



A sustainable future needs women and men working together for change

By Elizabeth Daley

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It's that time of year again! March means International Women's Day and the annual meeting of the UN Commission on the Status of Women. It's not surprising, after COP26 in Glasgow, that this year's CSW66 links gender equality with climate change. The official theme is 'achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes.'

The good intentions are there. Women and girls make up half of humanity, and gender equity is essential for human rights to be enjoyed by all. When it comes to climate change and the environment – our planet's land and natural resources, as well as the air we breathe – what better approach than for all people in a community to be involved in a participatory and gender-equitable way in the management and governance of their community's land? Any other way, and we risk that marginalised and vulnerable people of any gender will be discriminated against or their livelihoods needs ignored. This was a key message I shared in the [LandUp! Podcast](#) on Gender Equality released last week.

Solutions to climate change require social legitimacy and buy-in from local communities, but these solutions will never be sustainable unless the processes of decision-making about our land and natural resources are inclusive of women, girls and all vulnerable groups, including vulnerable men.

Mokoro's [WOLTS](#) project has been directly addressing these challenges for the past 6 years. Together with our partners, [PCC](#) in Mongolia and [HakiMadini](#) in Tanzania, we've developed an evidence-based programme that brings men and women together in support of more inclusive, participatory and gender-equitable land governance.

In Tanzania, this has resulted in women speaking up a lot more in village meetings and men supporting them to do that. When the project started, I never dreamed we would hear a senior local man say "men are happy nowadays to let women speak and advise, and to follow women's advice on different local issues."¹ Another older man said women "have new confidence that leads them to make demands and ask questions when they see something wrong."²

In Mongolia, we've [collaborated with the national land agency, ALAMGAC](#), to develop comprehensive [Gender Guidelines](#) to address these issues nationwide. These new guidelines provide tools for local officials and communities to fully integrate gender issues into their existing planning processes. In Mongolia, herder families – both women and men – are under extreme pressure from mining and other land uses, but are also revered as '[guardians of the grasslands of the nation](#)'.

It is the lifestyles and livelihoods of these pastoral people in Tanzania and Mongolia that may provide some solutions to the climate emergency – but we first of all need to make sure that decision-making processes include them.



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While we reflect on the links between gender and climate change, let's look at land and natural resources through a gendered lens, and put that at the centre of any solutions for climate change.

That means all people must be able to freely and fairly participate in processes of land governance and management – not to have decision-making structures and outcomes that exclude or discriminate against vulnerable groups. A sustainable future for humankind depends on it.

¹ As cited in Daley, E., Grabham, J., Narangerel, Y., and Ndakaru, J., 2021, *Women and Community Land Rights: Investing in Local Champions*, UK: Mokoro Ltd, with HakiMadini (Tanzania) and PCC (Mongolia), page 3.

² As cited in *Women and Community Land Rights: Investing in Local Champions*, page 10.

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