VI. Discussion of the results

The data from this research, together with the project's secondary resources, were used to examine the determinants of women's participation in NR-related decision-making and the implementation of consensual approaches to resource management. In relation to the research questions that were formulated, the discussion of our results is as follows:

✚ *What evidence is there that more active participation by women in decision-making contributes to more resilient and cohesive communities?*

Communities have given many examples of how women can contribute to more resilient and cohesive communities. Women play a very important role in NRM decision-making. According to the results, women's participation in decision-making processes has led to more effective solutions to conflicts related to natural resources, as confirmed by 66% of respondents (85% women and 53% men). This is explained by the fact that women are often considered better mediators than men, and can bring different ideas and perspectives to the table that would lead to more effective and sustainable solutions.

As has also been noted, women play a very important role in mitigating the effects of climate change. Given that they are the main users of forest resources, their involvement in NRM decision-making would make a major contribution to more effective solutions. Gender equality and women's participation in decision-making and governance of natural resources benefit conservation objectives and lead to more effective outcomes. Indeed, studies of forest user groups in Indonesia, Peru and Tanzania have shown that groups with a quota for a gender-balanced composition conserved more trees in a payment for ecosystem services intervention and shared payments more equitably than groups without a quota (Nattan J. Cook, et al, 2019<sup>6</sup>).

✚ *How can the development of inclusive and consensual approaches to natural resource management promote social cohesion and community resilience in the face of conflict?*

The results of the study showed that local approaches to resource management are predominantly community-based. All conflicts are managed in such a way as to reduce the involvement of external services. Analysis of the data collected shows that current local approaches to NRM are perceived to be inclusive (i.e. including a wide range of voices from men, women, different ethnicities, age groups, professions and socio-economic groups) by 95% of respondents, with 65% saying this all the time and 30% saying it often (see graph below for disaggregation). The majority think that a consensus-based approach is used (all the time): 67%, often 20% and sometimes 13%. According to the respondents, these approaches help to promote social cohesion and community resilience to conflict through: (1) local ownership, i.e. approaches are developed and implemented by community members themselves, (2) strengthening social ties by creating relationships of trust and solidarity between individuals, which is essential for dealing with challenges and tensions, (3) consideration of diverse needs and perspectives by involving different local stakeholders and (4) reducing dependency on external services, which strengthens their autonomy and ability to find solutions tailored to their specific needs.

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<sup>6</sup> N.J. Cook, T. Grillos, and K.P. Andersson. "Gender quotas increase the equality and effectiveness of climate policy interventions." *Nature Climate Change*, 9. 2019.

One of the conditions for successful collective action cited by Ostrom (1990<sup>7</sup>) is the existence of institutional arrangements. In "Governing the commons", Ostrom (1990) proposes that the users of a resource must set up their own system of governance to ensure effective use of the resources. To do this, they need to put in place a system of controls and sanctions, to check that the players are observing the rules that have been pooled, to regulate conflicts, and procedures for renegotiating and modifying the rules when the need arises. The implementation of these rules is guaranteed by the users themselves, and the rules must be legitimate and accepted by the communities.

✚ *How can women's sustainable access to land reduce gender inequalities and promote better representation of women in decision-making processes relating to natural resources? What evidence is there that this contributes to more resilient and cohesive societies?*

Twenty-seven percent 27% (23% of women and 31% of men) of respondents said that women's access to land had not improved or had deteriorated. However, 63% (77% of women and 69% of men) of respondents (both men and women) felt that women's access to land had improved.

The main reason for improved access was a change in customary practices, accounting for 44% (40% among women and 49% among men). Access was also facilitated by awareness-raising campaigns (41% of the total, 37% of women and 45% of men) and collective farming, i.e. in several localities, collective access to land is the only way for women to own land in the long term (13% of the total). In fact, women gave this reason more than men (20% compared with 6%). Unless they have money and can buy it directly (2%).

Historically, women have often been excluded from land ownership, which limits their ability to exercise control over the natural resources vital to their livelihoods. By ensuring equitable access to land, women can be more economically and socially empowered. Furthermore, when women have secure access to land, they are more likely to be involved in decision-making processes related to natural resource management as they are better positioned to participate in discussions, negotiations and decision-making regarding the use and management of land and related resources.

In agriculture, if women had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20 to 30%. This could increase total agricultural production in developing countries by 2.5% to 4%, which could reduce the number of undernourished people in the world by 12% to 17% (FAO, 2011<sup>8</sup>).

## VII. Conclusion

In conclusion, the results of this study highlight the crucial importance of women's participation in natural resource management (NRM) in promoting community resilience, social cohesion and gender equality. Here are some key points to remember:

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<sup>7</sup> Ostrom, E. (1990). *Governing the commons: the evolution of institutions for collective action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>8</sup> FAO. *The State of Food and Agriculture: Women in Agriculture, Closing the gender gap for development*. FAO. 2011.

- The active participation of women in decision-making processes relating to natural resources contributes to more effective and sustainable solutions to conflicts and promotes more inclusive and consensual management of resources. Their role as mediators and their ability to bring different perspectives to the table are essential to achieving results that benefit the whole community.
- Local approaches to natural resource management, which are broadly community-based and inclusive, are crucial to strengthening social cohesion and community resilience in the face of conflict. By promoting local ownership, strengthening social ties and reducing dependence on external services, these approaches enable communities to find solutions tailored to their specific needs.
- Women's sustainable access to land is a key factor in reducing gender inequalities and promoting their participation in decision-making processes. By guaranteeing equitable access to land, women can be more economically and socially autonomous, which helps to strengthen their representation and influence in the governance of natural resources.

### **Main recommendations of the analysis:**

1. Emphasise awareness-raising, training and skills development for men in favour of gender equality, in order to promote better understanding and active support for women's participation in all areas of community life.
2. Focus women's training programmes more on areas such as rights, leadership and participation, to boost their confidence and ability to make informed decisions.
3. Mobilise and involve community leaders more so that they actively support the involvement of women in decision-making processes
4. To provide appropriate support for women in developing their market gardening and agricultural product processing activities, by providing training and access to markets.
5. To support community reforestation and environmental conservation initiatives, providing financial, technical and logistical support to encourage tree planting.
6. Intensify training and literacy programmes for women, offering them continuous learning opportunities to enhance their skills.

## VIII. References

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## IX. Collection tools

The various tools used to collect the data are attached:



Outil\_ Femme  
VSLA.docx



Outil\_Hommes.docx



Outil\_Focus\_Groupe  
de Discussion.docx