

Women and Protected Areas



Lucía Loren, Landscape artist. Photo: Félix Guerra



Fundación Interuniversitaria
Fernando González Bernaldez
PARA LOS ESPACIOS NATURALES

In collaboration with

altekio
INICIATIVA HACIA
LA SOSTENIBILIDAD



The Fernando González Bernáldez Foundation, EUROPARC-Spain and ALTEKIO have developed the project entitled **“Women, drivers for economic diversification in rural areas and for the improvement of governance through protected natural areas”** co-funded by the 2009-2014 European Economic Area Grants (EEA Grants) through the Spanish Institute for Women and Equal Opportunities.

Actions carried out within the framework of the project

- Diagnosis of “Gender Equality and protected areas”, based on surveys of three groups: management teams, business fabric and associations.
- Seminars to encourage entrepreneurship led by women in the Sierra del Rincón Biosphere Reserve, in the Tablas de Daimiel National Park and in the Biosphere Reserve of the Sierras de Béjar and Francia.
- Advice and promotion for the implementation of entrepreneurial activities in protected areas.

www.fungobe.org | www.redeuoparc.org



Participants in the workshop led by women entrepreneurship in the Biosphere Reserve of Sierras de Béjar y Francia. Photo: Carlota Martínez

Why is it important to drive the role of women in the field of protected areas?

“Women play a vital role in the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity [...] and their full participation is necessary for the formulation and execution of policies for its conservation”.
Convention on Biological Diversity, 1992

“Women have a special understanding of environmental ties and the organization of fragile ecosystems [...] their function is fundamental for the promotion of sustainable development, as is their concern for quality and the sustainable nature of life for current and future generations”.
Beijing Conference on Women, 1995

“The responsibility for any initiative on the conservation of biodiversity consists in guaranteeing that the development and implementation of national and international conservation policies, contribute to equality through the creation of fair possibilities and benefits for both women and men”.
Convention on Biological Diversity, 2010.

The project offers the first diagnosis on the role of women in Spain's protected areas and an analysis of the entrepreneurship opportunities linked to the values of natural areas.

Protected areas are key sites settings for the conservation of nature. They are also territories in which to live and work, which combine social and economic development with the enjoyment of their heritage values.

Towards equality in decision-taking on protected areas

“Female participation and influence must be encouraged in the taking of decisions at both the social and political levels. This latter point is perhaps the one that presents the greatest shortcomings at present and is one of the main sources of marginalization”.

Strategic Plan on Equal Opportunities (2014-2016).

Women are still a minority in the corridors of power and decision-making in the management of Spain’s protected areas. It is estimated that there are 34% of women in executive and co-ordination positions versus 66% of men. In technical jobs, women represent 42% versus 58% of men.

Only 13% of male managers perceive obstacles preventing women from accessing executive positions, as opposed to 40% among female managers. The obstacles cited include the traditional superiority of professional profiles dominated by men, the lack of generational renewal aggravated by the lack of public procurement contracts in recent years, the problems in reconciling working and family life and the existence of cultural and educational barriers that still generate inequalities.



Participants at the meeting of the Spanish Network of Biosphere Reserves. Photo: Fundación Abertis

Opportunities for employment in protected areas: let’s highlight the role of women

Protected areas provide opportunities for rural entrepreneurship. Despite the difficulties identified (ageing population, small numbers of associations, limitations on accessibility and communication, regulatory constraints, cuts in public funds, few opportunities for business training, lack of spaces in which to share resources and contacts, risks of low acceptance of new rural initiatives), there are numerous opportunities that can be promoted both by the administrations responsible for protected areas and also by associations and the business sector.

The management of protected areas implies *conservation actions* (on biodiversity, on farming diversity, proper handling of forests and both wild and domestic species), *socio-economic revitalisation* (sustainable tourism, farming and cattle-breeding activities, conservation of cultural heritage), *investigation and education* (monitoring, inventories, environmental education programmes and awareness-building) and *surveillance and maintenance* of installations and amenities in the protected area.

The management of protected areas generates activity and direct and indirect employment for both men and women in the areas of conservation, revitalisation, monitoring, education and maintenance.



Carolina, creator of a school herbalism



María José, environmental educator



Patricia, head of a rope park

Multiple opportunities identified as linked to protected areas

ADMINISTRATION OF PROTECTED AREAS

- Support from the administration for companies and producers through distinctive quality labels for local products and services
- Financial assistance and public subsidies
- Technical support, advice and training for the population

TOURISM AND SERVICES SECTOR

- Opportunities for sustainable tourism (rural and cultural tourism, accessible tourism, tourism for health, astronomy, quality food and drink based on local products)
- Promotion of the food and farming sector to compensate for the seasonality of tourism
- Divulgación, comunicación, educación ambiental

FARMING SECTOR

- Agriculture, husbandry and environmentally-friendly beekeeping
- Recovery of crops on abandoned lands
- Generation of local, kilometre-zero products
- Growing of local varieties, growing and transformation of aromatic or medicinal plants and other natural products
- Traditional extensive activities supplemented by the development of food and agricultural produce
- Exploitation of non-timber forestry resources such as mushrooms and wild berries
- Marketing of local plant produce and fibres as well as the manufacture of products from leather, wood and glass



Isabel, manager of a rural hotel



Marivi, worker bee



Margarita, ornithological guide.

Photos: Javier Puertas

Increase awareness and training on equality matters in protected areas

It is necessary to invest in training and qualifications for women living in rural areas, the training of personnel in public administrations, companies and associations, as well as regarding the importance of gender mainstreaming for its positive impact on innovation and sustainability.

There is a lot of ignorance regarding equality measures. “No information” was the response from 47% of female managers and 33% of male managers. *No training on gender matters, equal opportunities and fair treatment* had been received at their organisations according to 86% of those surveyed.

The measures most widely deployed for *reconciling personal and professional life* refer to reduced working hours, leave of absence for the care of children, absences for family emergencies and flexible working hours and days off. While 66% have no possibility to work remotely from home, only 10% find it possible to work towards pre-set goals and 12% receive support for childcare costs, although almost 27% have no information about this.



Orchards in the Biosphere Reserve of Sierra del Rincón. Photo: Ignacio Ubeda

Women and protected areas: key messages

- 1. Recognize the role of women in the conservation of nature and the sustainable use of natural resources.**
- 2. Make the role of women more visible in protected areas, as the fundamental tools for the conservation of nature and in support of the revitalisation of the rural world.**
- 3. Strengthen networking for the development of socio-economic activities linked to protected areas.**
- 4. Guarantee equality of opportunity for women in accessing executive positions, to represent protected areas and participate in their management.**
- 5. Improve the integration of conservation and rural development policies in protected areas, highlighting the role of women.**
- 6. Take advantage of the opportunities for business activity and employment identified by the protected areas' management teams and by the entrepreneurial fabric by boosting the role of women.**
- 7. Support the active participation of women in entrepreneurial initiatives, as well as in local and regional professional associations.**
- 8. Support the incorporation of women on an equal footing in the farming sector as the main focus of rural activities, supplemented by other more seasonal sectors such as tourism and cultural services.**
- 9. Invest in awareness-building, training and qualifications regarding the importance of incorporating gender perspectives into public administrations, companies and associations.**
- 10. Incentivize the effective integration of women into protected areas through empowerment, entrepreneurship and the encouragement of associations.**