

Since the inception of the ArBolivia project we have fully respected and promoted women's rights in general and we strive to evaluate and improve our performance on relevant issues, as our scope and resources allow.

The forestry sector, particularly in Bolivia, has been dominated by men and the reality is that the pool of qualified candidates for both manual and managerial, as opposed to typically administrative positions is extremely limited. In addition men have tended to play a dominant role in household and community decision making and so participation and representation is far from perfect

Nevertheless, we are aware of the issues involved and are committed to doing what we can to train, promote and improve the lot of women in all areas.

*The ArBolivia Project is creating awareness of the importance of including women and indeed all family members in all aspects of project development & elaboration, especially in decision making and land use planning.*

Our project focuses specifically on the settler communities, which have been established and have grown as a result of a series of government resettlement programmes. Land title in these areas is general is a thorny issue in general, due to a number of factors including, poor regulation and administration, corruption & politics, unauthorized encroachment onto neighbouring or new land, reclassification of land as National Parks & "Multi-Use Zones" and conflicts between settler and indigenous communities.



However Land Rights are a particular issue for women. Until as recently as 2012, women in Bolivia had not been recognised in titles of land. Only a husband or male partner was mentioned in the official documents by name , this providing no legal recognition for a wife or female partner. If the husband or man passed away or left, women had no secure tenure and legally no rights to the land and property they lived on.

Now, whether married or not, couples living together for more than 2 years can have their properties officially mapped and registered with the local government and can have their legal documents updated. However this is not very well known by a lot of farmer families and so Sircrec Bolivia has been actively informing households of these rights and obligations. In any

event, formal registration of the property of the plantation itself is needed in order to ensure that the timber rights themselves are owned jointly by both partners.

Training in on equality issues is provided to all our staff and specific attention given to including all family members in decision making.

*The first step in the whole process of starting up activities in a community is to arrange meetings with them, in which the importance of the participation of the whole family is explained as well as the legal rights both spouses have on land property as well on ownership of trees and crops to be planted.*

We ensure that all women and indeed all individuals of secondary school age are included in the consultation and overall planning of farm activities and land use. The resulting Land Use Plans are formally registered with the authorities in the joint names of all couples.

In particular the physical capabilities and other responsibilities of women contribute to both the selection and the scale of appropriate activities.

Women generally appear to appreciate the benefits of forestry more than their male partners –

- Women tend to value the longer term legacy that forestry will provide for their children
- Women appreciate the flexibility that tree maintenance can provide, compared with standard cash crops such as coffee or cocoa. Whilst these require constant weeding and attention, trees are far less needy and maintenance can be fitted around other duties.
- Maintenance itself is easier because women do not have to constantly stoop down and we also provide specialist tools and training to make the job easier.
- The tree maintenance regime also yields a very convenient source of firewood, making the job of collecting it, which normally falls to the women, far easier.
- Trees also provide very valuable shade in often stifling heat.



In particular, the project has been perhaps surprisingly popular with older women, who are perhaps able to cope with caring for their trees far more easily than the majority of other crops – they can choose how much to do each day, they have shade and do not need to bend constantly.

For these reasons, it is often the women of the family, who take primary responsibility for the tree programme.



Culturally Bolivian men have always been expected to take a dominant role in decision making within both the individual household and within the wider community

Sicirec Bolivia is actively encouraging women play a more prominent role not only within the household but also in its Forestry Committees and to become involved in board positions of the committees. Many women do now play a very prominent role, both within their own household and also within their community. Women are well represented on our Forestry Committees, which govern the way the project is developed and also settle any disputes either between participants or between participants and Sicirec Bolivia. In particular, many participating women take primary responsibility for the family's tree lots



The project creates many new jobs, which women value. For example We employ a high proportion of women for seasonal work in our nurseries, where both a delicate touch and precision are necessary.

We are also developing new revenue generating opportunities for women, for example in the processing of biomass fuels and biochar for soil improvement.

*In case of the production of Almendra Chiquitana the specific involvement of women has been very successful - of the total number of 370 producers 311 are women.*



We encourage all women to participate in all training activities, regardless of conventional perceptions. We also provide specialist tools to make the work easier.