LINKING GENDER AND CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION:

A CASE STUDY OF A GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY SMALL GRANTS
PROGRAMME PROJECT IN ECUADOR

by

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Abstract

This thesis examines whether and how international climate change mitigation financing relates to gender. In the context of international and United Nations gender obligations, and guided by Southern feminism, it asks whether a Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme (SGP) project promotes gender equity, or, conversely, reinforces or worsens any existing inequities. It evaluates how the GEF SGP policy level incorporates gender and, by conducting a gender analysis grounded in the local context, analyzes a case study of a SGP biodigester project in the Intag zone of Ecuador to understand whether and how gender considerations are implemented in practice. Findings from interviews, background documents and observation indicate that the promotion of gender is overall low on the agenda, strategic gender interests are mainly not advanced through the project, nor does it differentiate among women and in turn excludes marginalized women. Overall, this project case study reinforces existing gender inequities

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines the conjuncture of international gender commitments to promote gender equity and international climate change financing to mitigate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, an area of development that has typically been framed as gender neutral. Gender awareness is essential in order for development interventions to promote gender equity. Almost any project will have a gender differential impact. In order to ensure this impact is not contributing to or reinforcing existing gender inequities, it is necessary to understand the different roles, responsibilities, needs and visions of women and men and how they relate to development interventions.

One manner of promoting gender sensitive policy and planning is to undertake a gender analysis. This thesis conducts an evaluation employing a gender analysis framework rooted in the theoretical contributions of Southern feminism to understand and critically analyze the assumptions behind policies and how women and men are involved in and affected by a climate change mitigation project. This study is grounded in a transformative gender analysis framework that promotes gender equity. That is, it promotes the rethinking of existing policy approaches, concepts and tools from a gender perspective in order to reveal any biases and limitations. Should such inequities exist, the next step is to “discard, modify and transform them in the interests of achieving development with gender equity; the goal, therefore, is *gender-aware* policy and planning” (Kabeer 1994, 298-299).

Broadening the Analysis: Linking Climate Change and Gender

This present study aims to contribute to gender-inclusive policy and program development by examining: first, whether and how international gender commitments have been incorporated into international financing mechanisms for climate change

programs and projects; and second, how climate change projects arising from these international financing mechanisms relate to gender equity at the local level. Vast amounts of resources are flowing into climate change related programs and projects in countries in the global North and the global South, which presents an opportunity to not only to reduce GHG emissions but also to foment broader development benefits such as gender equity. The purpose of this thesis is to examine whether such funds are narrowly focused on environmental criteria such as reducing GHG emissions or whether there are broader development benefits, in particular, whether gender equity is advanced, or, conversely, any existing inequitable gender relations are reinforced or worsened. The overarching question to guide the analysis of this thesis is, “What is the impact of international climate change mitigation financing on gender equity?” This thesis focuses on the Small Grants Programme (SGP) of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) administered by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Based on the theoretical foundations, rooted in Southern feminism, that are outlined in chapter 2, three hypotheses are advanced in this thesis regarding the question of how climate change mitigation projects relate to gender. These hypotheses are addressed independently, recognizing links between them.

Research Hypotheses:

The first hypothesis relates to the policy level and to a certain extent the project level:

Hypothesis 1

- GEF SGP funding mechanisms for climate change mitigation projects are falling short of broader UN requirements for gender equity.

The second two hypotheses relate to the project level:

Hypothesis 2

- When women’s strategic interests are not actively pursued in climate change mitigation projects, opportunities are being missed to address gender inequities.

Hypothesis 3

- Climate change mitigation projects that do not differentiate among women according to class, race and ethnicity risk excluding marginalized women.

Analyzing these hypotheses requires: first, conducting a review of how gender is treated within the GEF SGP policies; and second, using a case study approach empirically focused on a climate change mitigation biodigester project funded by the GEF SGP in the region of Intag, Ecuador. The perspectives and lives of participants in the region in the context of gender equity inform this thesis. This thesis investigates the current state of gender equity in the Intag region of Ecuador, and, using the case of a biodigester in the Intag zone of Ecuador, evaluates how the GEF SGP project intersects with gender relations. Based on findings from documents, interviews and observations, the central argument of this thesis is that overall, this case study of an internationally-financed climate change mitigation project maintains existing gender inequities.

Outline of the Study

Chapter 2 examines feminist theories of development and outlines the Southern feminist perspective that is used as the theoretical foundations of this thesis. Chapter 2 also develops a gender analysis framework to guide this study. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology of this thesis and briefly describes the GEF SGP and the rationale for choosing this mechanism. It also summarizes the project in the Intag zone of Ecuador that has been selected as a case study. Chapter 4 involves an evaluation of the GEF and SGP at the policy level. An overview and historical context of the project host country – Ecuador – and the Intag zone where the climate change project selected is being implemented is provided in chapter 5. Chapter 6 presents the context of gender relations in the Intag zone of Ecuador from which to analyze the impact of the project. Chapter 7 moves to the project level and applies the gender analysis framework to a case study of a

SGP climate change mitigation biodigester initiative in the Intag region of Ecuador. It analyzes whether and how gender has been designed into this project and how project implementation and monitoring and evaluation relate to gender equity. Chapter 8 outlines some of the lessons that can be drawn from this study and provides some concluding remarks.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND GENDER ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK

This thesis is grounded in a feminist theoretical perspective. The multidisciplinary nature of the relationship between gender and development has generated a variety of feminist theoretical approaches, which shape their critiques of dominant development paradigms and influence policy thinking in distinct ways. This thesis' main theoretical approach is rooted in a Southern feminist perspective, which has evolved as an alternative to the more traditional feminist theoretical perspectives of development. Section 2.1 of this chapter defines key gender concepts. An overview of the main feminist perspectives on development is provided in section 2.2. Section 2.3 develops a theoretical framework based on Southern feminism that will be used to analyze how a climate change mitigation project relates to gender equity. This thesis also pulls from Women, Environment and Development (WED) theories, outlined in section 2.2 and expanded upon in section 2.3, to complement its main theoretical foundations.

2.1 Clarifying the Concepts

Gender, in this thesis, is understood as a socially constructed rather than a biological concept. This thesis draws on a particular understanding of gender offered by Lourdes Benería and Martha Roldán (1987, 11-12):

Gender may be defined as a network of beliefs, personality traits, attitudes, feelings, values, behaviors, and activities differentiating men and women through a process of social construction that has a number of distinctive features. It is historical; it takes place within different macro and micro spheres such as the state, the labor market, schools, the media, the law, the family-household, and interpersonal relationships; it involves the ranking of traits and activities so that those associated with men are normally given greater value. Ranking and therefore the formation of gender hierarchies, in most societies is an intrinsic component of gender construction.

The outcome – and the means – of this construction is the asymmetrical and structured (institutionally defined) access to resources generating male

privilege and domination and female subordination. Gender relations so conceived give rise to feminist politics that focus on 'long-run gender interests' and goals to do away with male domination. These goals include equality before the law, women's economic and psychological self-reliance, the abolition of a gender-based division of labor, women's control over their sexuality and reproductive capacity, and the eradication of male violence and coercion over women. Since, however, gender is constructed simultaneously with a multiplicity of relations – such as class, race and ethnicity – each historical analysis may show that women perceive long-run gender interests differently and according to their own life experience.

Gender relations refer to hierarchal relations of power between men and women in which women tend to be disadvantaged. Gender relations are a type of social relations:

Gender relations refer specifically to those aspects of social relations which create and reproduce systematic differences in the positioning of women and men in relation to institutional processes and outcomes. Material inequalities other than those of gender are also likely to be significant, but take different forms (class, caste, race or religion) in different contexts. Gender relations are therefore interwoven into the broader set of social relations structuring the division of resources and responsibilities, claims and obligations between different social groups of women and men within any given society (Kabeer 1994, 280).

Thus, when analyzing gender relations, it is necessary to consider that power encompasses other forms of relations and inequality such as socio-economic class, race and ethnicity. That is, women's lived experience is shaped and differentiated by these other factors in addition to their gender identity (Antrobus 2005, 11). This point is further developed below in the section on Southern feminism.

While gender hierarchies are socially constructed, they tend to be understood as “natural” and materialize within the division of labour and resources and gendered ideologies (Reeves and Baden 2000, 18). In this context, development projects that emerge and are carried out within structures of inequitable gender relations are conceived as agents that reinforce inequity. In other words, a project may reinforce gender inequity by simply unfolding, uncritically, within a context of inequity (Kabeer 2003, 75).

Another important theoretical point about gender relations is the notion that power can be exercised both materially and discursively through dominant narratives. Power manifests itself in terms of material relations through visible and formal means such as institutional constraints or physical strength. However, it is often discursive power that holds more relevance to questions pertaining to gender relations (Foucault 1980). As chapter 6 shows, the division of labour in the Intag region of Ecuador is largely based on a narrative about women's weakness that does not necessarily correspond to the material reality of their physical capabilities. Thus, discursive power implies that some women and men can assume certain 'truths' about themselves that do not necessarily correspond to material facts. It is important to highlight that in contrast to material power relations (like torture for instance), discursive power relations are characterized by the active participation of the 'oppressor' and the 'oppressed' in maintaining a certain power structure (IBID). In analyzing gender relations it is important to keep in mind that women themselves may sustain inequitable gender relations without being forced into doing so.

This thesis distinguishes between gender equality and gender equity. Gender equality is defined as women having the same opportunities in life as men. It is based on the premise that removing discrimination in opportunities for women, such as the ability to participate in the public sphere, allows women to achieve equal status to men. This approach falls short of understanding practices that go beyond formal institutions. Thus, this perspective assumes that once formal barriers are removed there is a level playing field for men and women. It fails to recognize that "women's reality and experience may be different from men's" (Reeves and Baden 2000, 2).

Gender equity refers to the equivalence in life outcomes for women and men, and moves beyond gender equality by recognizing their different needs and interests¹ that require their differential treatment. This approach pushes for development interventions to be understood in terms of how they affect gender relations and requires a redistribution of power and resources (Reeves and Baden 2000, 10). This definition is not to say that only outcomes are relevant when it comes to gender equity. Processes and outcomes need to be seen as interrelated aspects of development (Kabeer 1994, 89). The goal is transformative change leading to more equitable gender relations (Reeves and Baden 2000, 10).

Promoting gender equity may necessitate very different treatment of women and men (Reeves and Baden 2000, 10). As noted by Global Gender and Climate Alliance - GGCA (2009, 15), “In the development context, a gender equity goal often requires built-in measures to compensate for the historical and social disadvantages of women”. For this reason, when analyzing gender equity, as will be the case in this thesis, more of a focus is generally placed on women. In examining gender equity, this thesis focuses mainly on questions of women’s participation in and access, use and control over activities that affect their lives, their ability to voice their opinions and questions of empowerment, all of which are interrelated. These factors are expanded upon in the section on Southern feminism below.

2.2 Feminist Approaches to Development - WID, WAD, GAD, WED

Early development initiatives followed the modernization theory model based on the premise that development is a linear process that involves moving from traditional

¹ As noted by Kabeer (1994, 300), “Needs point in the direction of satisfying choices, while interests refer to expanding control over the interpretation of needs and the conditions of choice.”

practices to a modern, Western-style political-economic system. This theory holds an underlying assumption that its macro-economic policies are gender neutral and benefit all of society. Whether people of different class, race, ethnicity and gender will or can ‘prosper’ equally is not in question among these mainstream theorists (Connelly et al. 2007, 56).

Feminists, however, began critically assessing the dominant development model as it relates to women/gender. These criticisms can be divided into three general camps: Women in Development (WID); Women and Development (WAD); and Gender and Development (GAD). Each perspective focuses on different variables, as outlined in table 1. Southern feminism falls under the GAD feminist framework.

Table 1: Feminist Critiques of International Development

	Women in Development (WID)	Women and Development (WAD)	Gender and Development (GAD) Feminist	Gender and Development (GAD) Non-Feminist
Origins	Early 1970s	Late 1970s	1980s	1980s/1990s
Theory	Liberal feminist, modernization	Marxist feminist, dependency	Socialist feminist	Liberal feminist, neo-liberal
Emphasis	Sexual inequalities, women’s invisibility and exclusion from development	Critiquing the development model, capitalism and class structures	Women’s multiple roles, differences among women, gender relations between men and women, practical vs. strategic interests	Sexual inequalities, women’s invisibility and exclusion from development
Development Strategy	Integration of women into development	Transformation of development processes	Promotion of holistic alternatives to mainstream development that account for women and men and differences among them	Gender mainstreaming
Approach	Efficiency	Poverty	Empowerment	Efficiency

2.2.1 Women in Development (WID)

The WID liberal feminist perspective provides the basis for the evolution of other feminist frameworks but has a number of shortcomings that limit its usefulness. WID is considered to have emerged from Ester Boserup’s work in which she challenges the notion that development is gender neutral. Boserup provides evidence that women have

been excluded from the presumed gains from development initiatives (Connelly et al. 2000, 56; Antrobus 2004, 47). In turn, this perspective focuses narrowly on integrating women into the dominant development model, using efficiency arguments to justify doing so (Bhavnani et al. 2003, 5; Visvanathan 1997, 17-21; Tinker 1997, 39). This paradigm fails to question whether this development model can meet women's needs and promote gender equity (Visvanathan 1997, 20; Antrobus 2004, 47-48). It also focuses on productive roles (income-earning activities) while ignoring unpaid labour such as work within the home and as a result, fails to properly understand women's multiple roles and responsibilities. Moreover, it identifies women as a single category, overlooking differences among them, for example, according to class, race and ethnicity. This framework also fails to question whether a development effort promotes gender equity and therefore does not provide a sufficient basis from which to analyze a climate change mitigation project.

2.2.2 Women and Development (WAD)

The Women and Development (WAD) approach emerged in the mid-1970s, with its roots in Marxist-feminist theory. This perspective goes further than WID by pushing for a focus on structural factors such as capitalism, inequalities in the international economy and the development model as contributing to gender inequalities. WAD also focuses on differences among women according to class (Visvanathan 1997, 21-22; Connelly et al. 2000, 59; Bhavnani et al. 2003, 5). However, like WID, this approach fails to capture elements that are important for understanding women's positions. Again, it only focuses on productive roles, while largely ignoring socially reproductive roles (such as household tasks and childcare) (Visvanathan 1997, 22). Moreover, it downplays differences among women other than class, particularly in relation to race and ethnicity (Connelly et al.

2000, 61). As a result, similar to WID, it offers a limited framework from which to study the gender implications of a climate change mitigation project.

2.2.3 Gender and Development (GAD) Socialist Feminist

The Gender and Development (GAD) approach emerged in the 1980s, based mainly in socialist feminism, and addresses the shortcomings of the WID and WAD approaches. It provides a more holistic understanding of the situation of women and focuses on socially constructed patterns of behaviour – or gender relations – as key determinants of women’s position in society (Visvanathan 1997, 23; Young 1997, 51). The term ‘gender’ is emphasized rather than ‘women’ because a focus on women alone can obscure the complex ways in which power is at play in gender relations (Visvanathan 1997, 23; Young 1997, 51). This perspective considers women’s material conditions and patriarchy² to be defined and maintained by the accepted norms and values that construct women’s and men’s roles and responsibilities in society (Connelly et al. 2000, 62). It combines the spheres of production and reproduction and focuses on differences among women (Benería and Sen 1997, 49; Young 1997, 51). Southern feminism is a version of the socialist feminist GAD framework and is explored further below.

2.2.4 GAD Liberal Feminist

A liberal-feminist version of the Gender and Development (GAD) approach emerged in the late 1980s. It aims to integrate women into dominant development models, now termed gender mainstreaming. As noted by Kum Kum Bhavnani et al. (2003, 5), “aid agencies and development practitioners tend to use the concept of gender

² For the purposes of this thesis, patriarchy is defined as “systemic societal structures that institutionalize male physical, social and economic power over women” (Reeves and Baden 2000, 28). Institutions and habits that discriminate against women due to their gender are considered patriarchal practices. Examples include occupational segregation, exclusion and unequal pay (IBID).

in reductionist ways, failing to grapple with issues of power, conflict, and the larger social, cultural and political contexts that frame women's ability to resist conditions of oppression." This theoretical perspective mirrors many of the aspects of WID but under a different name and does not provide the expanded frame of analysis required to give proper treatment to the subject of gender equity.

2.2.5 Women, Environment and Development (WED)

The interactions between women and the environment have slowly gained prominence as a major theme within development studies and Women, Environment and Development (WED) has come to be considered a distinct theoretical path in the field (Visvanathan 1997, 24). Within WED there have emerged a variety of theoretical perspectives, the most prominent of which are ecofeminism, feminist environmentalism and feminist political ecology. These perspectives provide different understandings of relationships between gender inequities, the environment and development and the latter two are more compatible with Southern feminism.

Ecofeminism

Ecofeminism focuses on the link between women and the environment but does not provide specific tools that enable an analysis of how particular policies relate to gender equity. Rather, this theory focuses on critiquing capitalism, the Western system of development and how these structures have subjugated both women and nature, and the oppression of one cannot be eliminated without eliminating the oppression of the other (Moeckli and Braun 2001, 115). Cultural or biological ecofeminists consider women and nature to be biologically connected (Moeckli and Braun 2001, 125), a position that conflicts with Southern feminism and "wide-ranging evidence that concepts of nature,

culture, gender and so on are historically and socially constructed and vary across and within cultures and time periods” (Agarwal 1997, 70-71).

Socialist ecofeminists reject the notion that women and nature are biologically connected and instead locate the oppression of women and nature within capitalist patriarchy (Moeckli and Braun 2001, 125). Vandana Shiva and Maria Mies, prominent ecofeminists, argue that the capitalist world system built itself on the colonization of women and nature, devalued women’s work and created dualities that place men above women and nature. The result is an ecological crisis and increased inequalities between women and men, the corrective response to which is a return to systems of subsistence agriculture that existed prior to the era of colonialism (Mies and Shiva 1993, 2; Shiva 1997, 67; Braidotti et al 1997, 57). This approach thus ignores history by disregarding economic and social inequalities that existed prior to the imposition of the western model of development (Agarwal 1997, 73). It also has limited usefulness in examining how a climate change mitigation project relates gender equity.

Feminist Environmentalism

Feminist environmentalism is more pertinent for the purposes of this thesis. In contrast to ecofeminism, feminist environmentalism, coined by Bina Agarwal, argues that the relationship between women and nature needs to be understood in terms of ‘historical and geographical specificity.’ It employs political economy to analyze women’s relationship with nature, taking into account local conditions as well as international influences. As noted by Jane Moeckli and Bruce Braun (2001, 120), “It places the focus of analysis and politics on the specific, place-based forms that gender-environment interactions take in response to a broad set of economic, cultural, political and technological relations.”

Moreover, feminist environmentalism focuses on the material conditions of production and reproduction and combines the levels of material reality and ideological constructs of meaning in the analysis of women and the environment (Braidotti et al 1997, 60-1). Agarwal pushes the need to examine the work that women and men do and the gender division of power and property to understand “how the material realities in which women of different classes/castes/races are rooted might affect their responses to environmental degradation” (Agarwal 1997, 71). As will become evident below in the examination of the most pertinent components of Southern feminism, feminist environmentalism overlaps in many ways with this theoretical perspective but complements this theory by placing a specific emphasis on the relationship between gender and environment.

Feminist Political Ecology

The other WED perspective that thesis draws from is feminist political ecology. This theory arose out of political ecology, which combines the concerns of ecology and political economy (Watts and Peet 2004, 7). Political ecology links local environmental issues with the global political economy (Watts and Peet 2004, 4) and is primarily concerned with:

the economic and environmental decision-making processes, the social, political and economic contexts and scales of interaction that regulate human-environment practices (how ‘global’ institutions influence ‘national’ and ‘local’ environmental policies), and the uneven distribution of, access to, and control over resources on the basis of class and ethnicity (Moeckli and Braun 2001, 121).

Feminist political ecology takes political ecology further by pressing the need to look at gender (Watts and Peet 2004, 12; Moeckli and Braun 2001, 121-123). As noted by Moeckli and Braun (2001, 121), feminist political ecology insists, “that gender is a critical variable (in relation with class, caste, race, culture and ethnicity) that shapes

institutional practices, household-level politics that influence decision-making strategies, and how resources are distributed and controlled.” Cultural norms and ideologies and development discourses are also considered important in understanding the relationship between gender and nature (Moeckli and Braun 2001, 123). There is evidently overlap between feminist political ecology and feminist environmentalism and, as will become evident below, Southern feminism. Both of these WED theories complement Southern feminism by pointing to specific ways in which to analyze gender and the environment. Moreover, a useful concept for the purposes of this analysis emphasized by these theories is the focus on how gender, in interaction with other variables such as class, race and ethnicity, relates to access, use and control of resources (Rocheleau et al 1996, 4. This concept is analyzed further below in the section on Southern feminism.

2.3 Theoretical Foundations: Southern Feminism

There are a number of components within Southern feminism that are pertinent to undertaking a gender analysis of a climate change mitigation project. This section outlines these key elements and the corresponding questions that need to be asked within a gender analysis framework. Aspects related to understanding women’s context include: a holistic frame of analysis; linking women’s local context to the global; the need for an institutional analysis; and related to this, understanding women’s multiple responsibilities. Elements related to analyzing how a project intersects with gender relations include: examining underlying assumptions for gender; development planning informed by women’s context and voices; differences among women (according to class, race and ethnicity); practical versus strategic interests; and related to strategic interests, questions of access, use and control; and women’s participation, voices and empowerment.

2.3.1 Main Components of the Southern Feminist Perspective

Holistic Frame of Analysis

Women's lives straddle many dimensions and activities and are not easily contained within compartmentalized modes of thought (Kabeer 1994, ix). As a result, it is necessary to use a holistic frame of analysis to understand gender relations, including economic, social, cultural and political factors (Antrobus 2004, 77, 102; Visvanathan 1997, 23; Young 1997, 52). As conveyed by Naila Kabeer (1994, 79), "Transformed possibilities for development come into view if we undertake a process of expanding conventional categories of analysis, revealing their interconnections and reversing the hierarchy of values embedded within them."

Linking Women's Local Context to the Global

Southern feminism highlights the linkages between the daily experiences of women in the South to the macro-economic policy framework and global trends (Antrobus 2004, 77). Patriarchal power relations at the household and community level as well as women's position in national, regional and global economies affect their status in society (Connelly et al. 2000, 62). In other words, Southern feminism links the local to the global and helps bring to the forefront the necessity of looking at the larger picture in order to truly appreciate power relations and overturn factors that contribute to women's oppression (Antrobus 2004, 44-48, 75-78). Undertaking a gender analysis thus requires an analysis of power from the personal to the political and a focus on the daily lives of women in relation to economic, political, social and cultural factors in the local and global context (Connelly et al. 2000, 91). This aspect of Southern feminism complements the nature of this thesis and its focus on analyzing how the structure of an international

climate change financing mechanism relates to gender equity in the local context of women's lives.

Institutional Analysis

Southern feminism promotes a category of analysis that encompasses the institutions of the household, community, market and state. As noted by Hazel Reeves and Susan Baden (2000, 18), “[g]ender relations constitute and are constituted by a range of institutions.” Gender awareness, in turn, requires an analysis of social relations within the “family, market, state and community in order to understand how gender and other inequalities are created and reproduced through their separate and combined interactions” (Kabeer 1994, 280-1). These institutions share certain norms and assumptions that can create and reinforce social and gender disparities (IBID, 281). Gender inequity arises in part from institutional arrangements that enable men, more so than women, to mobilize institutional rules and resources to defend their own interests (IBID, 299). A gender analysis thus involves asking whether women are able to share in determining priorities and making decisions within these institutions. In the case that institutions serve to reinforce unequal power relations between women and men, “genuine change entails institutional transformation” (Kabeer 1994, 299).

Women's Multiple Responsibilities

A key aspect of an institutional analysis involves understanding women's multiple responsibilities. The Southern feminist and GAD approach go further than WID and WAD by emphasizing not only productive (income-earning) responsibilities but also social reproduction (household activities such as childcare and housework) and inequities that occur at the household level (Visvanathan 1997, 23; Benería and Sen 1997, 49). As noted by Lourdes Benería and Gita Sen (1997, 49):

In order to understand fully the nature of sex discrimination, women's wages, women's participation in the development process and implications for political action, analysts must examine the two areas of production and reproduction as well as the interaction between them.

Productive and socially reproductive activities cannot be separated in the lives of most women and must be understood in unison. Caroline Moser points out that women often have multiple responsibilities in these two areas as well as in community management (the organization and provision of items for collective consumption such as volunteering in a soup kitchen) that must be distinguished to grasp the context of inequities in their lives (Moser 1989 as cited in Kabeer 1994, 295).

Understanding the gender context thus involves posing questions regarding who performs what activities and how these activities are carried out, including the amount of time devoted to the activities and where they take place. For instance, cooking done for the family will have different implications for issues of access and control than cooking done for a community soup kitchen (Kabeer 1994, 278). Questions should be aimed at understanding the gender division of labour, social and gender relations within the institutional sites of the household, community and market, and to a certain extent, the state and how these relations have changed over time. Such an analysis can draw attention to implications for women's time, remuneration and constraints that prevent some women from participating in development interventions and other activities in the public sphere (community, market and state) (IBID, 270).

In looking at elements such as the gender division of labour, one must be careful, as noted by Kabeer, not to oversimplify women's lives by "abstracting them from their relationships and networks and treating them as an entity separate from men" (Kabeer 1994, 294). The gender division of labour is not simply about the relationship between

activities but also involves social relationships between people. It is a relation of social connections involving linkages and interdependencies between women and men's activities (Kabeer 1994, 272-4). Prominence needs to be given to social and gender relations and connections between women and men's lives and to imbalances of power between them (Reeves and Baden 2000, 18).

Moreover, the existence of a gender division of labour alone does not imply the oppression of women. Context specific explanations must be sought in each case in order to analyze how these relations are perceived, whether women's labour has been devalued (Mohanty 1988, 76) and whether women's choices have been restricted (Reeves and Baden 2000, 35).

Examining Underlying Assumptions for Gender

Rather than simply integrate women into development, Southern feminism advocates that it is necessary to analyze the assumptions within development models. Assumptions embedded in policies and programs can serve as a means of exerting power over others and maintaining gender inequities (Connelly et al. 2000, 99). Gender-aware policy and planning requires unpacking the underlying assumptions of development policies and programs in order to challenge and critically analyze any underlying power relations that maintain and/or exacerbate inequities and, in turn, transform them (Kabeer 1994, 289; Antrobus 2004, 48; DAWN 1995, 22).

Gender-aware policy and planning requires that policies be informed by the local context of women's lives (Kabeer 1994, 289; Antrobus 2004, 77). Due to differences in socially constructed roles and responsibilities emerging from gender constructs, women's reality and experience may be very different from men's and in turn, they may have very different needs, interests and perspectives (Reeves and Baden 2000, 2; Oxaal and Baden

1997, 6). Ensuring that a project is not designed around misinformed assumptions requires conducting a gender analysis therefore.

Development Planning Informed by Women's Voices

Southern feminism advocates that questions must be posed regarding the kind of development that meets women's needs and interests and whether women are involved in determining priorities and making decisions (Antrobus 2004, 48; Sen and Grown 1987, 17). Questions of power arise in terms of development planning. Kabeer (1994, 289) conveys how:

Development planning is not simply a technocratic response to neutrally determined imperatives; it is also a process of struggle over concepts, meanings, priorities and practices which themselves arise out of competing world-views about the final goals of development.

Whoever is responsible for designing programs and policies is in a position of power. As a result, it is important to ask questions regarding how such decisions are taken, and whether and how women are involved in decision-making. Southern feminism pushes for a shift from a focus on narrowly defined 'women's issues' to 'women's perspectives' on a range of issues of concern to everyone (Antrobus 2004, 78-79). Women's voices and ideas must be actively sought in the conceptualization and design of development interventions in order to promote the goal of gender equity in development. Participation in this process involves defining the goals of development, determining which needs to prioritize and what resources are being allocated (Kabeer 1994, 300). Otherwise, there is a danger of misinterpreting or ignoring women's needs and interests, disempowering women and maintaining any existing gender inequities.

Differences Among Women: Multiple Sources of Inequities

The Southern perspective reveals that it is necessary to go beyond inequities between men and women when analyzing gender relations. That is, gender inequities are located within other forms of inequities that shape and often exacerbate them. Women and men cannot be separated from the larger context of their lived experience and emphasis must therefore be placed on the intersection of other forms of oppression based on race, ethnicity and socio-economic class, among other factors, that contribute to gender inequities (Antrobus 2004, 11; Braidotti et al 1997, 61; Visvanathan 1997, 26). Pushing for gender equity must therefore include engaging in struggles against other sources of oppression that extend beyond gender (Antrobus 2004, 11-12).

A Southern feminist perspective thus involves an analysis based on differences between women (Antrobus 2004, 125). Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) argues, “feminism cannot be monolithic in its issues, goals and strategies, since it constitutes the political expression of the concerns and interests of women from different regions, classes, nationalities and ethnic backgrounds” (DAWN 1985, 32). Women’s lived experience is shaped and differentiated by these other factors in addition to their gender identity (Antrobus 2005, 11).

This perspective does not essentialize women therefore, but rather celebrates each woman’s positionality. That is, ‘women’ and ‘men’ are not homogenous categories (Antrobus 2005, 11). Chandra Mohanty (1988, 79) points out that grouping women under a single category “colonizes and appropriates the pluralities of the simultaneous location of different groups of women in social class and ethnic frameworks; in doing so it ultimately robs them of their historical and political agency.” In assuming women are a stable category of analysis based on their subordination, women are limited to their

gender identity and deprived of their history and particular local contexts based on other identities (Mohanty 1988, 72). Mohanty (1988, 72) goes on to convey how:

Women are constituted as women through the complex interaction between class, culture, religion and other ideological institutions and frameworks. They are not 'women'- a coherent group- solely on the basis of a particular economic system or policy. Such reductive cross-cultural comparisons result in the colonization of the specifics of daily existence and the complexities of political interests which women of different social classes and cultures represent and mobilize.

It is necessary therefore that development projects undertake a gender analysis to understand the specific context and histories of women and ensure projects are designed in a manner that is sensitive to differences among women. In undertaking a gender analysis, it is necessary to continually pose the question “which women?” in order to incorporate other sources of power and oppression (according to class, race, ethnicity, etc.) into the analysis (Kabeer 1994, 279). A lack of consideration of other sources of women’s oppression can translate into an inability to properly plan development interventions in relation to differences among women (IBID).

A Southern perspective, particularly as espoused by DAWN, argues that in order to devise strategies for more equitable development, development theories and practice must be understood from the vantage point of women, particularly women who are disadvantaged for reasons that extend beyond gender (Kabeer 1994, 81; Braidotti et al 1997, 61; Antrobus 2004, 75-78). Gita Sen and Caren Grown (1987, 23), advocate that this point of view “provides a unique and powerful vantage point from which we can examine the effects of development programmes and strategies.”

However, a focus on oppressed women is not to imply that such women are more knowledgeable than others, as has been argued by standpoint feminists. Rather, these women offer “the viewpoint from below, a viewpoint that can help realign development

paradigms more closely to ‘the real order of things’ (Kabeer 1994, 81). Nor does a focus on marginalized women imply that only oppressed women from the South matter, but rather “without a structural transformation of the lives of poorest and most oppressed sections of all societies, there can be neither development nor equity” (IBID).

It is necessary to point out that women should not be viewed solely as victims. As noted by Mohanty, defining women as archetypal victims relegates them primarily to their object status (Mohanty 1988, 66). It “freezes them into ‘objects-who-defend themselves’, men into ‘subjects-who-perpetrate-violence’ and (every) society into a simple opposition between powerless (read: women) and the powerful (read: men) groups of people” (Mohanty 1988, 67). This objectification needs to be challenged (IBID, 66).

Women, particularly poor women from the South, do face multiple challenges including poverty, discrimination, many forms of violence, and limited access to resources in manners that are differentially oppressive and exploitive for Southern women due to specificities of history, political economy and culture. However, these women “meet these challenges and confront them actively, often in remarkably creative and effective ways” (Bhavnani et al 2003, 3). Southern feminism presses the importance of “validating women’s work, experiences and knowledge; and working in solidarity with women” (Antrobus 2004, 77). Feminist political ecology links women’s voices specifically to the environment by advocating that women’s experience, knowledge and practices need to be taken into account in how environmental issues are understood and addressed (Watts and Peet 2004, 13; Moeckli and Braun 2001, 121-123).

Practical vs. Strategic Gender Interests

Southern feminism and GAD go beyond the WID and WAD feminist theories of development by distinguishing between advancing women’s practical and strategic

interests (as outlined by Caroline Moser, 1989). Practical interests refer to immediate perceived needs (Kabeer 1994, 90). They involve “assisting with women’s survival in their socially accepted roles, within existing power structures” (Reeves and Baden 2000, 14). Gender inequalities are not directly challenged. Examples of practical needs or interests include providing health services and income-earning opportunities for women (within women’s socially accepted roles) (Visvanathan 1997, 20; Reeves and Baden 2000, 14).

Strategic interests, on the other hand, must be met to change women’s inequitable position in society (Visvanathan 1997, 20). They involve challenging the larger structural basis of women’s disempowerment and oppression. Promoting strategic interests means supporting measures that enhance women’s control over their own lives and women’s empowerment (Kabeer 1994, 90-301) and implies changing inequitable power relations (Visvanathan 1997, 26). Examples include addressing inequities in the gender division of labour, ownership and control of resources, and participation in decision-making (Visvanathan 1997, 20; Reeves and Baden 2000, 14). Women’s interests will be shaped in complex and at times conflicting ways by gender as well as other social relations such as class, race and ethnicity and as a result need to be understood according to each particular context (Kabeer 1994, 295, 299). The distinction between practical and strategic interests can be quite blurred and practical interests can help promote strategic interests.

The distinction between practical and strategic interests is a methodological-conceptual tool to address issues of power and inequity in a more comprehensive manner. A gender analysis must therefore distinguish between practical and strategic gender interests and in doing so, shift from a more technocratic domain to one concerned with gender politics (Kabeer 1994, 294-5). Analyzing women’s strategic interests in particular

increases awareness of the larger context of inequitable gender relations and signals the need for a broader transformational agenda (IBID, 296, 299). Understanding strategic interests involves analyzing questions of access, use and control and women's participation, voices and empowerment. These factors are interrelated and are analyzed below.

Access, Use and Control

Differences between women and men in terms of access, use and control over resources and project benefits have implications for gender equity. Access to resources and benefits implies the opportunity to use and employ certain resources to satisfy personal and collective interests. Use refers to the difference in how women and men use resources and control relates to the capacity or power to decide about the resources (PPD y Fundación OFIS 2008, 5). Feminist political ecologists focus on the uneven distribution of access, use and control to resources in relation to gender in addition to other variables such as class, race and ethnicity (Rocheleau et al 1996, 4). Questions of access, use and control represent one manner in which inequitable power relations can materialize in relation to an environmental project. As noted by Kabeer (1994, 289), "the asymmetrical nature of gender relations...raises questions about power and privilege that impinge on the planned distribution of resources." In analyzing the implications of a project for gender equity it is therefore important to assess what resources are made available (in this case the biodigester and capacity building), who can access and use these resources and who has control over them.

Women's Participation, Voices and Empowerment

Women's participation, voices and empowerment are interconnected. Women's participation promotes women's empowerment through knowledge building and women's

ability to voice their opinions and decide on what choices are available. At the same time, facilitating conditions that lead to women's empowerment helps ensure women have the confidence to participate and voice their opinions (Reeves and Baden 2000, 35).

Women's participation in capacity building has the potential to advance their empowerment. Knowledge, as the truism goes, is power. One is thus empowered by knowledge and women's involvement in capacity building involves gaining knowledge, whether technical or abstract (World Bank 2010). In turn, women have more tools at their disposal to exercise control over their lives and voice their opinions (Oxaal and Baden 1997, 3, 5). Leaving women out in terms of access to the knowledge through a development project increases inequities between men and women. Questions thus need to be directed at whether women are involved in capacity building and other areas of knowledge building. Such questions include women's knowledge of aspects related to the project and in this case their grasp of the environmental issues related to the project including climate change.

Southern feminism has highlighted the need to "shift from the original goal of 'integrating women in development' to 'empowering women for social change'" (Antrobus 2004, 58). Power is at the root of empowerment and can be understood as operating in different ways including "as 'power within,' or self-confidence to influence and change inequities, 'power with', or the capacity to organize with others towards a common purpose, and the 'power to' effect change and take decisions, rather than 'power over' others" (Reeves and Baden 2000, 35). It must be kept in mind that "[e]mpowerment is not only about opening up access to decision-making, but also must include processes that lead people to perceive themselves as able and entitled to occupy that decision-making space" (Rowlands 1995 in Oxaal and Baden 1997, 3-4). The goal in terms of

women's empowerment, "is for women themselves to be active agents of change in transforming gender relations" (Reeves and Baden 2000, 35)

Empowerment must come from the bottom up. A development agency cannot claim to empower women. A project can, however, provide an enabling environment for women's empowerment by helping to promote dialogue related to changing gender inequities, facilitating women's confidence building and conditions for women's participation (Reeves and Baden 2000, 35; Oxaal and Baden 1997, 6; Kabeer 1994, 300). Questions must therefore be directed at whether a project is facilitating conditions for women's empowerment.

2.3.2 Southern Feminist Gender Analysis Framework

Gender analysis is a critical tool in bringing about gender awareness in development projects. As conveyed by Naila Kabeer, gender analysis frameworks "seek to draw boundaries around complex empirical realities in order to focus attention on issues considered significant" (Kabeer 1994, 266). Different conceptual frameworks have been developed and applied to development projects and policies, promoting quite diverse approaches to policy (IBID, 289). The following framework is rooted in the theory outlined above and pulls from two frameworks in particular: the 'social-relations' framework (SRF) highlighted by Naila Kabeer in her book "*Reversed Realities*," an outcome of efforts in gender training by Kabeer alongside Southern participants active in different areas of development; and the DAWN framework, derived from a network of Southern feminist scholars and activists³. The framework below encompasses a series of questions meant to facilitate a gender analysis and help to reveal how a development

³ The frameworks consulted are included in Appendix 2.

intervention – in this case a climate change mitigation project – relates to gender equity.

This thesis employs the following framework:

Southern Feminist Gender Analysis Framework

A. Questions pertaining to understanding the local gender context

Note: Within all these questions it is important to ask which women.

Holistic Understanding of the Gender Context and Linking the Local to the Global

- Are there political, economic, social or cultural issues (locally, nationally or internationally) that are particularly affecting the community?

Institutional Analysis

- What are the pertinent local institutions within the community (e.g. community assemblies, NGOs), market (e.g. chambers of commerce, farming enterprises, firms) and state (administrative assemblies, legal systems)?
- What are the rules, activities and resources of the pertinent institutions and how do they relate to gender equity?
- How are women and men represented within and involved in these institutions? Which men and which women?
- Whose interests do the institutions represent? Have institutions in the community traditionally been responsive to women's interests?

Women's Organizing (related to the state, market and community institutional analysis)

- Are women able to organize? Do they want to? Why or why not. If women are able to organize, how do they do so? Within male dominated organizations? Are they able to express their interests?
- Are there forces of resistance to women's empowerment? If yes, where do these forces of resistance come from (e.g. patriarchy, social and cultural factors, the state, the church, the development model)?

Multiple Responsibilities (related to the household institutional analysis)

Production (income earning)

- What goods and services are being produced within this community? Who is involved in their production? How - What are the work conditions? Where are these activities carried out?
- What is women and men's involvement? Which women and men (according to age, socioeconomic class, race, ethnicity, etc)?
- What are the implications for women and men's time?
- How were conditions in the past?

Social Reproduction (childcare/domestic work)

- Who is responsible for social reproduction? Which women or men?
- What are the implications for women and men's time?
- What services does the state supply? Who has access to them? Who controls them? Who manages them?
- How were conditions in the past?

Community Management

- What are the collective tasks in the community? Who takes responsibility for these tasks? Which men and which women?
- What are the implications for women and men's time?
- How were conditions in the past?

Gender Perceptions

- How do men and women perceive their gender relations in the community? Do they consider their roles fair, complimentary, burdensome, unequal?

B. Questions pertaining to analyzing a climate change mitigation project

- *Underlying Assumptions*: What are the goals and objectives of the project? Whose interests are they meant to address? Are the goals and objectives shared by both women and men? What assumptions are being made within this project about the gender division of resources and responsibilities? About women's and men's interests? What evidence is there that these assumptions are well informed? Was a gender analysis conducted?
- *Development Planning Informed by Women's Voices*: Were women involved in conceptualizing and designing the project?
- *Which Women*: How are different women involved in the project (according to class, race and ethnicity)?
- *Practical vs. Strategic Interests*: What benefits or gains flow from this project? Who gains from them? Are there negative impacts? Who experiences them? Are extra responsibilities entailed? If so, are extra resources made available? How does the project relate to women's multiple responsibilities? Is the project designed to address practical gender interests? Is the project designed to address strategic gender interests? Does the project purposely aim to overcome structures that are maintaining gender inequalities? Is there resistance arising out of promoting practical and strategic gender needs and if yes how is this addressed?
- *Access, Use and Control*: What resources are being made available through this project? Who has access to them? Who manages them? Who controls them? Which women and which men?
- *Women's Participation, Voices and Empowerment*: Do women participate in project meetings and knowledge-building activities? Which women? Why or why not? What are the implications for women's voices and empowerment?

The following chapter outlines the specific methodology to be followed in order to apply this framework and analyze how a SGP climate change mitigation project in Ecuador relates to gender equity.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This thesis undertakes a gender analysis to evaluate how an international climate change mechanism treats gender. In particular, it uses a case study of a Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme (SGP) biodigester climate change mitigation project in the Intag region of Ecuador in order to analyze the hypotheses of this thesis:

Hypothesis 1

- GEF SGP funding mechanisms for climate change mitigation projects are falling short of broader UN requirements for gender equity.

Hypothesis 2

- When women's strategic interests are not actively pursued in climate change mitigation projects, opportunities are being missed to address gender inequities.

Hypothesis 3

- Climate change mitigation projects that do not differentiate among women according to class, race and ethnicity risk excluding marginalized women.

The method employed by this thesis is a case study based on qualitative, ethnographic methods – principally interviews and observation and primary literature analysis (policy papers, project-level documents, etc.). It uses Southern feminism to guide the development and implementation of the research methods in order to develop a systematic, thorough, and balanced evaluation of the project being researched.

Before developing with more detail the methodological approach of this thesis it is worth stating an important methodological-theoretical guiding principle on which this thesis is rooted. This consideration, which is derived from Southern feminism, is that policies and programs, including climate change mitigation programs, do not exist in vacuums or in isolation from their social, political and cultural context. They are shaped by multiple and dynamic factors, and research methodologies must carefully situate policies and programs within this broader context. The perspectives and daily lives of people in the Intag zone inform this research, the overall purpose of which is to evaluate

the extent to which climate change mitigation policies and programs consider gender in general, and more specifically, whether such programs reinforce or worsen existing gender relations or promote gender equity. The research framework utilized in this thesis thus focuses both on any existing gender inequities in the Intag region, in chapter 6, and on how climate change mitigation policies and programs intersect with them in chapter 7. Using findings from this methodology, this thesis argues that overall, international climate change mitigation funding in this case maintains gender inequities.

The remainder of this chapter is divided into four parts. The next section looks at methods used to assess the extent to which high-level climate change mitigation policies incorporate gender with a focus on the GEF SGP and climate change mitigation. In section 3.2, the scale of inquiry shifts from higher-level policies to an on-the-ground biodigester project in Ecuador. This section focuses on a methodology to outline contextual information related to gender relations in the Intag region while section 3.3 examines the tools to develop the main analytical chapter of this thesis – how a climate change mitigation project intersects with gender relations in the Intag zone of Ecuador. Section 3.4 addresses the strengths and weaknesses of the research design and section 3.5 summarizes the embedding of research ethics into the research tools employed in this thesis.

3.1 Methods for Assessing High Level Climate Change Mitigation Policies

The first step of the analysis requires examining policy documents at the international and national level to determine whether and how gender is conceptualized within the GEF and its climate change funding and specific gender policy requirements. The international level involves the GEF and the SGP and the national level entails

looking at the policies specific to the SGP in Ecuador. The method for this section involves analyzing policy documents and interviews with project officials.

3.1.1 The Global Environment Facility (GEF)

The GEF serves as the financial mechanism for the United Nations Framework for Convention Climate Change (UNFCCC) and is a partnership between 182 member governments, international institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector. It provides funding for environmental projects in developing countries and countries with economies in transition with the purpose of addressing global environmental issues including climate change (GEF 2010).

The GEF funds climate change mitigation projects related to renewable energy, energy efficiency, sustainable transport, and management of land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF). Hundreds of millions of dollars are disbursed each year through the GEF towards projects in these areas. As of 2009, US\$2.7 billion had been invested to date through the GEF specifically to climate change mitigation projects in developing countries and economies in transition (with an additional US\$17.2 billion in co-financing). GEF climate change mitigation projects aim not only to reduce GHG emissions but also to create benefits for local economies and their environmental conditions. The GEF is divided into three programs, the Large Grants Programme (LGP), the Medium Grants Programme (MGP) and the Small Grants Programme (SGP) (GEF 2010).

This thesis investigates how GEF mandates and policies relate to gender equity. In examining gender policies in the GEF, this thesis focuses on all eight of the policy documents outlined on the GEF website:

- “Climate Change Focal Area Strategy and Strategic Programming for GEF”

- “GEF-5 Operational Procedures for the System for a Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR)”
- “Operational Strategy of the Global Environment Facility”
- “Policies and Procedures for the GEF Project Cycle”
- “The GEF Resource Allocation Framework” “Recommendations Concerning Certain Appointment, Reappointment and Performance Objective Reviews Processes”
- “The Public Involvement Policy”
- “Recommended Minimum Fiduciary Standards for GEF Implementing and Executing Agencies”

3.1.2 The Small Grants Programme (SGP)

The GEF SGP aims to work with communities to address the most critical global environmental problems and achieve more sustainable livelihoods by promoting projects through NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs) in developing countries. Focal areas include biodiversity, international waters, persistent organic pollutants and land degradation and the focus of this thesis – climate change. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) implements the SGP on behalf of the GEF partnership. The maximum grant amount awarded is \$50,000 but most grants are generally between \$20,000 and \$35,000 (SGP 2008, 21). To date, the SGP has a presence in 122 countries and has awarded more than 12,000 grants (GEF 2010).

The method for examining the SGP policies in this thesis involves two steps: analyzing the international level; and examining the country level. The first step at the international level requires evaluating all five international SGP policies to understand how they relate to gender:

- “GEF Small Grants Programme Monitoring and Evaluation Framework”
- “GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) Operational Guidelines”
- “GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) Strategic Framework”
- “Global Communications Strategy”
- “Resource Mobilization Strategy”

Within the specific context of Ecuador, examining how gender considerations are taken into account requires reviewing the country's principal SGP-related policy documents:

- Ecuador's SGP National Strategy – Fourth Operational Phase, “*Estrategia Nacional Ecuador – Cuarta Fase Operativa*”;
- System of Monitoring and Evaluation, “*Sistema de Monitoreo y Acompañamiento – SIMONA*”;
- The general terms of reference to monitor and evaluate microprojects, “*Terminos de Referencia Generales Para Monitoreo y Evaluación de Microproyectos*”

As well as the guide:

- Ecuador's SGP guide to incorporating gender into community socioenvironmental projects, “*Guía para incorporar género en proyectos socioambientales comunitarios*”

This step also involves conducting interviews, using questions guided by the gender analysis framework outlined in the previous chapter, with one of the two SGP Ecuador officials⁴ and two officials responsible for evaluating GEF SGP projects.

3.1.3 Rationale for Selection of the GEF SGP

There are several reasons for focusing on the GEF SGP. First, it provides examples of climate change mitigation projects (the focus of this thesis) as opposed to adaptation or capacity building projects. While there exist other options related to internationally-financed climate change projects in Ecuador⁵, as outlined in table 2, the GEF SGP provides a preferable case study because of the need to find climate change mitigation projects that are accessible and within a reasonable time frame. Moreover, projects such as those implemented through the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) have received a great deal of attention in the past few years, including studies to determine their contributions to sustainable development and their effectiveness in

⁴ The other SGP project official was unavailable for an interview.

⁵ Ecuador has been selected as the country for this case study due to practical reasons including contacts made in the past through an internship opportunity, a partnership made with a host university – FLACSO Ecuador and personal relationships formed in the country, all of which help facilitate research conditions.

mitigating climate change (see for example Murphy et al N.D; Schneider 2007 and Brown et al 2004). This thesis focuses on a smaller scale, non-market-based program that has, to date, received less attention in climate change research.

Table 2: Other Examples of Climate Change Projects in Ecuador

Project Options	GEF LGP & MGP	Clean Development Mechanism	Bilateral Programs	Development Banks
Projects in Ecuador	One LGP project in the Galapagos Islands, no MGP projects	14 climate change mitigation projects throughout the country	E.g. No CIDA climate change mitigation projects in Ecuador	E.g. No World Bank climate change mitigation projects within a recent time frame
Reasons for Rejection	Expensive and inaccessible location	Large, complex (typically involve multiple funding sources and actors), market-based projects	No options	No options

Another reason for focusing on the GEF SGP is because of an interest in uncovering mechanisms with the potential to increase the promotion of gender equity in climate change projects. Market-based mechanisms such as the CDM have been criticized for their inability to prioritize social benefits (including gender benefits) (see Hemmati and Rohr 2007; Rohr 2006; Skutsch 2002; Lovera N.D.). The SGP, due to its smaller-scale and demand-driven participatory model of project design, provides a model that is more likely to be able to incorporate a strong gender component (GGCA 2009, 154; GEF 2008, 27). This thesis intends to analyze the extent to which and how this opportunity is taken up, and provide recommendations on manners in which this potential could be improved.

A further reason for focusing on the GEF SGP is because it is lauded as a success story in incorporating gender (GEF 2008, 27). The GEF gender mainstreaming evaluation document points out: “Many projects under the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) have been recognized for their success in promoting gender equality and the

empowerment of women” (GEF 2008, 27). This document goes on to lay out how the “GEF SGP tries to do a better job of gender mainstreaming” (GEF 2008, 27) than the Large and Medium Grants Programmes.

This thesis is therefore focused on a program that is likely to incorporate gender into project designs, making it a difficult case to study in order to substantiate the first hypothesis of this paper. The aim of this thesis is to uncover the extent to which gender has indeed been designed into these projects and how the gender components of the project design relate to gender equity in practice within the communities. If this mechanism is found to provide a weak example of incorporating gender when the SGP is considered one of the climate change mitigation mechanisms with a strong gender focus, it opens up important further research questions regarding the gender implications of mechanisms with less of a gender focus, such as the Large and Medium Grants Programmes of the GEF (GEF 2008) and the CDM.

3.2 Methods for Assessing Contextual Information Pertaining to Gender Relations

Moving from the policy to the project level, the second step of this thesis is contextualizing gender relations in the Intag zone of Ecuador. The GEF SGP did not conduct a baseline survey of gender relations in the Intag zone prior to carrying out the project. Nor is there much published information available pertaining to this region. As a result, this section pieces together the local gender context using primary literature research. Some of the most important publications utilized in this respect are:

- Living in the Occidental Andres of Cotacachi – FOES Project in Farm Agroecology and Agriculture - Intag “*Vivir en los Andes Occidentales de Cotacachi – Agroecologia y Agricultura Campesina Proyecto FOES – Intag*”
- Life Plan for Women of the Intag Zone 2007-2011 “*Plan de Vida de las Mujeres de la Zona de Intag 2007-2011*”

This analysis is also based on interviews conducted by the author with local community members⁶. One of the expected results of this research is to fill notable research gaps that exist in this area.

The gender analysis framework is used to guide the particular questions to ask to policy makers, project participants and community members. The first few characteristics of Southern feminism outlined in chapter 2 are used to set up the structure of the context section, including understanding pertinent political, economic, social and/or cultural contextual factors and how the local context relates to the global. These factors are examined both in chapter 5, which provides context and history of Ecuador and the Intag zone, and chapter 6, which outlines the gender context. In chapter 6, Southern feminism also provides the basis for developing an institutional analysis of gender relations relative to the state, market, community (including women's organizing), and household, which includes an analysis of the multiple responsibilities pertaining to the gender division of labour and how gender relations are perceived. The use of measures or indicators such as men and women's time burdens are used in some cases.

3.3 Methods for Assessing a Local Level Climate Change Mitigation Project: A Biodigester

The third step of this thesis is to carry out an in depth case study of whether and how a GEF SGP project relates to gender equity in practice in chapter 7. The focus of this thesis is a biodigester SGP climate change project in the Intag Zone of Ecuador. This project is run by the local community organization the Association of Agro-Artisanal Farmers of Intag – ACAI (*Asociación Agroartesanal de Campesinos Agroecológicos de Intag*). The biodigester project involves using pig waste to create gas to cook with. The

⁶ More information related to the interview process will be outlined below.

biodigester project is just beginning its second phase (which started in 2009 with some delays). Phase one took place over two years starting in 2006. In analyzing this case study of a locally implemented climate change mitigation project funded by an international mechanism through the UN, this thesis is well positioned to evaluate the extent to which international gender policy commitments, which are outlined in chapter 4, are implemented at the project level. The purpose is to determine whether this climate change project is promoting gender equity, or, conversely, whether it is maintaining or worsening gender inequities.

3.3.1 Measures to Evaluate How the Project Relates to Gender Equity

Measures to evaluate gender equity stem from the questions outlined in the gender analysis framework in chapter 2. There are several criteria to observe which are based on the characteristics of Southern feminism. At the project design level these components include whether there are underlying project assumptions that maintain or worsen gender inequities, whether women are participating in the project development, and whether different women (according to differences of class, race and ethnicity) are included in the project. At the project implementation level, the analysis includes whether only practical gender interests are promoted or whether strategic gender interests are advanced including questions of access, use and control and women's participation, voices and empowerment. Analyzing these different factors involves, in some cases, the use of measures or indicators such as the number of men and women who have an understanding of managing the biodigester. Monitoring and evaluation activities are also assessed for the extent to which they promote gender equity.

3.3.2 Research Techniques

Research techniques to analyze the hypotheses of this thesis include the use of the following qualitative tools: information from background documents, interviews and observation. The specific methodology requires breaking down the questions in the gender analysis framework among information to be obtained from background documents, background interviews with officials and interviews with community members and observation. The background documents include project proposals, GEF policy documents and guides, project evaluation documents and studies related to the Intag region. The background interviews include the GEF official, and two project evaluation officials mentioned above as well as three interviews with officials working at ACAI who are involved in implementing the project and one individual involved with the main local women's organization.

The interviews with individuals in the communities within the Intag zone include families that have received biodigesters, families about to receive biodigesters, and interviews with Afro-Ecuadorian community members⁷ in order to understand how the project relates to different women, in this case Afro-Ecuadorian women, and any implications for gender equity. In presenting findings from interviews, the interviews were assessed to understand who said what and these findings were grouped together according to perspectives. If there were alternate views, these are mentioned when presenting the findings.

3.3.3 Project Selection

The SGP office in Ecuador has been in operation since 1994 and to date has supported more than 200 community initiatives in different focal areas. Climate change

⁷ No indigenous community members were interviewed due to logistical reasons.

projects have not been as prominent as projects related to conserving biodiversity (although the two areas can overlap). However, 10 climate change-related projects have been carried out in Ecuador to date. Of these, five were implemented in the 1990s or very early 2000s and are too old to study. Of the remaining five projects, only three were carried out in relatively close proximity to Quito (my research base) making it feasible to travel to these locations more easily and at less cost, and are also clearly related to climate change mitigation (as opposed to technical support and monitoring projects) (PPD 2009).

The remaining projects include two biodigester projects, one in the province of Bolivar and the other in Imbabura, and one project divided into two components: a cycling project carried out in the coastal province of Manabí, a fair distance from Quito; and a solar hot water heater project implemented in La Chimba, Imbabura which is located closer to Quito. Among these, the project carried out in the Intag zone of Ecuador was selected because it takes place within a more recent time frame as well as for practical reasons and limitations in terms of the research capacity. Another project that was considered was the solar hot water component of the project in La Chimba. However, upon further study it was found that this project concluded several years ago and it would be difficult to gather interview participants, including officials involved with evaluating and implementing the project. This factor, in addition to time and other practical constraints, has led to a research design involving a more in depth, ethnographic analysis of a single case: the biodigester climate change mitigation project in the Intag zone of Ecuador.

Map 1: Map of Ecuador

(Latin American Travel N.D.)

Map 2: Map of the North of Ecuador

(St. Louis et al 2010, 120)

3.3.4 Interview Methodology

Research in Ecuador was carried out between March 2010 and August 2010.

Research in the Intag region took place between July 4th and August 18th, 2010. As outlined in table 3, in addition to the three interviews with officials carried out in Quito, three interviews were carried out among project officials. Interviews were also carried out among 31 community members in seven different villages where biodigesters have been constructed and one Afro-Ecuadorian community (outlined in table 3). No interview participants approached for an interview declined to participate except one man whose wife I interviewed.

In order to determine which families to interview, it was necessary to request from ACAI a list of families that have already received biodigesters and families that will be receiving biodigesters in the future. Among these individuals, a random draw was conducted in order to select participants to interview. This method was deemed preferable to using suggestions from ACAI project officials regarding whom to interview as this approach could bias the research, by, for example, directing the research to more successful examples.

Based on the history and context of Ecuador's discrimination towards Afro-Ecuadorian and indigenous peoples, because the population of Intag consists of *mestizos* (individuals of mixed Spanish and indigenous descent), Afro-Ecuadorians and indigenous peoples, and since Southern feminism requires looking at differences among women, it is also important to analyze how these groups are involved in and impacted by the project. In order to determine which members of the community to interview, locals were consulted regarding where these groups are predominantly located in the Intag zone. In

the case of indigenous community members, it was found that none were located in close proximity to the project and due to logistical reasons, no indigenous peoples were interviewed for this research. Afro-Ecuadorian communities, on the other hand, were found to be located in direct proximity to the project and were included in the interviews.

As it was not possible to send letters of information to the families or call them since there is no mail service or phones, the method of contacting interview participants involved meeting them on market day on Sunday in the community of Apuela where individuals gather from different communities several kilometers away. Individuals with biodigesters or on the list to receive them were identified by asking around, approaching the individuals identified, and requesting an interview at a time and place convenient for them. In other cases, it was necessary to visit the family in their community in order to request an interview and determine a time and place convenient for them. In the case of Afro-Ecuadorian community members, it was necessary to visit the communities identified by locals and randomly seeking out potential research participants to request interviews at a time and place convenient for them.

Interviews with community members included short introductory interviews with the family as a whole to get a sense of the family dynamic and roles and responsibilities and whether and how the family (household male and female head as well as other family members) has been involved in the project. The next step was to conduct separate interviews with the female and male head of the household. In the cases of Afro-Ecuadorians, only the female household heads were interviewed because in two cases they were single women, and in the other cases one husband declined to participate in an interview and the other was unavailable.

Table 3: List of Interviews

Participants Biodigesters	Participants to Receive Biodigesters in the Future	Afro-Ecuadorian Participants	Local Officials	Policy Level Officials
Female family 1	Female family 9	Female family 15	ACAI official 1	GEF official
Male family 1	Male family 9	Female family 16	ACAI official 2	ECOPAR official 1
Female family 2	Female family 10	Female family 17	ACAI official 3	ECOPAR official 2
Male family 2	Male family 10	Female family 18	Women's Coordinator official	
Female family 3	Female family 11			
Male family 3	Male family 11			
Female family 4*	Female family 12			
Female family 5	Male family 12			
Male family 5	Female family 13			
Female family 6	Male family 13			
Male family 6	Female family 14			
Female family 7	Male family 14			
Male family 7				
Female family 8				
Male family 8				

* Single woman

Interviews lasted between an hour and two hours per person. Interviews among Intag community members were generally conducted in participants' homes and interviews with officials were conducted at their offices or in cafes. All interviews were conducted in Spanish⁸ and the interviews were later transcribed in Spanish. The information in the interviews was inputted into a database according to the factors and questions outlined in the gender analysis framework. The information in this table along with specific quotes, which were then translated into English, was used as the basis for the analysis.

3.4 Study Scope

The interviews were set up in a manner that attempted to minimize interview bias. Families were selected randomly and caution was taken to phrase questions in a way that would not bias responses. Interviews were not led with gender questions but rather with

⁸ I am fluent in Spanish.

more general inquiries such as who is responsible for what with regards to production, social reproduction and community management. When gender specific questions were posed, caution was exerted to phrase them in a way that did not make lead responses in a particular direction or coach a response from the interviewee. Aside from one man whose wife I interviewed, each individual or family that was approached agreed to the interview, which implies there is a reduced possibility that only the more enthusiastic individuals were interviewed.

There are strengths and limitations to this research design. One potential limitation of this research design is the small sample size. However, the total number of participants interviewed for this research makes up nearly half (48 percent) of total cases of people with biodigesters (eight of 16) and to receive them in the future (six of 13). Also, while the case is unique, the research results from this study can be used in conjunction with future studies (George and Bennett 2005, 23). One particular benefit of the research design is that it involves an in-depth analysis of a case that provides an analytical account of culturally sensitive variables that are captured through qualitative methods. This investigation entails filling various research gaps about the region.

3.5 Research Ethics

Several measures were taken to ensure that this research was carried out ethically. In setting up interviews, caution was taken to explain to interview participants that I have no affiliation with any of the organizations involved in the project so as to ensure, for example, that they would not think they needed to participate in order to receive a biodigester in the future or other benefits. Emphasis was also placed on the fact that the information they provided would be for academic purposes, that they would remain anonymous if so desired, and that participation in the interview was completely voluntary.

Compensation of US\$5 was provided in appreciation of each individual's time, and US\$10 was provided in the cases of single women since interviews took more of their individual time. Although in some cases the interview participants expressed their names could be used, it was deemed preferable to keep all interviews anonymous in case the opinions they expressed might affect them negatively in any way.

A final point relates to positionality. This investigation was conducted within the context of an awareness of the privileges and responsibilities that come with conducting research, particularly in a setting of being an outsider and a white Northerner. Time was taken to gain a level of trust among community members and caution was taken to ensure participants did not view me as in a position of power over them, but rather in a position to learn from them and their lives and experiences. With this context in mind, care was also taken to write up the research results using first person voices from interviews as much as possible. However, I am aware that research is not a value-free process and in the instances where it is necessary to interpret the information gathered, caution was taken to do so in a manner that reflected to the best of my abilities the perspectives and intentions of the people whom I interviewed.

CHAPTER 4: GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (GEF) AND SMALL GRANTS PROGRAMME (SGP) GENDER POLICY CONTEXT

This chapter assesses whether and how the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Small Grants Programme (SGP) include gender considerations at the policy level and addresses the first hypothesis of this thesis. It conveys how at the international level, gender equity criteria are low on the overall agenda of the GEF and SGP internationally, despite strong international gender obligations. At the national level however, gender considerations take greater precedence.

This chapter begins with an overview of international gender obligations in section 4.1. Section 4.2 conveys how the international climate change debate has been largely void of these gender obligations. Section 4.3 turns to an analysis of how gender is treated in international GEF policies. Section 4.4 studies the SGP internationally and section 4.5 examines the national level of Ecuador.

4.1 The Gender Context: International Gender Commitments

Over the past few decades, development institutions have evolved in such a way that the necessity of taking a gender perspective in all interventions is now clear. This thesis therefore assumes rather than justifies the need to incorporate gender considerations into development projects and policies. This debate has already taken place in the international sphere where a gender perspective has been found indispensable on the grounds of human rights, sustainable development, social justice, human welfare, poverty eradication and development with equity (CCGA 2009, 43; Kabeer 1994, 81).

Gender obligations have taken shape through the UN Conferences on Women (in Copenhagen in 1980, Nairobi in 1985, Beijing in 1995, and Windhoek in 2000) and the UN 'Decade for Women' (1976-1985). There are now international requirements to take

a gender perspective in development interventions. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights put obligations on states to secure fair and equitable distribution of funds, technology, and information and to ensure women's participation in decision-making regarding policies and mechanisms (GGCA 2009, 45).

Another illustration of international gender obligations is the Platform for Action (PFA), which arose out of the 1995 Beijing United Nations (UN) Fourth World Conference on Women and is considered the most important guide for incorporating gender considerations into development initiatives (UNDP N.D., 7). It promotes "an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes so that, before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men, respectively" (UNDP N.D., 7). Moreover, in 2000, countries around the world adopted the Millennium Declaration, the aim of which is to assure equal rights and opportunities for women and men and promote the empowerment of women as an effective way to address poverty and advance sustainable development (GGCA 2009, 70).

The GEF SGP is administered by the UNDP and the United Nations as an institution has strong gender obligations. In addition to the international gender conventions and obligations outlined above, gender requirements have made it into the institutional agenda of the United Nations. Following the Fourth World Conference on Women, the United Nations adopted gender mainstreaming as the strategy to ensure the incorporation of gender perspectives in all development activities at all levels in order to promote gender equality (UNDP 2006, 2). The UNDP has since corporately adopted the

Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) (1997/2) definition of gender mainstreaming which is:

...the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality" (UNDP 2006, v).

In 2005, ECOSOC adopted the resolution "Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective into All Policies and Programmes in the United Nations System" which calls for intensified efforts by all UN entities, including agencies, funds and programs, to integrate gender perspectives in all UN policies and programs (UNDP 2006, 2; GGCA 2009, 49). Moreover, the UNDP is one of the primary programs responsible for ensuring the MDG targets are met, highlighting another requirement to promote gender equality.

The above examples make it clear that the UN gender commitments challenge the assumption of gender-neutrality of any policy or action. Such an assumption would prove contrary to accepted UN stances and counter the principles of gender equality.

4.2 Climate Change Discourse: Gender as a Missing Component

The need for a gender perspective in all development efforts was gaining prominence on the international arena around the same time that climate change was increasingly recognized as needing urgent international cooperation. Yet these processes have in many ways failed to intersect. Climate change has been viewed mainly as a scientific and economic problem, with a narrow focus on reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (CCGA 2009, iii; Denton 2002, 17). Despite global gender commitments, climate change has largely been framed as a gender-neutral issue in the international negotiations (Dennison 2003, 1; Rohr 2006, 2). The words 'gender' and 'women' are not

mentioned in either the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC) or the Kyoto Protocol, the two most important international treaties related to climate change (Skutsch 2002, 30). The absence of such terms is particularly surprising considering that the UNFCCC was adopted in Rio de Janeiro during the UN Conference on Environment and Development (the 'Rio Earth Summit'). The 'Earth Summit' had a strong gender component and all other documents from this summit, including Agenda 21, the Rio Declaration and the other two Conventions related to the UNFCCC – the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) – have a gender focus and incorporate women's recommendations (Hemmati and Rohr 2009, 21-22).

Nor are gender issues widely discussed among governments in the Conference of the Parties (COP) international climate change negotiations (Skutsch 2002, 30). There have been sparse official mentions of gender to date. One is contained in the text of the COP7 Marrakech resolution, which calls for more nominations of women to UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol bodies because it was determined that women were poorly represented in climate change planning and decision-making processes (Rohr 2006, 2). The other mention of gender arose more recently at the 2008 COP14 in Poznan, Poland. The UNFCCC secretariat formally acknowledged that climate change has a gender dimension and women and men are likely to feel its impacts differently and urged the need for gender inclusive policy measures to address climate change, recognizing that women are important agents of change in addressing this issue (UNFPA 2009, 6). While gender is slowly making its way into the international climate change discourse therefore, there is much room for improvement.

4.3 The Global Environment Facility and Gender

As the international financial mechanism for the UNFCCC, the GEF manages several funds, including the SGP, through implementing agencies such as the UNDP. As part of the UN system, the GEF has clear gender obligations. This section examines the extent to which these obligations are met at the policy level within the context of climate change projects.

4.3.1 GEF Mandates

The UN conventions on the environment, including the UNFCCC, and the COP meetings are the mechanisms by which the Global Environment Facility derives its mandates. The Conference of the Parties for the UNFCCC “determines the policy, strategic direction, program priorities and eligibility criteria for access to and utilization of financial resources available through the financial mechanism” (GEF 2008, 17). The UNFCCC secretariat recognizes that “there is a gender dimension to all activities relevant to climate change and that the negative effects of climate change are likely to affect men and women differently (GEF 2008, 49). However, the UNFCCC, as mentioned above, is the only convention for which the GEF is the financing mechanism that has no clear gender mandate, as no reference is even made to “gender” or “women” (Awori 2009, 12).

The convention does refer to broader social criteria. The preamble asserts that social and economic development and climate change efforts should be coordinated together, “taking into account the priority needs of developing countries and poverty reduction” (GEF 2006, 20). However, socio-economic and socio-cultural issues have not been emphasized in COP decisions except at a general level and there is yet to be specific guidance provided to the GEF on these issues. Mandates require active interpretation to inform the design of programs and projects (GEF 2006, 20). Moreover, that GEF

mandates do not emphasize gender is inconsistent with international gender commitments.

4.3.2 GEF Policies

GEF policy documents also conflict with international gender requirements. The GEF does not have a policy specific to gender and the inclusion of gender considerations in GEF policies is minimal. Of the seven policy documents listed on the GEF website (outlined in table 4) only two make specific reference to gender and/or women – the GEF Resource Allocation Framework (RAF) and the Public Involvement Policy. While the policy document “Recommended Minimum Fiduciary Standards for GEF Implementing and Executing Agencies” does not make reference to gender it does outline social criteria more generally, which could include gender, though the requirement is weakened (GEF 2010; GEF 2009, GEF 2008, GEF 2007; GEF 2005; GEF N.D. a; GEF N.D. b; GEF N.D. c).

The references to gender that do exist within these policy documents are minimal. The RAF is a system for allocating resources to countries in a consistent manner and is based on two pillars: a country’s potential to generate global environmental benefits; and country performance, which reflects the national policies relevant to the successful implementation of GEF projects. The only mention of gender is in relation to gender criteria pertaining to this second pillar (GEF 2005).

Table 4: GEF Policy Documents

Document Name	Description	Gender Refer-ences	Women Refer-ences	Social Refer-ences
Recommendations Concerning Certain Appointment, Reappointment and Performance Objective Reviews Processes	Recommends processes for the appointment and reappointment of the GEF CEO/Chairperson and the Director of the GEF Evaluation Office and performance objectives review processes for these two positions	No	No	No
GEF-5 Operational Procedures for the System for a Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR)	The STAR was designed to replace the Resource Allocation Framework used during the fourth replenishment of the GEF and this document clarifies some operational rules and procedures related to its practical application	No	No	No
Policies and Procedures for the GEF Project Cycle	Describes the revised GEF project cycle for implementation	No	No	No
The GEF Resource Allocation Framework	Describes the system for allocating scarce GEF resources within and among focal areas and countries	Yes	No	Yes
Climate Change Focal Area Strategy and Strategic Programming for GEF-4	Outlines the climate change focal area strategy and strategic programming for the GEF	No	No	No
Public Involvement Policy	Presents the GEF policy on public involvement in GEF-financed projects	No	Yes*	Yes
Recommended Minimum Fiduciary Standards for GEF Implementing and Executing Agencies	Presents the GEF policy for strengthened accountability for GEF implementing and executing agencies	No	No	Yes
Operational Strategy of the Global Environment Facility	Outlines operational principles that guide the GEF in the preparation of country-driven initiatives in the GEF's focal areas, including climate change	No	No	Yes

*Only mentioned as an example of a disadvantaged group.

The Public Involvement Policy relates to GEF operational policies. The GEF has an Operational Strategy that outlines 10 operational principles to provide overall direction to GEF focal areas. None make specific reference to gender. Principle 4 is somewhat related to social issues as it states that the GEF will fund projects based on national priorities designed to support sustainable development (GEF 2008, 21). Principle 7 concerns requirements for consultations and the participation, as appropriate, of project beneficiaries and affected groups of people which are outlined in the Public Participation Policy. This policy, which relates most directly to social issues, applies to all GEF focal

areas, programs, and projects (GEF 2006, 23) and “solidifies the operational requirement for stakeholder involvement and partnership in the design, implementation, and evaluation of GEF-financed activities” (GEF 2008, 15-16). However, no specific requirements related to gender and women are only mentioned as an example of a disadvantaged group that could be included in consultations (GEF N.D.c, 2).

Key policy documents such as the GEF Operational Strategy and the GEF Project Cycle Policy are void of gender. The GEF project cycle policy and regulations eliminated gender requirements. The first social considerations and criteria in 1995 were broad and included the use of tools such as social assessment in order to identify the roles of stakeholders and understand gender dimensions. These criteria were revised in 2000, 2003 and 2007 however, with implications for gender considerations. The 2000 changes narrowed social considerations to include stakeholder involvement, namely, descriptions of how stakeholders, including marginal groups, are involved in project development. The most recent revisions “further simplified the review criteria to focus on GEF-specific criteria, such as global environmental benefit”. There are no longer GEF specific social criteria, including gender considerations, as it is assumed that GEF agencies, such as the UNDP and the World Bank, have their own social and gender policies and strategies that will be applied to the projects (GEF 2008, 15-16; Awori 2009, 8-9).

The GEF may be following this method to ensure it is not duplicating efforts with these other entities and relying on the gender mainstreaming policies of the UN is not necessarily problematic. However, there is evidence that depending on the gender mainstreaming policies of other agencies has not to date guaranteed the promotion of gender equity through GEF projects. Many of the GEF agencies, including the UNDP, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the World Bank, have conducted

internal reviews and assessments of their efforts to take a gender perspective in their development activities. As noted by the GEF (2008, 16), “These assessments all concluded that, although some improvements had been made, generally the application of gender-related strategies remains weak...” (GEF 2008, 16). The GEF itself, in its evaluation, “Mainstreaming Gender at the GEF,” recognized that given each GEF implementing agency has its own gender policy and/or strategy with varying applicability to GEF projects, this strategy needs to be reworked in order to fulfill commitments and mandates to mainstream gender equality (GEF 2008, 16).

Furthermore, there is evidence of the need for the GEF itself to have clear gender criteria since GEF mandates are often referred to in evaluating the success of its programs. For example, one GEF evaluation noted: “Given that the GEF’s primary mandate is to address global environmental concerns rather than poverty alleviation, the SGP’s current level of efforts in reaching out to the poorest and most marginal populations seems appropriate” (SGP 2008, 35-36). Unless the GEF incorporates international gender requirements into its policies and mandates, there is less likelihood that evaluations will measure projects against these criteria.

Currently, GEF policies and evaluations are more primarily focused on environmental criteria. On the one hand, the focus on environmental criteria is understandable considering the GEF is an environmental mechanism whose mission is to provide funding to achieve global environmental benefits in areas such as climate change (GEF N.D.b). On the other hand, however, these findings imply that the GEF is not meeting international requirements to incorporate a gender perspective into all policies and programs at every stage. These findings lend support to the first hypothesis of this thesis.

4.4 The Small Grants Programme at the International Level and Gender

The GEF SGP aims to balance global criteria and goals, such as reducing GHG emissions, with program implementation appropriate to each country (SGP 2002, 10). SGP operations are supposed to be carried out in a decentralized, flexible manner, promoting maximum country and community-level ownership (SGP 2002, 10). It is thus necessary to examine gender criteria in policies at both the international and country level.

Globally, the SGP has developed a strategic framework outlining the SGP approach and criteria (focal areas, operational programs and eligible SGP interventions). Policy guidance is also provided regarding operations, resource mobilization, monitoring and evaluation and communications. The goal of these global policies is to ensure program consistency and accountability to GEF global environmental objectives (SGP 2002, 10).

Similar to the GEF, the SGP policy documents are in many ways inconsistent with international requirements to incorporate a gender perspective. Like the GEF, the SGP has no policy specific to gender. Of the five policy documents outlined in table 5, three make references to gender while the Global Communications Strategy makes mention of social criteria (SGP N.D.a; SGP N.D.b; SGP N.D.c; SGP N.D.d; SGP N.D.e). The Operational Guidelines and the Strategic Framework, the most relevant documents, have few references to gender. In the case of the Operational Guidelines there is only one mention of gender, but only as an example, which is also brought up in the Strategic Framework. The reference relates to how the SGP aims to address areas in which the local circumstances do not meet necessary project conditions and/or there is no local capacity by mobilizing organizations and resources, such as gender training, to ensure a

project's success. This reference is both indirect and the SGP does not take direct responsibility for gender in this sense, stating that in mobilizing these resources, "The burden to meet the development baseline would be spread among a network of organizations rather than rest of the GEF SGP alone" (SGP N.D.b, 7). The Strategic Framework does make a further more direct reference to gender, stating that the SGP will continue to direct its grant-making and technical assistance activities to marginalized communities with an emphasis on gender and indigenous peoples' issues. However, as the most important policy document for the SGP, it is significant that there is scant reference to gender in the text.

Table 5: SGP Policy Documents

Document Name	Description	Gender Referen-ces	Women Referen-ces	Social Referen-ces
GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) Strategic Framework	Provides guidance to SGP country programs on the development, revision or elaboration of country program strategies and the development of projects that fit GEF operational strategies and programs	Yes	No	Yes
GEF Small Grants Programme Monitoring and Evaluation Framework	Provides a common approach to guarantee that project implementation is adequately monitored and assessed keeping in mind the interests of both project participants and the GEF objectives	Yes	Yes	Yes
GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) Operational Guidelines	Outlines operational guidelines based on the Project Strategic Framework to assist GEF-related staff in program structure, implementation and administration at the country level	Yes*	No	Yes
Global Communications Strategy	Provides an internal and external communications system for the SGP	No	No	Yes
Resource Mobilization Strategy	Guides the SGP in reaching current and future co-financing targets by creating a 'culture and infrastructure' to attract, manage and allocating funding from non-GEF sources to achieve global environmental benefits through local action	No	No	No

*Gender only referred to as an example

The SGP Monitoring and Evaluation is the only policy document that could be deemed to include a gender perspective as required by international obligations. It insists,

for example, on asking questions regarding how women and men participated in planning, implementing and evaluating projects and whether such projects had a planned gender focus or whether it evolved during the course of implementation. It also promotes the need to undertake a gender analysis (GEF N.D.a, 25-27). The SGP overall is more successful than the GEF in promoting gender therefore, but still lacks a gender perspective in most of its policies. These findings overall lend support, though less clearly than the GEF level, to the hypothesis that the GEF SGP falls short of broader UN requirements for gender equity.

4.5 The Small Grants Programme at the National Level of Ecuador and Gender

In analyzing the objectives, National Strategy, templates and monitoring and evaluation procedures and Ecuador's gender manual it becomes clear that policies at the national level go further than the international level in promoting a gender perspective.

4.5.1 Ecuador SGP Objectives

Gender considerations are not mentioned explicitly in the SGP Ecuador's four principal objectives. These include developing community-level strategies and implementing technologies to reduce environment problems; sharing best practices among community-based organizations (CBOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), host governments, development aid agencies, the GEF and others; building partnerships and networks of stakeholders; and ensuring environmental conservation and sustainable development strategies and projects are understood and practiced by communities and other key stakeholders (SGP 2008, 7). While gender is not mentioned directly, this final principle relates indirectly to gender. Half of the members of communities where projects are carried out are women and unless women are involved in the projects, it could be argued this principle is not being followed. However, the lack of

specific gender objectives risks weakening the promotion of gender equity through SGP projects.

4.5.2 Ecuador National Strategy

Every country that accepts the GEF develops a SGP National Strategy to guide the program. Ecuador's National Strategy has strong gender mandates. One of the key focuses is equality of opportunities, with a specific emphasis on gender (PPD 2004, 42). The National Strategy promotes ensuring participation and decision-making in accordance with the needs and particularities of men and women of the community in all phases of the project (IBID, 32). Projects are to be elaborated in a participatory manner considering the effects on men and women and the mechanisms by which the project design addresses these impacts (IBID, 42). Projects are to be implemented in a way that contemplates the situation and different needs of men and women (IBID). Women's participation is considered crucial to promoting another objective, which is women's empowerment (PPD 2004, 83). The National Strategy also promotes equality of opportunity in relation to interculturalism/ethnicity, namely Afro-Ecuadorians and indigenous peoples (PPD 2004, 32) that relates to the promotion of equity in terms of differences among women.

Ecuador's National Strategy focuses on the conservation of natural resources (Anonymous Interview GEF Official 2010) and as a result, linkages between climate change and gender are not made. For example, the Strategy promotes a clear definition of women and men's access, use and control of natural resources to ensure equitable policies and equal opportunity with regards to the management of these resources (PPD 2004, 32). This reference relates more directly to resource management than climate change technologies. However, the National Strategy does state that one of the most effective

ways of promoting equality of opportunities through the project is by paying attention to the needs and interests of women in relation to technologies (IBID).

4.5.3 Project Proposal Templates

Applying these policies through SGP Ecuador templates portrays somewhat of a weaker ability to promote gender equity, though there are some strong gender criteria. Project proponents must follow three forms when applying for a GEF SGP grant. Information is requested related to the total population the project proponent will work with broken down by men and women and how the project will strengthen community participation and in particular that of women in the planning and execution of decisions and in the results of the project. The forms also ask in general terms how the project will promote gender equality (PPD 2009). Notably however, no mention is made of conducting a gender analysis at this stage so as to understand the needs and interests of men and women in the communities. Nor is information requested in terms of how the project will benefit or negatively impact women and men or any information related to promoting women's empowerment. The implications of these omissions are examined in chapter 7.

4.5.4 Monitoring and Evaluation

While there are international standardization procedures, every SGP host country goes about monitoring and evaluating projects in their own way (SGP 2002, 10-11). Ecuador has developed a system called SIMONA – System of Monitoring and Tracking (*Sistema de Monitorio y Acompañamiento*). This system is the follow up to the old procedure called SISE – System of Follow-up and Evaluation (*Sistema de Seguimiento y Evaluación*), which was replaced in 2005 due to the need to incorporate global SGP indicators and make the system more practical and applicable to the field (Quintero, 4).

SIMONA applies to all SGP focal areas, including climate change projects (Anonymous Interview GEF Official 2010).

SIMONA is in keeping with the National Strategy's strong gender emphasis. The system emphasizes equality of opportunities including a focus on the marginalized groups in society, which includes women, Afro-Ecuadorians and indigenous peoples (Quintero N.D., 10). Specific objectives of SIMONA related to gender include ensuring women's and men's participation and decision-making as related to their needs and particularities in all phases of the project. Another objective is to analyze the different ways in which men and women interact in society, their functions and situations, and the division of labour, and integrate different local visions into the projects in order to promote gender equality. A final objective is to create new spaces for thinking, action and policy in order to work with women to rethink their condition and positions. SIMONA promotes efforts to create democratic and participatory spaces that permit direct access to decision-making processes that respond to the positions, interests and needs of women and in this process advance women's empowerment (Quintero N.D., 10).

As outlined in the terms of reference for project evaluators, evaluation teams are responsible for ensuring there is a specialist within the project evaluation group with an expertise in project development with an emphasis on the environment, gender and participation (PPD N.D., 4). The monitoring and evaluation team also has responsibilities as capacity building facilitators and must present a plan that specifies the content and method regarding a focus on gender equity⁹ (PPD N.D., 4).

⁹ Attempts to access this document, which exists to the best of my knowledge, were unsuccessful.

4.5.5 Gender Manual

Ecuador has developed a manual to guide the inclusion of gender in SGP projects. The guide was elaborated in 2008 and is designed for the use of CBO and NGO technical teams that implement SGP projects. The guide focuses on socio-environmental projects (PPD y Fundación OFIS 2008, 5) and as such applies to climate change projects indirectly. The development of a national guide is not an international SGP requirement. In this case, the guide was developed in response to a perceived need. There are no internationally developed SGP gender guides available for country use. It is therefore up to the country to determine the extent to which gender manuals and other resources are available. Ecuador can be hailed as a success story in this case (Anonymous Interview GEF Official, 2010).

Ecuador's guide has strong gender recommendations with the purpose of developing environmental projects with a gender perspective so as to promote gender equity. It recommends that project proponents undertake three gender workshops: a gender analysis to understand the context of gender relations (including understanding multiple responsibilities and questions of access, use and control); an analysis of the activities and strategies to incorporate a gender focus into the project; and monitoring and evaluation with a focus on gender (PPD y Fundación OFIS 2008).

It is clear therefore that overall, a gender perspective is present in many of the SGP policies at the national level of Ecuador. These findings counter to a certain degree the first hypothesis of this thesis.

Conclusions Related to the First Hypothesis of this Thesis at the Policy Level

The analysis in this chapter conveys mixed results in relation to the first hypothesis of this thesis that GEF SGP funding mechanisms for climate change

mitigation projects are falling short of broader UN requirements for gender equity. This chapter conveys how despite international gender obligations, which are central to the general mission of the UN, the policies of the GEF and the SGP at the international level do not place much emphasis on gender and overall are non-compliant with UN gender policies. These findings lend support to the first hypothesis of this thesis therefore.

In comparison to the international level, the national level of Ecuador has stronger gender policies. Ecuador's gender requirements in many ways lend counter support to the first hypothesis of this thesis. The national policies outlined in this chapter in many ways meet international gender criteria and provide clear requirements against which to measure how gender has been considered at the project level. Gender guidelines are not necessarily based on international GEF and/or SGP requirements but in some cases have been developed based on perceived need, as in the case of the gender manual. How other countries take up gender within the context of the SGP is a topic for further research. Whether and how these policies are implemented in practice is analyzed in chapter 7.

CHAPTER 5: ECUADOR HISTORY AND CONTEXT

This chapter moves from the high policy level to the local level of Ecuador and the Intag zone. The overview of conditions among Ecuador's rural sector, indigenous peoples, Afro-Ecuadorians and women presented in this chapter sets the context for the subsequent assessments of an international climate change mitigation project. As promoted by Southern feminism, this chapter, along with chapter 6, aims to provide a holistic understanding of women's context and link the local to the global. It also focuses on another key aspect of Southern feminism – marginalized women. This chapter includes an introduction to rural conditions in Ecuador in section 4.1 and more specifically in the Intag zone in northern highlands of Ecuador, the location of the empirical component of this thesis, in section 4.2.

5.1 Ecuador Context

Ecuador is a democratic republic. Although Ecuador has been under continuous democratic rule since 1979, like most of its Latin American counterparts, Ecuador's political history is largely defined by instability and power struggles among elites. Ecuador's economy is characterized by the export of primary goods, mainly petroleum, bananas and roses (World Bank 2003; Ayala-Mora, 2010).

5.1.1 Indigenous Peoples and Afro-Ecuadorians

Ecuador is a racially and ethnically diverse country. *Mestizos* make up the majority of Ecuador's population, while indigenous peoples¹⁰ also make up a large share of the population and Afro-Ecuadorians (Afro-descendants) to a smaller degree. These

¹⁰ Indigenous peoples in Ecuador consist of 23 different nationalities and peoples.

latter groups make up approximately 30 percent of the population, although estimates vary widely¹¹ (Uquillas and Van Nieuwkoop 2003, 3).

As a result of a history of social, economic and political exclusion, socio-economic differences have persisted among ethnic groups since colonial times and the incidence of poverty (as measured by income and unsatisfied basic needs) among the indigenous and Afro-descendants is higher than the rest of the population (Gallardo and Nopo 2009, 4; Uquillas and Van Nieuwkoop 2003, 3). Indigenous peoples and Afro-Ecuadorians tend to have less access to basic services compared to the national average (World Bank 2003). There is also evidence of educational discrepancies. For example, the 1999 Living Conditions Survey shows indigenous populations over the age of 24 living in rural highland areas have an average of 2.4 years of schooling compared to 7.6 years of schooling at the national level (Rojas 2003, 271). The 2006 educational registration rate among Afro-Ecuadorians was 88.2 percent while it was 92.7 percent for the rest of the population (PNUD 2010, 32).

5.1.2 Ecuador's Rural Sector

Ecuador has a history of inequality in the rural sector (North 2003). Factors such as structural adjustment policies, the effects of economic integration and the opening of economic markets have all contributed to and compounded the situation of poverty and vulnerability in rural areas (Uquillas 2005). Educational indicators, for example, convey that the rural dropout rate is 34 percent in rural areas, compared to 17 percent in urban areas and performance evaluation tests in language and mathematics show that rural areas are, on average, obtaining the lowest scores (IDB 1998, 1-4). More limited access to other

¹¹ Indigenous peoples often estimate their population around 40% while Ecuador's Integrated System of Social Indicators estimates 10% based on census data (Uquillas and Nieuwkoop 2003).

basic services, including only 25 percent of the rural population being covered by public health insurance, 30 percent having no access to basic health care services and one third of rural households lacking access to safe drinking water or electricity, underpin and entrench rural inequality throughout Ecuador. Women and indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian communities are among the social groups that suffer the most from poverty in rural Ecuador (World Bank 2003).

5.1.3 Women in Ecuador

Social indicators also help confirm that gender inequalities in Ecuador go well beyond biological differences. Women in Ecuador in general (not distinguishing among women according the race, etc.) have lower educational completion rates than men (64 percent compared to 69 percent at the primary level) and higher illiteracy rates (12 percent compared to 8 percent for men), and the literacy gender gap is more pronounced within indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian populations (World Bank 2003; UNDP 2010). Women also have fewer employment opportunities (World Bank 2003) and Afro-Ecuadorian women are among the most disadvantaged in the market, with unemployment levels four times higher than men who are not Afro-Ecuadorian (UNDP 2010, 36).

In the rural sector, several development projects throughout the 1990s aimed to increase crop productivity and agricultural sustainability but effectively excluded Ecuadorian women. The vast majority of technical assistance and other programs that actually reached small-scale producers were targeted to men, reflecting general beliefs by national-level policy makers that men were most often household heads and primary decision makers regarding production, including land use and input selection (Hamilton 1998).

Overall, several factors within and beyond Ecuador, ranging from domestic policies that discouraged the participation of females in the school system through to international development policies that failed to fully recognize the importance of women in productive activities, have collectively reinforced gender inequities throughout rural Ecuador over the past few decades. These gender inequities are most pronounced among rural indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian women.

5.2 The Intag Zone of Ecuador – The Rural Context

5.2.1 General Context

The Intag region, a diverse area in terms of climate and ecological zones, is part of the canton of Cotacachi in the province of Imbabura. This area has a population of almost 12,000 inhabitants, of which 98 percent are *mestizo*, one percent is Afro-Ecuadorian and one percent is indigenous (AUCC N.D., 11, 13). The Intag zone experiences high levels of poverty, which, as measured by basic needs not being met, is at 94.9 percent. For example, only 20 percent of homes have potable water (IBID, 14). Unfortunately there is no gender-disaggregated data regarding poverty for the Intag region or data broken down according to race/ethnicity. Social and economic indicators do show inequities between men and women however. For example, illiteracy rates in the Intag region are 17.69 percent for men versus 27.14 percent for women (AUCC N.D., 36). One study found that women also have lower elementary and high school completion rates (Roper-Bakter, 2010, 12). According to one of the Intag zone's literacy officials, part of the explanation for women's relative lower level of education responds to the fact they have less time to devote to education. As this official notes: "men don't have as many obligations as women who work at home. For that reason men are able to devote more time to education [than women can]" (Aboueldahab 2010).

5.2.2 History

Settlement in the Intag zone dates back to about 1850 when families escaping the exploitation of working on large haciendas in Northern Ecuador arrived in search of new land and opportunities. Some of the new arrivals worked on properties that were already being used for agriculture while others acquired their own land for the same purposes. Over time, small villages were formed which were the origin of the present-day communities (Rivadeneira y Robalino 2004, 15-16).

5.2.3 Principal Productive Activities

Agriculture continues to be the dominant activity in the Intag zone. Farms range in size from five-six hectares up to 50-60 and agricultural products are produced both for self-consumption by the family and for sale. A variety of crops are cultivated depending on the altitude at which the farms are situated, from beans, lentils and corn to different fruits and vegetables. Farmers also raise cows, pigs and chickens. While certain farms have been based in intensive and extensive monoculture techniques, alternative agricultural practices have emerged which attempt to join more traditional small-scale practices with newer conservation practices including diversifying crops and reforesting trees. Other productive activities in this region include tourism, manufactured goods and handicrafts such as coffee bags from *cabuya* (a local plant) and bath products (AUCC N.D.).

5.2.4 Principal Local Environmental Issues

Forests, Soil and Water

More than 150 years of colonization has contributed to the dividing of plots of land, the extension of agricultural areas and severe deforestation, which has altered the overall landscape of the Intag zone. Government policies greatly contributed to

deforestation – notably the second Law of Agrarian Reform and Colonization of 1970 that required the clearing of land in order to establish legal ownership (Rivadeneira y Robalino 2004, 18). The degradation of soils due to erosion on steep slopes and contamination of water sources are also important environmental issues in the region (AUCC, 14). These trends are now being addressed locally by efforts to conserve landscapes, reforest and preserve water sources (AUCC N.D., 21) and the GEF SGP biodigester project relates to such environmental initiatives.

5.2.5 Global Environmental/Political Economy Issues

Mining

Southern feminism promotes looking at the impact of global factors, such as economic and political influences, on the local community. One global influence that has largely defined the Intag zone is the mining struggle. The region has large quantities of mineral deposits, which has made it attractive to transnational mining companies since the 1990s (Rivadeneira y Robalino 2004, 20). A Canadian mining company, Ascendant Copper, planned to exploit these deposits and used a number of tactics to gain access to the region, including offering money, jobs and development projects, buying up land and on the other end of the spectrum, hiring paramilitaries to forcefully gain access to the region. The company ultimately failed due to local efforts to block the mining (Alvarez 2009). In 2008, the Canadian company pulled out and the mining rights are currently in the hands of the government (DECOIN 2010).

Community members in Intag opposed to mining argue they could benefit in the short-term from mining but in the future there would be no livelihood for them or their children (Alvarez 2009; Rivadeneira y Robalino 2004, 20). They look to other areas of Ecuador that have undergone mining as examples of what could happen in the Intag

region. As such, they argue that mining leads to contaminated water, loss of biodiversity and the transformation of rural life and advocate alternatives (Rivadeneira y Robalino 2004, 20).

The mining conflict has had a notable impact on local community relations, including gender relations. It has created marked divisions both within communities and within families among those who are pro-mining and against it (AUCC N.D., 65; Alvarez 2009). At the same time, as is explored further in chapter 6, this conflict has stimulated a process of resistance to mining in the region in order to protect the land and be able to promote alternatives such as agricultural activities, handicrafts and tourism and has spurred some women, often for the first time, into the public sphere (AUCC, N.D., 55).

Conclusion Related to the History and Context of Ecuador

This chapter conveys pronounced inequities in the rural sector and among indigenous peoples, Afro-Ecuadorians and women in Ecuador. It also illustrates the context in the Intag zone, including inequities that mirror the national level as well as particular struggles related to the environment and the mining conflict that must be appreciated in order to understand gender relations in the region. The following chapter turns to a specific analysis of gender relations in the Intag zone.

CHAPTER 6: THE INTAG ZONE OF ECUADOR GENDER CONTEXT

This chapter aims to establish a gender baseline in the Intag region from which to understand the state of gender equity. Understanding gender relations in the Intag zone is necessary in order to analyze how a climate change mitigation project intersects with this context and whether it maintains or worsens any existing gender inequities or, conversely, promotes gender equity. This process involves an institutional analysis, as promoted by Southern feminism, of women's involvement in the state and political sphere in section 6.1, the market and the community (including women's organizing) in section 6.2 and the household in section 6.3, though these spheres clearly overlap. The exploration of the household level involves understanding women's and men's roles and responsibilities. Women's and men's perceptions and values assigned to this work are analyzed in section 6.4.

6.1 State and Political Institutional Analysis

The principal political institutions with a presence in the Intag zone, as outlined in table 6 below, are the national, provincial and municipal government and the district councils (*juntas parroquiales*). No gender-disaggregated statistics are available for the Intag region but data at the national level shows women are participating in the public sphere to a greater degree at the micro-level than higher levels and even then their levels of participation are low. Statistics from the Political Coordinator of Ecuadorian Women (*Coordinadora Política de Mujeres Ecuatorianas*) show that at the micro-level, women represent 2.7 percent of mayors, 30 percent of city councilors and 24.9 percent of participants in the district council (AUCC N.D., 62).

Table 6: Intag Political Institutions

Political Institution	Key Services/Responsibilities	Observations
National Government	Education, health, welfare	Provides welfare and food provision baskets to low-income senior citizens, people with disabilities and poor mothers with young children
Provincial Government	Road construction and upkeep	
Municipal Government	Has committees pertaining to education, health, tourism, economics and environment and natural resource	In 1996 the mayor at the time, Auki Tituaña Males, initiated a participatory local development process to define a County Development Plan
District Council	Take community concerns to necessary funding source (municipal, provincial or national)	There are seven district councils in the Intag region corresponding to the seven districts, each with between five and 40 communities. Each district council has its own local plan

Efforts have been made to increase women's participation levels in public institutions at the local level. The promotion of the Quotas Law related to women as public dignitaries has increased the active participation of women in the public sphere (AUCC N.D., 5, 64). The district councils are also targeting women. These are elected bodies with a system in which the first candidate of each list gets more votes, the second candidate on the list gets less votes and so forth. By law, if the first candidate is a man, the second candidate must be a woman and so forth. However, as member of ACAI points out, the first candidate on each list is generally a man and, for that reason, men are almost always elected over women (Anonymous Interview ACAI 2 2010). In consequence, this gender equity policy often fails to produce equitable results as far as gender is concerned.

Women's level of participation in the public sphere in the Intag zone is still in its initial stages. For example, as conveyed by an official from the Women's Coordinator,

Women have not finished leaving the closet. Not in public spaces. They are in the *junta* [district council], they arrive at the *junta*, but their role is insignificant and when they grab the microphone they can't defend a proposition. They coordinate food and these types of things. They are still afraid to talk. This part comes from education, the schools I think. Since they are small they are scared of speaking in

public. There are few that speak in public. Women are experts in staying quiet during meetings and criticizing after (Anonymous Women's Coordinator Official 2010).

This statement conveys how a lack of confidence and experience are barriers to women's participation in politics. In addition to these reasons, the Women's Coordinator of Intag conveys in its publication that machismo, or male attitudes that dominate women, continues to be an obstacle that prevents women's participation in decision-making spaces as illustrated by cases of men preventing women from attending meetings and belonging to organizations (AUCC N.D., 65). Even those women who are actively participating in politics face gender challenges. In some cases, the men participating in the district councils do not listen to women or respect their opinion and at times even take unilateral decisions that effectively exclude women's voices (IBID, 62, 65).

Unfortunately there is no information available disaggregated by race/ethnicity making it unfeasible to answer questions regarding how different women are involved in politics in the Intag region. These findings show that gender inequities exist in political participation.

6.2 Community and Market Institutional Analysis

6.2.1 Local Community Organizations

Local community organizations, as outlined in table 7 below, have arisen primarily in response to the mining conflict. The mining threat prompted people from different communities to come together to oppose this activity in the region. As noted by one community member in reference to the influence of the mining issue: "People were not participatory in the past. They didn't want to converse with people they didn't know, whereas now they do" (Anonymous Interview Man with Biodigester 3 2010). Local community members began to organize not only to halt the mining but also to build

sustainable alternatives by promoting, for example, reforestation, community development and environmental education (DECOIN 2010).

Table 7: Principal Local Organizations of Intag

Community-Based Organization	Purpose
Defense and Ecological Conservation Organization of Intag (DECOIN)	To halt mining in Intag and providing alternative sustainable livelihoods
Association of Agro-ecological Farmers of Intag (ACAI)*	Promotes conservation practices on farms as a sustainable alternative to mining
Association of Coffee Cultivators of the Intag River (AACRI)	To promote local coffee products
Corporation of Sustainable Products of Intag (CORPAISE)	To promote local bean products
Corporation of Lactose Products (CORPIL)	To promote local milk farmer's products
Corporation of Productive Development (CORDESPRO)	To provide local credit
Toisan Consortium	Umbrella group for local organizations in Intag that finds and distributes funds

* Responsible for the biodigester project

The resistance to the mining threat and the emergence of the several different organizations operating in the region led to a relative increase in the participation of women in the public sphere. As expressed by one female project participant, feeling comfortable participating was a slow and gradual process that was the result of the presence of a number of new organizations:

I have now left my nerves behind because before I didn't leave the house. Before I didn't leave...that is that women didn't leave the house at all (sic). We had to only be in the house, preparing food and feeding the husband and the children and nothing else (sic). Women for this reason in the past didn't study. They didn't have the freedom to go out at all but now they are participating little by little. I, for example, started to participate when I was 25 years old. Before 25 years of age I didn't go out, I didn't participate at all. I didn't have relationships with anyone – the house and my kids and nothing else so I didn't know people, I didn't converse with anyone so I had misgivings about going to meetings and I didn't want to converse with anyone and I'm in my house and I say better if no one comes (sic). I didn't know anyone. But after organizations came, they said this should be this way (sic). I started to converse with people. Since DECOIN was formed, I started to participate. I didn't have elementary schooling – I dreamt of having finished elementary school and this was like having gone to school. I started to participate in all the capacity building they have, the meetings, the courses, and this served to help me get exposure and start to participate (Anonymous Interview Woman with Biodigester 6 2010).

Another woman in a family with a biodigester noted that the mining struggle had a lot to do with changes in women's participation:

In the past it was terrible even to have a meeting because they [women] didn't talk, they didn't have opinions. I remember that many women, since we began our struggle [with the mining company], we have talked and ended up ahead (sic). We got to know one another and gained confidence. Where we had to go we went (sic). If one had to express their opinion they expressed it. We got to know many women, a group of more women than men (sic). We met from all over Intag (Anonymous Interview Woman with Biodigester 3 2010).

The local community organizations outlined above have direct linkages with the market and women's participation in them thus has implications for their involvement in productive activities. However, as noted in a document from the Women's Coordinator of Intag, these organizations are generally made up of male members who participate in the organizations' assemblies (where they establish, for example, coffee prices), even though activities related to these organizations (such as growing coffee) are carried out by both men and women (AUCC N.D., 22). There is evidence Afro-Ecuadorian women are also left out. Of all the women interviewed, only one was involved in one of these organizations (Anonymous Interview Afro-Ecuadorian Woman 4). The lesser presence of women (including different women) increases the likelihood that women's voices are underrepresented in these organizations.

6.2.2 Development Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

Women's involvement in market-related and political activities has also been spurred by NGO efforts. As outlined in table 8, the region has had the presence of two principal development NGOs: Brethen and United Foundation (*Fundación Brethen y Unida*) or FBU and PRODECI, formerly known as Help in Action (*Ayuda en Acción*). Neither of these two NGOs have programs specifically targeted at gender issues in the

Intag region, but these organizations have been involved in increasing women's participation in development activities, such as tree planting in the region (FBU 2010; PRODECI 2010; Anonymous Interview Man with Biodigester 3; Anonymous Interview Woman with Biodigester 3 2010; AUCC N.D., 64).

Table 8: Principal Development Non-Governmental Organizations of Intag

Development Non-Governmental Organization	Purpose
Fundación Brethen y Unida (FBU)	Promote the formation of agro-ecological farms, tree nurseries, soil conservation, animal management, biogas energy, environmental education, forest management and the promotion of small businesses
PRODECI (formerly Ayuda en Acción)	Promote education, health, capacity building, the environment, tourism and credit programs for farms

6.2.3 The Church

The Catholic Church has also been involved in increasing women's participation.

In 1995, a new priest initiated an organizational process in the Intag zone with the purpose of mitigating poverty. From this effort arose the organization "Women and the Environment" (*Mujer y Medio Ambiente*) among others, which was supported by the church (AUCC N.D., 63).

While there is evidence that the Catholic Church is encouraging women's participation, there are also ways in which it is upholding structures that maintain gender inequities. Evidence of this contradiction was observed in a community sixth grade beauty pageant (females only). These young girls performed dances and paraded in different dress attire in front of community members. The beauty queen judge was the local priest (who serves much of the Intag zone) (Personal Observation 2010). This practice objectifies women at a young age. As an influential institutional in the community, with ideas that have resonance among men and women in the region (AUCC N.D., 63), it is notable that the church is sanctioning this cultural institution.

6.2.4 Women's Organizing

Since the 1990s, women from different communities have been forming women's groups. These are usually born out of the need to generate income and most are based around artisanal projects (AUCC N.D., 63). These groups work in producing marketable products such as bags and hats made out of *cabuya* and bath products. An official from the Women's Coordinator noted that these are "productive initiatives to promote the independence of women because when you have money you have less dependence on your husband" (Anonymous Women's Coordinator Official 2010). By participating in these activities in this sense, women are confronting machismo¹².

Machismo has been a barrier to women's participation in market activities not simply through the local organizations outlined above but in general. In some cases husbands simply prohibit women from participating in income-earning activities (AUCC N.D., 33). As noted by the Women's Coordinator of Intag, patriarchy, which reinforces machismo, is quite accentuated in the Intag zone (IBID, 62). One woman interviewed noted how 30 years ago, women were not allowed to participate in anything. She conveys how in her community, women had no salary and wanted to organize to make money. She explains:

To acquire money at first the husbands prohibited the women from being involved in organizations (sic). There were many wars between spouses and with the [male] children but now the first group has been formed called "Women and the Environment" that works with artisanal products from *cabuya*...go and see the husbands and male children are now sitting knitting beside their wives and sisters working with *cabuya* artisanal products. Why? Because from this is derived a fund for the family. Therefore, in this manner, little by little people are understanding (Anonymous Interview Women with Biodigester 5 2010).

¹² Machismo in Latin America is the idea that femininity is inferior to masculinity.

Though there are still barriers to women's participation in market activities, women's groups are promoting women's financial autonomy and independence.

6.2.5 The Women's Coordinator of Intag

The women's organizations in the different communities come together under an umbrella organization called the Women's Coordinator of Intag (*Coordinadora de Mujeres de Intag*), formed in 2002, which is based out of the Toisan Consortium (*Consortio Toisan*) (AUCC N.D., 64). The mission of this organization is to strengthen the participation of women from the Intag zone, promote their empowerment and autonomy and transform inequitable and unjust relations between women and men (IBID, 64). One of the main objectives of this group is to increase the active participation of women and their decision-making power within different political and public spaces (IBID, 61). Gender equity is clearly a goal of women in the Intag region therefore.

6.2.6 Barriers to Women's Participation in the Public Sphere

These findings show that while women's participation levels in the region are increasing, there are still inequities related to women's access to politics, the market and community-level organizations. Women cited time, distance and their multiple responsibilities, as well as a lack of confidence/comfort public speaking as the principal barriers to their involvement in public activities such as capacity building workshops and CBO meetings.

Time, Distance and Multiple Responsibilities

The three most common explanations for women's lack of participation – time, distance to meetings and household roles and responsibilities – are all interrelated. The latter factor, which relates to the gender division of labour and women's multiple responsibilities, was especially emphasized in interviews. All but one woman who talked

about barriers to their attendance pointed to the current fabrication of the division of labour as the major obstacle to their involvement in participatory processes (the other noted health reasons for not attending). For instance, one woman when asked whether she is involved in organizations noted: “not me, my husband is the one who goes because I don’t have the time to go myself. As I am here all alone, if I go who will stay here to milk the cow or anything, for this reason I can’t go” (Anonymous Interview Woman with Biodigester 7 2010). Another woman mentioned that she was more involved in the past but found it too time consuming. She stated:

I was for a time on the directive of the organization and this takes lots of time which is difficult because I am here alone a lot and to leave the house and animals is hard to attend the meetings (sic). I want to participate but not too much because this takes time. I was a member of the directive of ACAI for two years. One person per family has to be a member. They put me on the directive. I accepted and after, [it was] too much of a commitment. I would go to the meetings but it [was] not good. I had to walk to Peñeherrera once every month all day. To give and give our time no, I said once and no more (Anonymous Interview Woman with Biodigester 1 2010).

One woman when asked whether she is involved in project meetings and capacity building responded no “because I have to be here in the house” (Anonymous Interview Woman to Receive a Biodigester 1 2010). She went on to note that: “sometimes when he [her husband] has a meeting about coffee, I say I also want to go, bring me because I like it. The problem is that here there are so many things to do, the cow, the pigs, I don’t have time” (Anonymous Interview Woman to Receive a Biodigester 1 2010). She noted that the only case in which she would attend a meeting (not just referring to those of ACAI) is if her husband had more than one at a time (IBID).

In another case a woman to receive a future biodigester also cited lack of time as the reason she does not attend meetings and capacity building:

[Y]ou have to give your time to attend courses. For this reason I have not given the time... Yes I have enjoyed sharing, seeing... Time is what is missing, there needs to

be an understanding with the husband if he knows you have to go he says you go then. Yes he understands. When I'm not here he takes care of things or my daughter who didn't want to study [does] (Anonymous Interview Woman to Receive Biodigester 3 2010).

Another woman noted that for her it was a question of distance and leaving the house and animals alone, but her husband's presence made her feel more involved:

I'm not personally involved there but I support my husband. He comes and converses with me and I say go...I support him in this. I also feel that I am there. By means of my husband, I know that I am also there. It is very far. More than anything I don't like to leave the house alone. There are animals that I care for. The ducks, chickens, pigs. To leave my husband to watch them I know that I can but he comes and leaves food for them and goes to work and it isn't the same. This is how they were not cared for. I had a lot of ducks. I went to Quito and stayed almost a month because I got sick. Since then I have never gone too far for many days because when I came back the *sancudo* [large mosquitos] and venom had come. Like dengue. Eleven ducks died (Anonymous Interview Woman with Biodigester 2 2010).

In this case the woman noted that if meetings were held closer to her home she would be interested in attending however. Another woman also cited distance and having to leave the house alone as the primary reason for not attending, stating that:

[T]o meetings almost never (sic). I don't like this. Almost no, the closest [location] is Apuela and for us it is tough due to the road...to go to an organization this requires walking, right, leaving the house, therefore for this reason we [women] haven't gone. This has never interested us in this fashion. I say if it were closer I think then we would be more animated but due to the distance we can't. Our role is to take care of the house (Anonymous Interview Woman to Receive Biodigester 2 2010).

Findings from this research support broader feminist claims that home based commitments and women's multiple responsibilities are preventing women from participating in project activities. This evidence points to barriers related to the gender division of labour as the primary reason preventing women from participating in project activities. A focus on social reproduction rather than solely productive activities draws attention to the multiple roles that women balance in their every day lives and their

additional time burdens which have implications for women's ability to participate in development efforts (Moser 1989 as cited in Kabeer 1994, 227).

Lack of Comfort/Confidence in Public Speaking

Evidence from interviews shows that another reason women participate to a lesser extent in meetings and capacity building is because they do not feel comfortable speaking in public. Seven out of 19 women interviewed expressed this sentiment. One woman expressed: "I don't like it [participating in meetings] because I feel embarrassed. Because sometime one speaks well, sometimes badly therefore people laugh so I don't like it (sic)" (Anonymous Interview Woman to Receive Biodigester 1 2010). Three of the four Afro-Ecuadorian women interviewed also noted a lack of comfort speaking in public. Another woman brought up one of the reasons this worry may be prominent among women, noting: "I haven't liked this. I have been really bad for this. I haven't liked it. My sister tells me I have to learn. One needs to talk. I say I don't like to in public meetings. I don't know why this would be. I think it is that since we were small we didn't learn" (Anonymous Interview Woman to Receive Biodigester 2 2010).

Another barrier to participation is that women lack confidence in their own opinions. As such, they believe it is better that their husbands attend rather than them. Two women voiced this point. One woman phrased the manner in which participation functions in her family as her husband being the first choice to go and if he cannot, she will attend. She notes "For example if he can't go then I go to listen on his behalf. I bring him the reason (sic), I tell him what they said" (Anonymous Interview Woman to Receive Biodigester 6 2010). This quote gives an indication that this woman does not feel that her own presence and opinion is of importance in these meetings. Another woman who is currently not involved in any organizations expressed a similar lack of confidence in her

opinion. She admitted, “speaking the truth I lack the ability to read for these things, I can read a little bit but I can’t read well so for these things it would be better someone who knows how to read (sic). For whatever thing, I don’t feel responsible in this sense (sic)” (Anonymous Interview Woman with Biodigester 7 2010). Women’s lack of confidence in their opinions, which results in them withholding from participating in organizations, is partly a product of their lack of education. This finding reflects women’s lower levels of education in Ecuador and the Intag region.

The Cases of Women Who do Participate in the Public Sphere

It is necessary to understanding why in some cases women are in fact able to participate in meetings and capacity building. Some of the women interviewed who attend meetings noted they need the support of their husbands, both to encourage them to go and to take over the household tasks while they attend (Anonymous Interview Woman with Biodigester 3 2010; Anonymous Interview Woman to Receive Biodigester 5 2010).

In other cases, the ability to attend involves women doing extra work. Some women noted having to do double the housework ahead of time to be able to attend a meeting. For example, one woman noted: “Sometimes for us to go to a meeting or something it is necessary to do double [the work] in order to be able to go, either the day before or early in the morning you have to do double the things” (Anonymous Interview Woman with Biodigester 6 2010). In other cases, women expressed how their daughters would have to take over their roles and responsibilities so they could attend meetings (Anonymous Interview Woman to Receive Biodigester 5 2010; Anonymous Interview Woman with Biodigester 3 2010). While the first case represents an example of overcoming structural barriers to women’s participation, the latter two scenarios characterize a reinforcement of inequitable gender roles and responsibilities.

6.2.7 Women's Desire to Participate More

Women's lack of participation in meetings and capacity building should not be interpreted as a lack of interest. Women's desire to participate and their ability to participate are in fact mismatched. There is clear evidence that women want to more involved, as conveyed by findings from interviews that 18 out of the 19 women (with biodigesters and to receive biodigesters in the future) expressed an interest in participating more in meetings and capacity building. This was also noted by all four of the Afro-Ecuadorian women interviewed. Even women who are already heavily involved in organizations noted their interest in being even more so. Only one woman expressed that she wanted to be less involved because the time commitments were too much. However, some women reiterated the difficulty they have in being able to participate.

6.3 Household Institutional Analysis

In examining the institution of the household, there is a clear gender division of labour between men and women among agricultural¹³ families in the Intag region. Men work in the field, either on their own land or as day labourers on other farms. They also work the minga, which entails volunteering generally one workday per month helping with a job in the community such as fixing a road. Women are not involved in the minga except sometimes to cook for the men. Women are responsible for household tasks such as cooking, cleaning and caring for children as well as the animals such as pigs, chickens and guinea pigs (AUCC N.D., 22). Some women work the fields in addition to these tasks. However, a study of the Intag region found that 99.3 percent of women (in a representative sample of 287 women from all the communities in Intag) work at home

¹³ The biodigesters are only located within agricultural families which is therefore where this research is focused.

(Roper-Bakter, 2010, 12). Also, of the total 1,522 economically active people in the Intag zone, only 300 are women (AUCC N.D., 54).

In some cases (six of 14 families), the male and female household head asserted that they help each other with their responsibilities. Several men pointed to how if their wife came to help them in the field, they in turn would help their wives with tasks around the home such as the laundry (Anonymous Interview Man to Receive Future Biodigester 1 2010; Anonymous Interview Man to Receive Future Biodigester 2; Anonymous Interview Man with Biodigester 1 2010). However, an official from the Women's Coordinator explained that very few families have managed to share the work in the household to date (Anonymous Interview Women's Coordinator Official 2010). Also, an underlying assumption that the social reproduction responsibilities belong to women while men's domain is outside the home in the field working in subsistence and productive activities prevailed in these narratives (e.g. Anonymous Interview Man with Biodigester 1 2010; Anonymous Interview Man with Biodigester 6 2010; Anonymous Interview Man to Receive Future Biodigester 3 2010; Anonymous Interview Woman to Receive Future Biodigester 1 2010). In the cases of Afro-Ecuadorian women interviewed, two are single mothers and therefore cannot rely on the help of their partners. One woman noted her husband does not help her in any way and the other noted her husband helps her at times.

Women work substantially longer hours than men. In the interviews conducted with community members, women and men were asked to describe their workday, the time they started and finished work, and when they were able to take breaks. Women explained that their work day started sometimes at four, five or six in the morning making breakfast for the family and feeding the animals and often continued with almost no breaks until seven or eight or sometimes as late as ten or eleven at night. When asked

when they take breaks, some said Sundays. Others said sometimes they would lay their heads down for no more than 15 minutes during the day and would get back to work. One woman mentioned she never has time to sit down and take breaks: “right now I’m sitting down because you are here but otherwise I’m not here” (Anonymous Interview Woman with Biodigester 2 2010).

Men work on average from seven or eight in the morning until four in the afternoon, with a one-hour lunch break in the middle of the day. While some men, as mentioned, come home and help with household tasks, several women noted that their husbands would come home at four o’clock and relax while they would continue working into the evening, doing the laundry, preparing dinner and washing dishes.

Adding up the number of hours worked on average by men and women shows that women work on average 15 hours per day while men work 8.5. These findings imply that women work an average of an additional 6.5 hours per day than men. These additional time burdens have clear implications for inequitable gender relations and have repercussions in terms of women’s ability to participate in the public sphere.

6.4 Gender Perceptions of the Division of Labour

The mere presence of a gender division of labour does not necessarily imply the existence of gender inequities (though in this case differences in time burdens have clear implications for gender equity). How these divisions are perceived and the value assigned to them is important as well as whether women have the ability to choose this work (Mohanty 1988, 76; Oxaal and Baden 1997, 3). This section analyzes information from interviews to determine how work is valued in the Intag zone, how the division of labour is perceived and reasons for the division.

There is evidence that women's work in the Intag region is given less value. One woman explained that while the work of men is hard and they come home very tired and need to rest, women need to rest too but this notion is not understood within the community. She pointed to a lack of value assigned to women's work and the patriarchal culture:

We also have to rest but for this reason there are people in the community that are macho and many times in meetings they say that women don't do anything. Let's change positions I say. Because they say that women don't do anything if we put them in the role of women. You men go to the field and do only one work. Meanwhile our heads – there is the washing, the ironing, the dishes, cooking, the kids – phew, such a number of things you can go crazy. For this reason women are stressed out. The work of women here in the countryside is very tough, it is also very tough. But they think it isn't, that it is nothing difficult, but it is (Anonymous Interview Woman with Biodigester 4 2010).

There is a contradiction found in valuing women's work however. While in some cases, as outlined in the example above, there is a sense of machismo in the community that considers that women's work is easy, in most of the interviews conducted with community members, it was found that both men and women considered that women have a harder burden than men. In the rest of the cases the burden was deemed equal. Many people explained that because women have so many different jobs to do, additional responsibilities, and more worries, their work is harder (Anonymous Interview Women with Biodigester 6 2010; Anonymous Interview Woman to Receive Future Biodigester 6 2010; Anonymous Interview Man to Receive Future Biodigester 6 2010; Anonymous Interview Woman to Receive Future Biodigester 3 2010; Anonymous Interview Woman with Biodigester 4 2010; Anonymous Interview Woman to Receive Future Biodigester 5; Anonymous Interview Woman with Biodigester 7 2010; Anonymous Interview Man to Receive Future Biodigester 4; Anonymous Interview Man with Biodigester 8 2010; Anonymous Interview Man to Receive Future Biodigester 5 2010). Women have to care

for the children, the house and the animals (Anonymous Interview Woman to Receive Future Biodigester 3 2010). Men, on the other hand, have only one job “un solo trabajo” in the field (Anonymous Interview Woman to Receive Future Biodigester 4 2010; Anonymous Interview Woman to Receive Future Biodigester 5 2010; Anonymous Interview Woman to Receive Future Biodigester 7). One man explained the gender division as such: “She [the woman] is in charge of everything to do with the house. The husband is the owner of the land. The one who suffers more is the one who looks after the home” (Anonymous Interview Man to Receive Future Biodigester 6 2010). Another woman emphasized that women’s work is difficult due to their multiple responsibilities:

Here women work [more] because men work from 7-11 and rest and from there 1-4 and rest. Women have a heavier load because they have to do many things. Men – only one job, they don’t have to be doing one thing, another thing (sic). Women on the other hand have so many things (sic) (Anonymous Interview Woman to Receive Future Biodigester 6 2010).

It was also pointed out that women’s work is hard because there is no visible end product. One cannot see the plates that have been washed or the clothes that have been cleaned whereas in men’s work, one can see when the land has been worked (Anonymous Interview Man to Receive Future Biodigester 6 2010; Anonymous Interview Man to Receive Future Biodigester 6 2010). One man noted that he understood well the responsibilities of the house from having to do them when his wife is away for medical reasons or visiting her family and stated: “they are small things that are not very visible, they don’t show anything for themselves. What woman do is quite hard” (Anonymous Interview Man with Biodigester 8 2010).

In the interviews conducted, many women expressed dissatisfaction being mainly restricted to the work in the home (e.g. Anonymous Interview Women to Receive Future Biodigester 1 2010; Anonymous Interview Woman with Biodigester 6). One interviewee

for example, expressed that she was tired of the work of women and wanted to be a man. She stated: “I say to my husband I want to be a man, I say, because I like to work [outside the house]. He goes out and leaves. On the other hand, I want to go to work but I have to do things here [in the home] therefore I get tired” (Anonymous Interview Women to Receive Future Biodigester 1 2010). One Afro-Ecuadorian woman expressed that she wished her husband would help more with the household tasks (Anonymous Interview Afro-Ecuadorian Woman 2). Findings from interviews suggest the restrictiveness of this particular gender division of labour and that women do not necessarily have the ability to choose these roles, which has implications for empowerment and inequity.

These findings bring up the need to question why the division of labour is set so clearly between women’s and men’s roles and responsibilities in the home and the field respectively. In inquiring about this point with interview participants, a narrative emerged regarding women not being able to do what men can on the farm. Some people explained that because men work so hard in the field they come home tired and need to relax after work. For this reason they do not help with work in the home and it is considered that this level of exertion could not be undertaken by women and thus must be carried out by men (Anonymous Interview Man to Receive Future Biodigester 2 2010; Anonymous Interview Anonymous Interview Man to Receive Future Biodigester 4). Being outside in the sun and the rain is considered too strenuous for women. One man, for example, explained:

Of course for women my work is more difficult. Therefore I don’t tell her “you need to be working with me”. All day, no. At times she can come and give me a hand, one hour, two hours, and ‘go ahead and do what you need to do in the house’. A woman can’t work all day [in the field]. The work here is very difficult. Here we work in the sun and the rain all day. Therefore, for a women no, it is too much (sic) (Anonymous Interview Man to Receive Future Biodigester 1 2010).

Thus, there is a perception that women are more delicate and need to be protected. The narrative about women's weakness implies women's only alternative is to take care of the house. In other words, women are naturally more suited to the household than to work outside of the household in the context of farming in the Intag zone. This evidence supports broader feminist findings that women are often seen as victims that need protection, which is a paternalistic idea that justifies their subordination (Reeves and Baden 2000, 4). Women themselves come to believe in their own weakness thereby reinforcing a system of power relations based in inequities (e.g. Anonymous Interview Woman with Biodigester 4 2010; Anonymous Interview Woman to Receive Biodigester 4 2010).

It is a valid point that men in many cases are physically stronger than women. However, such biological differences are not a reason to confine women to the home. Nor are they grounds for women's burden to be heavier and their workdays to be longer. That women cannot withstand the elements can be called into question by the cases in which women spend a great part of their day working outside the fields with their husband and carry out household tasks on top of this work.

Nor does the narrative of the 'weak woman' not being able to work the field hold in all cases. One could observe in some cases that the woman is clearly stronger than the man and the argument that she could not keep up with her husband could be called into question (Personal Observation 2010). One man noted that his wife could do anything he can: "in my case whatever I do my wife can also do so I also do things to help her" (Anonymous Interview Man to Receive Future Biodigester 4 2010).

It should be noted that cases in which women do want to work only in the home is not problematic in terms of gender equity. The problem is when women are in a position

where their choice of whether to do so or not is restricted (Oxaal and Baden 1997 3). Asymmetric gender relations also arise as a result of women performing multiple responsibilities resulting in time burdens that limit their free time and opportunities to partake in other activities. This time burden thus both underlies and is a product of asymmetric gender relations (Benería and Sen 1997, 49).

Research results suggest therefore that first, there is evidence of women's multiple responsibilities, additional time burdens and dissatisfaction with being largely confined to the home. Second, there is a narrative that women are weaker than men which is automatically associated with their inability to work long hours in the field, and their natural compatibility with housework. This narrative is not necessarily based on experience and results in an inequitable gender division of labour. Third, this narrative ignores the possibility of alternative distributions of labour in which household work and labour in the field could be done by both men and women.

Conclusion Related to the Gender Context in the Intag Zone of Ecuador

The contextual factors outlined in this chapter demonstrate inequitable gender relations in the Intag region. Though women are emerging into the public sphere, they are less involved in the politics and key community/market organizations than men, with negative implications for having their voices heard. Women also have multiple responsibilities in the home, which result in them working substantially longer hours than men. Keeping this context in mind, how a biodigester SGP project in Ecuador intersects with the inequitable gender relations in the Intag zone is analyzed in chapter 7.

CHAPTER 7 – GENDER ANALYSIS OF A GEF SGP BIODIGESTER CLIMATE CHANGE PROJECT IN THE INTAG ZONE OF ECUADOR

Using a gender lens, this chapter evaluates how a biodigester climate change mitigation project in the Intag region of Ecuador relates to gender equity. It speaks to the three hypotheses outlined in the introduction and develops the main argument of this thesis by applying the project-related questions of the Southern feminism gender analysis framework to the GEF SGP biodigester climate change mitigation project, *Promoting the Use of Biodigesters on Holistic Rural Farms in Intag, Cotacachi*, in Ecuador. This chapter systematically evaluates the extent to which this SGP project promotes gender equity or, conversely, reinforces or worsens inequities.

There are two important points that need to be established at the outset. First is clarifying what can be expected of the GEF SGP. Considering this program is small, has limited resources and takes place within a narrow time frame (in this case, two phases of a little over two years in addition to a pilot phase through a different grant), to expect substantial changes to gender relations to take place under this purview would be unrealistic.

However, expectations of this program can be evaluated against national gender requirements. As noted in chapter 4, Ecuador's National Strategy states projects should be designed in a participatory manner that considers the effects on women and men and mechanisms to address these impacts (PPD 2004, 42). Project implementation should contemplate the context and different needs of women and men (IBID). Women's participation and decision-making are considered necessary in all phases of the project. Women's empowerment is another key objective (IBID, 83).

Second, the promotion of gender equity, in particular strategic interests, should not be seen to conflict with cultural norms and expectations in the region of Intag. Culture and gender roles are not static, natural or unchangeable and a desire for change can also be part of the community's social fabric (Reeves and Baden 2000, 4). In the case of the Intag zone, while it can be said that women's roles as housewives is a cultural reality, it can also be said that important segments of the community desire changes in gender roles. The Radio Intag, for example, has a series on challenging inequitable gender structures including machismo/patriarchy and the division of labour (Radio Intag 2010:). Moreover, a gender analysis in the case of the Intag region shows evidence, as outlined in the gender context chapter, that women favour changes in their gender roles. Women have expressed displeasure in being confined mainly to the home, a desire to work the fields and be more active in the community, and for help with the household tasks (e.g. Anonymous Interview Women to Receive Future Biodigester 1 2010; Anonymous Interview Woman with Biodigester 6 2010; Anonymous Interview Afro-Ecuadorian Woman 2). Furthermore, there is evidence of interest among some men in the community in understanding how to change existing inequitable structures, namely the gender division of labour, so that they are more equitable (Anonymous Interview Woman with Biodigester 3 2010). In this sense, if a project challenges gender roles, the question of cultural insensitivity bares little relevance.

The structure of this chapter follows the stages of the project from design to implementation and monitoring and evaluation. Section 7.1 examines the gender implications of the project design. Section 7.2 looks at how aspects related to project implementation impact gender equity. Section 7.3 investigates whether and how monitoring and evaluation activities address gender equity.

7.1 ACAI Biodigester Project Design and Gender Equity

This section addresses the three hypotheses of this thesis through an examination of three components of Southern feminism related to the project design: examining assumptions for gender; assessing whether development planning is informed by women's voices; and understanding how the project relates to differences among women.

7.1.1 Project Design: Examining How Underlying Assumptions Relate to Gender

The positioning of gender, including the extent to which the project either promotes gender equity and/or inequity relative to environmental and other development objectives, is the focus of this section. It provides insight into the first hypothesis: that the GEF SGP funding mechanisms for climate change mitigation projects are falling short of broader UN requirements for gender equity.

Project Objectives and Implications for Gender

A usual starting point for assessing a project through a gender lens is an analysis of the implications of project objectives for gender equity in order to identify whether and what kind of gender assumptions are manifested at early stages of the project (Antrobus 2004, 48; DAWN 1995, 22; Kabeer 1994, 289). The project's overall purpose is to improve the economic, environmental, productive and health conditions of agricultural families in Intag by taking advantage of the organic residues for the production of biogas on farms and increasing local public awareness regarding climate change. The specific objectives of the project include: improving the management of natural resources through the installation of biodigesters that, because they are substitutes for wood consumption, reduce pressure on forests and also complement the agro-ecological farm model; and increasing local awareness regarding climate change and promoting the diffusion of the use of biodigesters in subtropical zones of the country. The objectives of this biodigester

project do not relate directly to gender but rather to environmental, and to a lesser extent, social and economic criteria. In view of these objectives, it is important to ask, what are the implications for gender equity?

Even though these objectives are not specific to gender, they have underlying repercussions for women. In referring to increasing public awareness and improving conditions on the farm, the project's objectives allude to the situation of women. However, the objectives are presented in a manner that assumes the project benefits will be distributed equally to both women and men and that the current structural positions of men and women are sufficiently similar and will not skew the distribution of benefits. A review of current gender relations in the region (see chapter 6) however, shows that Intag women face a number of barriers to their participation in public activities and are not in an equal position to benefit from the SGP project.

Moreover, the only explicit reference to promoting equality of opportunities in the project proposal is in relation to mentioning project benefits for women that were noticed in the first phase of the project (Anonymous Interview ACAI Official 2). That is, no purposeful actions were designed into the project to promote equality of opportunities and the benefits mentioned are only a positive "side effect" of the project. The project does not distinguish between and account for differences between and among women and men in these design elements.

How Project Criteria to Receive a Biodigester Relate to Gender

Decisions regarding the allocation of biodigesters are based heavily on a family's overall engagement in agro-ecological practices and the biodigester is likened to a prize for those families that have undertaken the most environmentally friendly practices. Criteria include tree plantings (an average of 160 per farm), the use of natural barriers to

prevent erosion (an average of 200 meters of barriers), composting and using homemade fertilizers (though some chemicals are allowed). The engagement of family members in environmental meetings, workshops and community collaborative activities are also factored into biodigester allocation decisions. Farms classified as type 'A' include those that employ at least five or six agro-ecological practices and are placed on a priority list for a biodigester. In addition, financial capacity is also factored into biodigester allocations. A family needs to own or be able to purchase pigs (five to six is ideal for the biodigester to function efficiently though two to three is more common among the families and still allows a biodigester to function) and purchase the materials and supply the labour to build a pigsty.

Overall, biodigester allocations are based primarily on environmental criteria and do not take into account broader concerns that would integrate environmental with gender criteria. Gender, and addressing gender inequities, is not included in the criteria used to allocate biodigesters (Anonymous Interview ACAI Official 1 2010: Anonymous Interview ACAI Official 2 2010). It is assumed, rather, that women and men should benefit equally from this project and special attention does not need to be paid to women to ensure this is the case. This assumption is inconsistent with basic UN principles that require gender to be taken into account during the project design phase in order to avoid the reinforcement of gender inequities. Such an assumption is of particular concern in the Intag zone where gender inequities have been documented (see chapter 6) and the Ecuadorian policy emphasizes the consideration of gender in SGP project design (see chapter 4).

Though there are no gender specific criteria at the allocation stage, these criteria have social and gender implications. The GEF SGP is effectively off limits to families of

the lowest socio-economic strata who do not own land or cannot afford to the pigs required to provide biodigester feedstock and/or the cost of building the pigsty. Thus, the selection criteria effectively lessen the likelihood benefits will flow to those women who are most likely to be structurally disadvantaged, including poor women or women of visible minorities. It should be noted that in some cases it was found that single women have benefited from this project but evidence points to the help of other family members such as brothers in meeting the counterpart (Anonymous Interview Woman with Biodigester 4 2010). There is no evidence to suggest the project overtly or purposively omits these members of society, but the selection criteria do further entrench existing gender inequities in the Intag region.

Whether the Project is Informed by a Gender Analysis

One manner of ensuring that a project responds to women's particular needs and interests is by undertaking a gender analysis, ranging from a simple framework to a more comprehensive one as advocated by Southern feminism. Ecuador's gender manual promotes undertaking a gender analysis that mirrors several of the aspects of the Southern feminist framework used in this thesis. For instance, the manual advocates asking questions about women's and men's roles and responsibilities within their particular social context and identifying any inequities such as time burdens. This process is meant to be a participatory among community members to analyze gender relations, reflect on problems and identify opportunities to improve these relations that can be integrated into the project (PPD y Fundación OFIS 2008, 29-30). However, no gender analysis was undertaken prior to designing or implementing this project, or at any point during project implementation to date. Although the gender manual was provided to the project

proponents prior to implementing the project (only in the second phase however)¹⁴, the manual was not followed in this case. The lack of gender analysis stands in contrast to SGP international policies that promote undertaking one (GEF N.D.a, 25-27).

These findings imply that the project was designed without a proper understanding of local gender dynamics. There was no informed appreciation at the outset of what the impact of this project might be on men and women, how to avoid negative impacts and ensure opportunities to promote gender equity are taken up through the project. This omission is the case even though Ecuador's National Strategy requires that projects be elaborated in a manner that considers the effects on women and men and mechanisms by which the project can address these impacts (PPD 2004, 42).

A gender analysis in this case would have highlighted important background elements in which the project is being developed, as outlined in the gender context chapter of this thesis. There are several key factors. First, women have multiple responsibilities and additional time burdens that make their involvement in activities related to the project more difficult. Second, lower educational levels and less experience in the public sphere make some women lack the confidence or comfort levels to participate in project activities as currently structured. Third, those women who do participate must sometimes do so under conditions of increasing their workload prior to attending meetings and having their daughters perform their duties while away, both of which have negative implications for gender equity.

Furthermore, a gender analysis would have drawn attention to misconceptions about women's roles in the Intag zone. In its only reference to improving equality of

¹⁴ The gender manual was not published until 2008, which implies it was not available for the first phase of this project. It was, however, available for the second phase.

opportunities between men and women, the project proposal states that “Obviously it is them [women] that in a greater sense, with the facility of having a natural gas stove, have alleviated their situation because before they had to fetch wood and suffer the health consequences of the smoke” (ACAI N.D., 11). While the interview results show, as conveyed below under project benefits, that women did gain health benefits, the second assumption is erroneous. Women’s time burdens are not alleviated as a result of lesser wood fetching tasks. Of all the families interviewed, in all but one of the cases in which this question was asked it was primarily men who gathered the wood (in four cases with the help of male children) and in the other case it was both the husband and wife. Two women noted they collected the wood when their husbands failed to do so.

Summary Discussion in Relation to Analyzing Assumptions for Gender in Project Design

The findings presented in this section on the implications of the main components of the project design (objectives and criteria to receive a biodigester) and underlying assumptions related to gender can be interpreted in a number of ways. First, they convey the assumption in the project design that the project will benefit men and women equally though there will be differential implications for women and men. Second, they suggest that the biodigester project is unlikely to challenge any existing gender inequities in the region as no explicit efforts have been made to determine how the project could do so. Third, they illustrate how gender criteria are not even on the agenda when it comes to project objectives and criteria to receive a biodigester, which lends support to the first hypothesis of this thesis. Finally, they portray a lack of gender aware policy and planning which is required to ensure that inequitable assumptions are identified and challenged early on in the development process and that projects are developed in a manner that

promotes gender equity (Kabeer 1994, 289; Antrobus 2004, 48; DAWN 1995, 22). This project exemplifies a missed opportunity to build in a gender component that addresses inequitable gender relations and improves the overall quality of the project by broadening its scope and reach.

7.1.2 Development Planning Informed by Women's Voices

This section looks at whether and how women have participated in the development of the biodigester project and questions of their voices and empowerment to speak to the second hypothesis of this thesis at the level of project conceptualization and design: When women's strategic interests are not actively pursued in climate change mitigation projects, opportunities are being missed to address gender inequities.

Women's Participation in Project Conceptualization

The extent to which women and men were involved in the project conceptualization is unclear. Rather than evolve from a process of choosing among different options (for example, a solar project or a biodigester), the biodigester idea arose from previous projects. Colleagues in Colombia introduced the biodigester technology to the Intag zone and the Swiss Ecuadorian Fund (FOES) (*Fondo Ecuatoriano Suizo*) was then approached to fund a pilot project in 2001-2. SGP funding began in the region in 1998 through a previous biodiversity project and in 2005, the SGP was approached to expand further upon this project and its promotion of ecological alternatives in order to fund a separate but related biodigester project as a follow up to the pilot phase (Anonymous Interview ACAI Official 1 2010). The SGP biodigester project is therefore a continuation of an already established idea. Women's involvement in the project conceptualization is unclear considering the evolution of this project and how it relates to

other projects and organizations. It is apparent however, that there was no consultation on behalf of the project with community members related to deciding which project to request funding for (Anonymous Interview ACAI Official 1 2010).

Women's Participation in Project Design

There was some consultation within the community with regards to the design of the biodigester project. However, consultation mostly took place with leaders of the organizations of Intag, both in the first and second phases of the project (Anonymous Interview ACAI Official 1 2010). The project proposal notes that 40 people attended the second phase project design meeting, including both men and women (ACAI N.D., 13). Unfortunately, no information is available on the number of women and men involved in the consultation workshops and no notes from the meetings are available that might assess the quality of participation. As a result, it is difficult to analyze the extent to which women and men contributed to the discussion. This lack of information highlights the need for gender-disaggregated data in order to understand how men and women are involved in the different stages of the project. Evidence presented in the previous chapter however suggests that women in general tend to participate less in matters pertaining to community and project decision-making and are therefore likely to be participating less in the SGP.

Gender and the Involvement of ACAI Staff and Board of Directors in Project Design

The ACAI Staff and Board of Directors are also potential positions of influence over the project design. Of the four staff members who work in relation to this project, three are men and one is a woman. The three men have paid positions while the woman works as a volunteer. The ACAI staff makes up the technical team who are most involved

in the details related to the project. After carrying out consultations, the proposal was written by a project team of three or four people (Anonymous Interview ACAI Official 2 2010). No women were involved during the writing of the first and second phase of the project (Anonymous Interview ACAI official 2 2010). The one woman in a position to be most involved is not part of this team and does not have input in this way into the project (Anonymous Interview ACAI official 3 2010).

The board of directors is made up of voluntary positions including a president, vice-president, treasurer and secretary and there are also members at large. As the board makes up the project development committee (*comité de gestión del proyecto*) for the biodigesters project, these are positions of influence over the project as well. More men are involved in the board of directors. The only woman is the secretary and this is the same woman as the volunteer in ACAI. This woman mentioned that she plays an indirect role in the biodigester project, helping her partner who is directly involved. Her work related to the project is more administrative than influential. She does almost all of the accounting for this project since there are no funds to hire a full time accountant and is also responsible for organizing the project documents and other administrative duties. She notes that within her capacity on the directive she helps evaluate projects but this role does not involve evaluating the project design. Rather, it entails finding ways to implement the current system. She has never been involved in constructing a biodigester herself (while the three other male staff at ACAI and the other three male members of the board of directors have). She notes the reason for being less involved is a lack of time and because the position is voluntary: "My work is voluntary and I'm a mother and involved in a woman's group, the water board, and work to do with the school as a parent. To go

[construct a biodigester] would be an entire day, which I can't give up (sic)" (Anonymous Interview Women's Coordinator Official 2010).

These findings have three implications: one, no women are benefiting from paid positions related to this project; two, men are more likely to be in a position of influence related to this project; and three, no women participated in the major decisions regarding the details of the project proposal.

Women's Voices in Relation to Project Design

Southern feminism emphasizes that the concepts of "women" and "men" are socially constructed, and relate to differences in roles and responsibilities and the context of their every day lives (as opposed to biological differences). As a result, women and men may interpret and experience the world in quite different ways. While there may be similarities, their needs, interests and opinions may also differ dramatically and it is therefore essential that projects hear from and reflect the voices of both men and women (Reeves and Baden 2000, 2; Oxaal and Baden 1997, 6). Women may have different ideas in relation to which project to chose (others may be better suited to their needs and interests) and how to design a particular project (either according to their needs and interests or simply from a different point of view). As argued by Southern feminism, women's voices and opinions must be validated within the context of the project therefore (Antrobus 2004, 77).

In subtle but important ways, there is evidence that women and men have different ideas to offer with regards to the biodigester project. All participants who have received a biodigester were asked in the interviews whether they would make changes to the design of the project. Fifty percent (four out of the eight) of women and fifty seven percent (four out of seven) of men mentioned changes they would make to the design. While in two of

the cases both the woman and man noted the same changes,¹⁵ the other participants had different ideas. One woman mentioned she would design a smaller biodigester so it would use less water and the other woman noted she would build a different type of roof over the biodigester to withstand harsh weather conditions. Innovations promoted by men included in one case, an interest in storing the gas to consume at a later time and in the other case, switching from pig to human waste.

These examples lend support to the need to ensure both men's and women's voices are taken into account in order to broaden the spectrum of ideas and innovations related to climate change projects. Despite requirements in Ecuador's National Strategy however, women's specific participation in the project design was not promoted by the project. Although consultations were held, barriers to women's participation were not addressed, nor were specific efforts made to encourage their participation and ensure their ideas can be voiced and acted upon. No measure were taken by the project, such as consultations with women or a gender analysis, to enable women to have a voice to express their own needs and interests which are unique to their context and lived experience (Kabeer 1994, 295, 299). Without procedures in place to ensure the project hears from women, it is questionable the extent to which the project proponents can claim to understand women's opinions and interests in the region and thus be able to promote their strategic interests and advance gender equity.

Women's Empowerment in the Context of Project Design

Empowerment involves not only being able to make choices but also being able to shape what choices are available. As noted by Oxaal and Baden, "the assumptions that

¹⁵ In one family both the male and female said they would build the biodigester further away from the house in order to keep bad smells at bay. In another family the man and woman noted they would like a smaller biodigester than the 10-meter design.

planners can identify women's needs runs against empowerment objectives which imply that women themselves formulate and decide what these interests are" (Oxaal and Baden 1997, 6). Women's empowerment is not addressed in the design phase of the project. The project is in fact set up in a way that effectively deprives women of a voice and control over aspects of this development initiative that affect their lives, thus disempowering women. As such, empowerment objectives as required by Ecuador's National Strategy are not being met.

Summary Discussion Related to Whether Development Planning is Informed by Women's Voices

The findings in this section suggest that women's participation, voices and empowerment are not purposeful components of the project design. They point to differences in structural positions¹⁶ between women and men that entail women's voices and interests are less likely to be heard. These findings support existing evidence, as argued by Southern feminism, that women's voices are often suppressed in development processes (Kabeer 1994, 304). The project's neglect to ensure attention is paid to key aspects of women's strategic interests, namely women's participation, voices and empowerment, entails a reinforcement of the structural disadvantage of women. These findings represent a missed opportunity to promote gender equity and lend support to the second hypothesis of this thesis.

7.1.3 How the Project Relates to Differences Among Women

This section examines how the project relates to differences among women and addresses the third hypothesis of this thesis that climate change mitigation projects that do not differentiate among women according to class, race and ethnicity risk excluding

¹⁶ Structural differences relate to differences in educational attainment for example.

marginalized women. The Southern feminist approach suggests that in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of the situation of women it is crucial to ask “which women?” as not all women are the same (Antrobus 2004, 11, 125; DAWN 1985, 32).

The analysis of different women, as Southern feminism shows, must be carried out according to historical and contextual factors. In the project proposal (for the second phase), ACAI notes that the Intag zone is made up of a multiethnic society to a certain degree, characterized by the presence of a majority *mestizo* population, with a lesser Afro-Ecuadorian population and a minor number of self-recognized indigenous peoples (ACAI N.D., 8). The history of Ecuador is one in which the discrimination against women (particularly poor, rural women) indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian peoples has prevailed in political, economic and social relations (UNDP 2010; Radcliffe, 2002). Rural indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian women are generally among the most disadvantaged groups in Ecuador (UNDP 2010, 36). In this context, paying attention to the voices of marginalized women is crucial in the design of an equitable development project. The Ecuador National Strategy requires that special attention be dedicated to women, Afro-Ecuadorians and indigenous peoples in projects, including ensuring their participation in projects (PPD 2004, 7, 83).

One factor to examine is class-based differences among women. If poverty is measured by those families on welfare, there are several cases of poor families with biodigesters. Seven of the 14 participants interviewed who have received or will receive a biodigester are on welfare assistance. It should be noted that welfare is not always a good measure of poverty since only mothers of young children, senior citizens and people with disabilities are eligible to receive it and the number of low-income families with biodigesters could actually be higher.

In examining differences among women according to race and ethnicity, the participants in this particular project, including those slated to receive a biodigester in the future, are all *mestizo*. Afro-Ecuadorian and indigenous community members are notably excluded from this project. No indigenous peoples are currently part of the biodigester project. While the only indigenous communities in the Intag zone are located far from the project area, which is a likely reason they are not part of the project, Afro-Ecuadorians are located in communities within the project area. However, no Afro-Ecuadorians in general and Afro-Ecuadorian women in particular are members of ACAI, or have benefited from the biodigester project (Anonymous Interview ACAI Official 2 2010).

Interviews were conducted to determine why Afro-Ecuadorians are not part of the project.¹⁷ A project official at ACAI tried to account for the reasons why Afro-Ecuadorians are not involved in the organization, stating:

I would dare to guess, even though it is risky, that Afro-Ecuadorians don't see in social-organization (sic) the possibilities to improve their cultivating techniques or to improve their productive or economic situation. There was a time when we worked with a community...but their perspectives and situation were really distinct. They live in land that is flat and good and before this was an hacienda and they had a long social and judicial fight to be owners of the land. Their expectations were different. We tried to push agro-forestry...It seemed like it all worked but in a re-diagnosis when we returned the only thing they wanted was a tractor. Almost against their wishes they were doing the garden, fruits and some trees and after the intervention of the project, they took out all the trees. They continue to do agriculture with quite a lot of chemicals (Anonymous Interview ACAI Official 2 2010).

Evidence from interviews with Afro-Ecuadorian women contradicts the assumptions in this statement however. Interviews were conducted with four Afro-Ecuadorian women from four different households in the area mentioned by the ACAI official. Two were single mothers and two were married with children. All four women

¹⁷ Due to logistical reasons, interviews were conducted only among Afro-Ecuadorians.

interviewed had access to land, planted a variety of crops and had pigs or had had them at one point but had been robbed. In all four cases, the women had never heard of ACAI even though ACAI works in the close vicinity and their main offices are located no more than 5 or 6 kilometers from where they live. When ACAI's activities were explained to them, all four expressed an interest in participating. They also conveyed an interest in planting trees and a variety of crops and conveyed that in some ways they were already doing so. Some women also noted they were willing and able to pay the monthly fee (which is \$1 a month). Unlike ACAI's conceptualization of the Afro-Ecuadorian population as using chemicals, some of the women do not use any chemicals while the others do use them but expressed an interest in learning how to make homemade fertilizers and pesticides (as promoted by ACAI). One woman, when asked whether she was interested in learning these practices, responded: "Of course. How good, it would be good without chemicals, just natural would be good (sic). I've heard that they do this but I don't know how" (Anonymous Interview Woman 3 2010).

Moreover, all four women expressed an interest in having a biodigester. Though it is unclear whether they could afford the counterpart of the pigs and the pigsty, they all portrayed a desire to build one and have pigs. When asked if she was interested, one woman replied: "very much because it is good, pigs I don't have because since they stole them I stopped having them (sic). But in this case I would start to look for more...Maybe I could accumulate [waste] from guinea pigs (Anonymous Interview Woman 4 2010). Another woman expressed how perhaps in a well-built, secure pigsty no one would steal her pigs (Anonymous Interview Woman 1 2010). When the option of using human waste was mentioned, one woman expressed interest and another woman thought this option might even work better for her. She exclaimed: "How good! This would be easier for me

because I wouldn't need pigs – here we are four [people], with four we could easily have enough to cook with” (Anonymous Interview Woman 3 2010). These women's willingness to set up a biodigester using human waste is an interesting finding since ACAI has noticed resistance towards using human waste in other communities (Anonymous Interview ACAI Official 2 2010). Moreover, the location of this community is an ideal area to carry out a biodigester project using human waste since all four of these women live along a river. Their current sewer systems are constructed by them rather than the municipality and consist of a hole in the ground, which is likely to contaminate the water and the biodigester would help remedy this situation.

When Afro-Ecuadorian women were asked why they are not involved in this project, one woman responded: “Because they don't take us into account. Because they never like that someone else participates for the reason that much of the time they like there to be only someone in front and the rest of the people no (sic). For this reason we didn't even know (sic)” (Anonymous Interview Woman 4 2010). Two of the women had heard about the biodigesters project but did not know how to get involved.

Summary Discussion Related to Differences Among Women and Project Design

The evidence outlined above suggests this project benefits poor women. However, it was noted above that the biodigester project is designed largely according to environmental criteria. The farms with the best ecological practices are those chosen to receive a biodigester but the best farms are not likely to be the farms of the poorest women, indigenous peoples and Afro-Ecuadorians. As these are often the most disadvantaged groups in society, these populations are less likely to have the capacity to pay for and/or implement the required environmental measures or to be able to afford the project counterpart (building the pigsty and owning pigs). Families without land are

particularly left out. This phenomenon reinforces socio-economic inequalities among Intag families in general and contributes to the further marginalization of poor women in particular.

These findings also convey that indigenous peoples and Afro-Ecuadorians have been left out of the project. This omission implies the project is leaving out some of the most marginalized populations in Ecuador. That this absence is the case is surprising considering one of the focal areas of equality of opportunities is interculturalism (ethnicity and cultural diversity) and there are policy requirements for SGP projects in Ecuador to include such considerations. In addition, monitoring and evaluation (which is explored further below) is required to report on this issue.

The principal reasons Afro-Ecuadorians have been left out of the project are that they have not heard of the organization or project and/or do not know how to get involved. Whether there is discrimination against Afro-Ecuadorians is unclear. What is clear however is that there is a narrative about this population that does not necessarily reflect their realities. There is a lack of understanding of the needs and interests of this population, particularly their readiness to be involved in this project. This exclusion increases the likelihood that only the more active and prominent women are involved in the project and “only the voices and versions of the vocal few are raised and heard” (Cornwall 2003, 1325-6). Those women who do not input into the project are those most likely to find their interests marginalized or overlooked (Cornwall 2003, 1325).

The exclusion of some of the most marginalized women in the region worsens gender inequities. These findings lend support to the hypothesis that unless other sources of oppression are considered, a project risks failing to properly plan development interventions in a manner that benefits marginalized women.

7.2 ACAI Biodigester Project Implementation and Gender Equity

This section turns to an examination of the implications of project implementation for gender equity. It speaks to the second hypothesis of this thesis related to women's strategic interests and investigates project benefits and negative aspects related to implementation (which pertain to practical gender interests) and strategic gender interests. It should be kept in mind that findings in this section do not relate to differences among women as only *mestizo* women and men have received a biodigester or are slated to receive one in the future.

7.2.1 Project Benefits and Negative Aspects Related to Implementation

The biodigester climate change mitigation project has a number of benefits as well as a few negative aspects (outlined in table 9). The general benefits and negative aspects relate to both women and men. As outlined in table 9, in general, few negative aspects of the project were brought up and each example was only mentioned by a small number of participants (both male and female).

The largest cited benefit of the biodigester by both men and women is that it provides an economic savings since the gas from the biodigester reduces the amount of petroleum gas the family needs to purchase. The savings depend on the size of the family and the number of pigs the family owns. It is unclear who has access to this saved money. In some families the men mentioned these savings are a benefit to them since they are the ones responsible for the family's finances (e.g. Anonymous Interview Man with Biodigester 1 2010). In other families, women mentioned these savings are a benefit to them since the kitchen is their domain and women are the ones who need to worry about gas (e.g. Anonymous Interview Woman with Biodigester 3 2010). While the management

of finances in general was an unclear area¹⁸, there is no evidence that women gain financial independence or bargaining power within the household from these savings.

There is a notable lack of recognition of the climate change benefits of this project among individuals. Few people cited the benefit of not contaminating the air with GHG emissions. Only one woman (out of eight) and three men (out of seven) from families with biodigesters mentioned the benefit of not contaminating the environment. Out of 12 cases of men and women to receive biodigesters in the future, none mentioned this benefit as a reason for wanting a biodigester. There was no mention of ways in which the climate change benefits relate to gender equity.

Gender Specific Benefits/Negative Aspects

As outlined in table 9, this project has some gender specific implications. Because women spend more time in the kitchen, they are the ones generally subjected to health problems related to smoke inhalation, which are diminished by the biodigester project. In this manner, the project thus has health benefits for women.

¹⁸ In some cases this was an issue that I did not feel comfortable expanding upon in interviews. In the cases that questions related to finances were asked, the majority of families mentioned sharing finances, while there were also cases of each individual managed their own finances (the money each made was spent respectively, always towards family needs in both cases) and of only men managing the finances.

Table 9: Biodigester Project Benefits and Negative Aspects

Theme	Break-down of Impacts	Respondents (with biodigesters)		Description/Examples
		Wom-en	Men	
General benefits	Economic saving	88% (7/8)	100% (7/7)	Gas from the biodigester reduces need to purchase natural gas. E.g. purchase at cost of US\$2.50 once every 2-3 months vs. every month
	Fertilizer end product	75% (6/8)	71% (5/7)	Liquid end product of biodigester is used on crops and trees. Participants have noticed substantial benefits in increasing quality of soil and end products.
	Cut Fewer Trees	75% (6/8)	57% (4/7)	Biodigester gas is a substitute to wood. In some cases families with biodigesters use less wood, in others they use no wood.
	Better quality meat	13% (1/8)	14% (1/7)	Having to build a pigsty to wash pig manure into the biodigester keeps pigs in a clean environment and free from eating garbage lying around
	Fewer parasites and insects	13% (1/8)	14% (1/7)	The biodigester keeps the pig manure covered which reduces the incidence of parasites, flies and other insects that can cause diseases
	Saves time	0% (0/8)	14% (1/7)	Families spend less time fetching wood
	Reduced GHG emissions	38% (3/8)	43% (3/7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces methane emissions from pig waste Using methane gas from pig waste for cooking lessons or removes need to purchase natural gas, and to burn wood, reducing these emissions. Environmental practices required to receive a biodigester (e.g. tree planting) also sequester carbon, reducing CO₂ emissions Biodigester end product in the form of fertilizer provides an alternative to buying chemical fertilizers which produce nitrogen oxide
General negative aspects	Counterpart difficult to meet	13% (1/8)	14% (1/7)	Providing the counterpart was financially difficult for the family
	Time lost	13% (1/8)	14% (1/7)	Participants have to give up time to be part of the project, to attend meetings for example
	Bad smell	13% (1/8)	14% (1/7)	The pigsty was built too close to the house and stunk which was bad for customers for their small store
	Need to cage chickens	13% (1/8)	14% (1/7)	Chickens cannot run loose since they can poke holes in the biodigester which cannot be patched, causing extra burden of building cages
Gender specific benefits	Improved health	38% (3/8)	14% (1/7)	Women, who spend more time in the kitchen, are subjected to less smoke in the eyes and smoke inhalation which affects the lungs due to less wood use. Men who work in the kitchen would also benefit
	Time saved	50% (4/8)	14% (1/7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women, who spend more time in the kitchen, do not need to start a fire every morning to cook but rather turn on the gas, which is instantaneous. Can let food that takes longer to cook, e.g. beans or mote, simmer on stove rather than have to tend the fire. The flame is larger so food cooks faster. Pots do not get as black from the smoke, reducing scrubbing time
Gender specific negative aspects	Time lost	13% (1/8)	0% (0/7)	Taking care of the pigs and washing the pigsty takes time

The project also has implications for women's time. Women's gender roles in the kitchen make them the ones who benefit from time savings related to cooking with a biodigester-powered stove (as opposed to cooking with a woodstove). Time savings in relation to caring for the pigs (which is considered women's responsibility) are less straightforward. The project has the potential to worsen women's situation by increasing their time burdens. Women noted having to clean out the pigsty, usually daily, and in some cases every second day, which takes an estimated 10 to 15 minutes. However, some women pointed out the project saved time because they no longer had to go searching for the pigs to feed them and instead would feed them at the same time as they cleaned out the pigsty. In the few cases in which families acquired pigs as a result of the project, the pigs did increase time requirements. It should be noted however that in these cases the family already had the intention to acquire pigs (though this project would have increased the incentive) and generally had pigs in the past (e.g. Anonymous Interview Woman with Biodigester 1; Anonymous Interview Woman with Biodigester 6). While the time savings are unclear, it appears that overall women save time as a result of this project.

Summary Discussion of Project Benefits and Negative Aspects Related to Project Implementation

This project thus has two practical benefits particular to women: health benefits and time savings. These benefits relate to women's practical needs, that is, to assisting with basic survival and immediate (generally material) needs (Reeves and Baden 2000, 14). It should be noted that freeing up women's time can be an important pre-requisite to pursuing strategic interests by enabling women to be more involved in meetings and pursue capacity building activities and education. As noted by Southern feminism, for women to ensure they interpret and identify their own needs and interests rather than be

put in a position of being merely recipients of a project intervention, they need to “empower themselves to identify and establish their legitimacy as a policy concern” (Kabeer 1994, 300). However, “for this to happen, they must have access to the enabling resources of space and time” (IBID).

However, this project does not free up a significant amount of women’s time. The time saving is unclear – it could be that overall there is a time savings of a matter of minutes. It is doubtful these savings would make up for the amount of time needed to get to and from and attend a meeting considering the distance between communities. At the same time, freeing up women’s time does not necessarily translate into women pursuing activities that promote their strategic interests (even though freeing up women’s time is an important step towards more equitable gender relations). In addition, as mentioned in the section related to project design, these practical benefits were not a purposeful component of the project design (Anonymous Interview ACAI Official 2 2010) and any time savings for women were incorrectly anticipated to come from not having to fetch wood, rather than the findings mentioned above.

Also, in espousing in the project proposal that women will benefit from this project precisely because they are the ones associated with housework cements these roles as belonging exclusively to women thereby reinforcing inequitable, socially constructed gender divisions. Ideally men should also be considered beneficiaries of a project that brings benefits to kitchen-related work. More specifically, what is being said here is that in the specific context of the Intag region, this project assumes it is helping women (and not men) because it is addressing kitchen-specific needs and therefore women’s domain. Project assumptions about women’s ‘natural’ roles are carried out within the context of gender inequities (Reeves and Baden 2000, 18; Kabeer 2003, 75) leading to a

reinforcement of gender inequities. As noted by Southern feminism, while policies to address women's practical needs may lighten women's burden of responsibilities, they do "little to challenge their subordinate position" (Kabeer 1994, 295). In order to address structures maintaining gender inequities, attention must be paid to strategic interests (Reeves and Baden 2000, 14). The following section turns to an analysis of how the project relates to women's strategic interests therefore.

7.2.2 Strategic Gender Interests Related to Project Implementation

Strategic gender interests are interests that seek to change the structural factors maintaining and reproducing any existing gender inequities (Reeves and Baden 2000, 14). This section begins with an overview of the project's specific treatment of gender in project implementation through gender workshops. It then focuses on a number of interrelated factors stemming from Southern feminism pertaining to women's strategic interests in relation to project implementation including questions of access, use and control of the biodigester, participation in capacity building, and women's voices and empowerment. This section addresses the second hypothesis of this thesis, that is, when women's strategic interests are not actively pursued in climate change mitigation projects, opportunities are being missed to address gender inequities.

Gender Workshop: Awareness Raising Regarding Women's Strategic Interests

The only deliberate effort to address strategic gender interests stemming from the project was the compulsory gender workshop undertaken in the first and second phase of the project, as required by the SGP Ecuador (Anonymous Interview ECOPAR Official 2 2010). Little information is available regarding these workshops such as documents

explaining the proceedings or the number of male and female participants.¹⁹ However, some general information can be pieced together from interviews. The second workshop was carried out by ECOPAR, the monitoring and evaluation NGO, and involved an estimated 25 participants. The workshop used photographs and guiding questions to reflect about gender inequities and why women have fewer opportunities (Anonymous Interview ECOPAR Official 1 2010).

A local resident of Intag considered one of the leaders in her community was hired as the gender promoter for the first phase of the project and led the first phase gender workshop. She explained that she led a workshop on how a family ought to be. In terms of how gender was conceptualized she explained:

We understood gender as in general not only women have value and not only men have value; we all have value (sic). Therefore, this big person, this small person, this person has value. And for this value this person needs to be respected, loved and not violated (sic) (Anonymous Interview Woman with Biodigester 3 2010).

The gender promoter and her husband take great care to help each other with the daily tasks of maintaining the family, the house, and the farm and the gender promoter put her experience of sharing responsibilities as an example to others. She explained: “it was beautiful telling my experience as a wife, a mother and how family should be” (Anonymous Interview Woman with Biodigester 3 2010). She said she had no misgiving during her workshop in telling men that they have to do everything in the home rather than the woman doing one thing and the man doing the other. She argued there has to be respect and understanding between couples so that they share the work (IBID). The gender promoter observed that there was interest rather than resistance to the gender workshop. She noted that the participants enjoyed speaking about this topic and explained

¹⁹ Neither ACAI nor ECOPAR had proper documentation of these events available.

in relation to men in particular: “there was no resistance, they just asked me how, in what way” (Anonymous Interview Woman with Biodigester 3 2010).

The two gender workshops convey that the project has, through these workshops, addressed some of the structures maintaining gender inequities in the region, in particular, inequities in the gender division of labour. By opening up a dialogue in this sense, the project has promoted women’s strategic interests. These findings also illustrate an openness among project participants to discussing the topic of gender, suggesting a cultural predisposition to embrace modifications in inequitable gender roles and implying it would be beneficial to push this theme further in capacity building workshops and meetings related to the project.

This relatively strong start in terms of a gender focus lost momentum however. The woman hired as the gender promoter in the first stage of the project was let go after the first few months because the SGP budget was not enough to have a gender promoter during the two full years of the first phase. No gender promoter was hired for phase two of the project due to a lack of funding²⁰ (Anonymous Interview ACAI 2 2010).

Also, that some of the gender inequities in the Intag region were highlighted in the workshops indicates that there was at least some degree of awareness within the project of structural inequities. However, aside from the obligatory gender workshop in the second phase of the project, no follow-up workshops in which women’s strategic interests were promoted were held, and as mentioned in the section on project design, no initiatives or mechanisms to address any elements of structural gender inequities were built into the project in its subsequent phase. This omission has occurred despite national policy

²⁰ A lack of funding available for the promotion of gender within the project implies that the project’s lack of commitment to gender is in some ways out of the control of the project proponents.

requirements to do so (by, for example, promoting women's participation and decision-making and empowerment).

Strategic Gender Interests: Access, Use and Control and Women's Participation, Voices and Empowerment in Project Implementation

Because issues of access, use and control and women's participation, voices and empowerment are so interconnected, this section looks at findings related to them collectively and provides a joint analysis of them. Southern feminism and the WED theories point to the need to ask whether women have access to, use of, and control over the resources (like technology or knowledge) made available through the project in order to evaluate the project's implications for gender equity (Kabeer 1994, 302; Moeckli and Braun 2001, 121). In the case of the biodigester project, it is necessary to understand whether and how women and men have access to the knowledge of the technologies involved in the construction and operation of the biodigester; use of the biodigester (its daily operation) and control over this technology.

While all of the men in families that received biodigesters were involved in the biodigester construction, women were generally not directly involved. Of the eight families interviewed that were provided with biodigesters, only two women were directly involved in constructing the biodigester. Most women mentioned that because the construction involved a full day of work, it was necessary to feed the workers. Women thus cooked for these workers, which took time away from observing and participating in the construction of the biodigester and in some cases completely prevented their involvement. Overall, there is no evidence of efforts made to enable women to take advantage of the learning process that takes place during biodigester construction. It should be noted, however, that even though there is a trend indicating that women were

less involved in construction and functioning of the biodigester, one woman did mention that ACAI took the time to ensure she understood how the biodigester worked (Anonymous Interview Woman with Biodigester 2 2010).

In relation to the use of the biodigester, evidence from interviews conveys that most of the women interviewed do have a basic understanding of how the biodigester works and are involved in its daily use. In reference to control over the biodigester, overall, as conveyed in table 10, there is a trend showing that men have greater knowledge of how the biodigester works and how to fix it. Every man with a biodigester interviewed conveyed this knowledge whereas findings for women were mixed.

Table 10: Involvement in the Management of the Biodigester

Families with Biodigesters			
Level of understanding of managing biodigester	Good	Weak	None
Female	38% (3/8)	38% (3/8)	25% (2/8)
Male	100% (7/7)	0% (0/7)	0% (0/7)

In addition to capacity building related to the biodigester, one of the objectives of the SGP biodigester project is the provision of general environmental/renewable energy capacity building. This capacity building is carried out at the time of the biodigester construction (Anonymous Interview ACAI Official 1 2010) and also takes place in meetings away from the homes. Unfortunately, no documents are available from ACAI related to how many men and women attend these meetings. It was possible, however, to observe one meeting that was set up jointly by ACAI and ECOPAR to both monitor the project and provide capacity building related to climate change. Fewer women attended (11 men and five women²¹) and they were less likely to contribute their voices. Neither

²¹ These numbers include individuals working for ACAI and/or its board of directors (four men and one woman).

the project organizers nor the evaluation NGO encouraged women to contribute their voices except in one instance in which the monitoring question pertained to women's participation (in which only men were answering until women were encouraged to participate as the question pertained directly to them) (Personal Observation 2010).

Promoting strategic interests involves advancing measures that enhance women's control over their own lives, that is, women's empowerment (Kabeer 1994, 90-301). As noted by Zoe Oxaal and Sally Baden, "Empowerment involves a process whereby women can freely analyse, develop and voice their needs and interests, without them being pre-defined, or imposed from above, by planners or other social actors" (Oxaal and Baden 1997, 6). If empowerment is understood as a process that must be built from below, women must be active agents in their own empowerment. While it is not the role of development planners to empower women, a development project can help to create some of the necessary conditions for women to engage in their own empowerment. Enabling mechanisms include "encouraging women's participation, acquisition of skills, decision-making capacity, and control over resources" (Oxaal and Baden 1997, 6). By facilitating these conditions, development projects can enable "women themselves to critically assess their own situation and create and shape a transformation in society" (Oxaal and Baden, 1997, 6). However, no purposeful measures were adopted by the project so as to fulfill any of the conditions to facilitate empowerment in project implementation. No measures were taken, for example, to promote women's decision-making related to the biodigester and participation in capacity building or lead women to perceive themselves as able and entitled to occupy these spaces (Oxaal and Baden 1997, 3).

The findings in this section have a number of implications for gender equity. First, they convey that women's participation in activities related to the biodigester construction

and environmental capacity building has been limited and that the reason women are participating less is largely due to their traditional gender roles. As such, while the project started off with the message through the gender workshop that cooking ought not to be the exclusive domain of women, this notion was not carried through in practice through project activities. If cultural factors are reinforced through the ongoing practice of social norms, then the project's act of reverting back to traditional gender roles during the construction phase is a reinforcement of a social norm rooted in gender inequitable relations. It should be emphasized that the reinforcement of inequitable gender roles through this project took place in the context of the project being aware of the need to challenge gender inequities by not limiting women to their traditional gender roles and of policy requirements at the national level related to the necessity of women's participation in every stage of the project, including implementation.

Second, women's lesser involvement in the biodigester construction process entails a limitation in access of important knowledge about the biodigester's functioning and maintenance. Greater knowledge in relation to this project has implications for equity, as the biodigester is, after all, a form of technology and shared access and control of technologies is, as Nalini Visvanathan notes, a fundamental step towards gender equity (Visvanathan 1997, 3, 21). Moreover, inequitable access to knowledge in relation to the construction and functioning of a technology has power implications in relation to control over this technology (Kabeer 1994, 289). Thus, by failing to ensure that women have access to the construction of the biodigester and the knowledge gained in this sense, women also have less control over the biodigester and the project has negative implications for gender equity.

Third, women's limited participation in the construction of the biodigester and environmental capacity building has not been identified as a problem, nor have measures been taken to improve the project's limited inclusion of women. As noted in the section on project design, no mechanisms have been designed into the project to address barriers to women's participation in the project, and, therefore, no specific actions have been taken during implementation to deal with these obstacles. For example, no actions were taken to ensure that women are not cooking during the biodigester construction and to address barriers to women's participation in far away meetings. As the concluding chapter will show, there are concrete and simple ways in which the project could have addressed these issues. It should be noted that by undertaking some capacity building at the time of construction, the project is partially set up in a manner that could facilitate women's inclusion in these activities – by not requiring women to travel long distances to attend meetings. However, the project does not take advantage of this opportunity.

Fourth, in terms of use (in relation to access, use and control), women do use the biodigester. However women's use of the biodigester can be explained not by the actions of the project, but instead, by a coincidence between the biodigester's functioning requirements (cleaning the pigsty and cooking) and women's traditional household roles.

Fifth, if, as the above findings convey, women are less involved in capacity building activities related to the project's implementation, it is less likely that their voices are heard. Excluding women's voices has implications for gender equity not only from a gender equity point of view but also in terms of responding to climate change. Changes in

the climate are already being felt in the region.²² Most women (16/19)²³ and all the men (except one who did not answer the question) noted they have felt changes in the climate.²⁴ These observations highlight the importance of both women and men, including women and men of different class, race and ethnicity, having an understanding of climate change, and ways to address it (e.g. renewable energy technologies and agricultural practices) in order to be active contributors to solutions – more people having access to knowledge about climate change entails more responses and better solutions to its harmful effects.

Since both women and men will feel the impacts of climate change, it is also necessary that both women and men have knowledge related to adapting to climate change. The UN advocates that women's voices and actions are critical when it comes to strategies to adapt to and mitigate its effects. It states that: "Women play an absolutely central role in many activities that are affected by climate change and must therefore be explicitly involved in all adaptation and mitigation modalities, and enjoy expanded access to environmental and energy services, tailored to their needs" (UNDP N.D., 28). Although women have a central role to play in climate change mitigation and adaptation, the project does not make sure they have access to environmental capacity building nor validate women's voices (by, for example, ensuring their input is encouraged).

Sixth, the findings outlined above show that empowerment is not a purposeful component of this project. That empowerment is not addressed is not surprising

²² During the interviews, those participants who did not understand the term were provided with a brief explanation of climate change and all participants were asked whether they had noticed any changes over the past few decades.

²³ Number includes interviews with Afro-Ecuadorian women.

²⁴ The most commonly cited change among both women and men is that in the past, the difference between the two seasons, summer and winter, was clear. More recently however, this has become unpredictable which has resulted in crop losses.

considering no gender analysis was conducted to determine which enabling conditions would need to be in place to promote women's strategic interests. As mentioned before, it must be kept in mind that there are policy obligations in Ecuador's National Strategy to empower women.

Though no purposeful efforts were made to promote women's empowerment through the project, a paradoxical relationship can be observed in the Intag region related to participation, confidence building and empowerment. That is, some women, as outlined in chapter 6, do not feel the confidence to participate because of a lack of education, yet the ability to participate in public activities (including but not limited to this project) provides many women with just the education and skills that help promote confidence levels and empowerment.

Many of the women interviewed expressed the benefits of participating in terms of the experience and knowledge they gain. One woman mentioned: "It is good as a woman to learn what they are showing" (Anonymous Interview Woman with Biodigester 1 2010) and she noted she puts into practice the useful things she learns. Another woman explained: "These meetings are very valuable to me. I learn" and went on to note how meetings that have arisen as a result of the mining conflict have brought women together and helped them gain confidence (Anonymous Interview Woman with Biodigester 3 2010). In another case a woman pointed out: "I feel, for example, interested because a person that is interested in learning participates in everything, if they are not interested nothing comes of this (sic)" (Anonymous Interview Woman with Biodigester 5 2010). Another woman observed: "Yes I like to [participate] because that is where I learn. I converse. I learn even though we have only accomplished elementary school. We [women] did not do high school. We left elementary school and stayed at that level [of

schooling] (sic). So here in the meetings I learn, follow something. I know a learn little by little...” (Anonymous Interview Woman to Receive Biodigester 5 2010). Another woman noted that she dreamed of finishing elementary school and that attending capacity building meetings helped her gain experience and the confidence to participate (Anonymous Interview Woman with Biodigester 6 2010).

The feelings of empowerment expressed in the interviews cannot be attributed to the biodigester project in particular, as many women made these comments in relation to their involvement in other public activities. They do, however, show that in a small way, this project, though not purposefully, may be contributing to the empowerment of those women who are participating in project meetings. This evidence highlights the importance of ensuring women have the ability to participate in organizations, meetings and capacity building so as to feel empowered and express their own voices and make their own choices. These findings also point to the value women in the region place on participation, education and training. As noted by Agarwal (1997a, 25), the absence of women’s formal participation reinforces pre-existing gender inequalities. It can lessen women’s bargaining power within and outside the household. In contrast, women’s participation in public decision-making fora helps “reverse rural women’s traditional exclusion from such fora, and also increase their self-confidence in asserting their rights in relation to public bodies in general” (Agarwal 1997a, 25). It is fundamental therefore that conditions for women’s participation and empowerment are purposefully facilitated by the project.

Summary Discussion of Strategic Gender Interests in Project Implementation

This section on strategic interests has looked at the gender workshops and questions of access, use and control and women’s participation, voices and empowerment

to analyze the second hypothesis of this thesis that when women's strategic interests are not actively pursued in climate change mitigation projects, opportunities are being missed to address gender inequities. In all of these areas, the only purposeful effort to address strategic gender interests was the gender workshops, which represent an important step towards challenging structures maintaining gender inequities in the region. However, as mentioned earlier, the teachings from these gender workshops were not translated into specific and purposeful project activities to address inequitable gender structures in project implementation. This omission is particularly significant given the gender workshops indicate the project proponents were aware of the need to challenge structural gender inequities and there are national requirements to promote women's decision-making and participation in all stages of the project as well as women's empowerment. In this sense, the project failed to produce meaningful, positive changes (however small) to promote strategic interests. In turn, it can be argued that overall, the evidence in this section shows that the project has reinforced existing gender inequities, and represents a missed opportunity to promote gender equity, which lends support to the second hypothesis of this thesis.

At this point it would be useful to reiterate that what this chapter suggests is not that an environmental project of this nature must produce the type of structural changes that would lead to a revolution in gender relations in order for it to promote gender equity. As chapter 8 shows, there are many ways in which, given the project's objectives, resources and its cultural settings, gender inequities could have been addressed. Moreover, what the findings of this chapter suggest is not that the only way for a project to be deemed to promote strategic interests is to ensure that men and women share work equally. Instead, it has shown that equity does not entail equality. Men and women may

undertake different activities but have the power to make decisions about their own lives equally. Moreover, what this thesis suggests is that if development projects, regardless of their size and scope, do not challenge these gender inequities and operate within and through them, then inequities will likely be reinforced. If a project is taking measures to tackle structural inequities throughout its activities, by addressing barriers to women's participation, promoting women's decision-making, access, use and control to resources and women's empowerment, then a project can be deemed to be addressing strategic gender interests and promoting gender equity.

7.3 ACAI Biodigester Monitoring and Evaluation and Gender Equity

This section turns to an analysis of how monitoring and evaluation activities treat gender and addresses the three main hypotheses of this thesis. In the case of the Intag project, ECOPAR is the NGO responsible for project monitoring and evaluation, which involves tri-annual visits to communities and subsequent assessments. Little attention is paid to gender in the assessment reports and final evaluations²⁵. In one report from the secondary project phase for example, the obligatory gender box only mentions that this activity is behind schedule (ECOPAR 1 2010a, 8). In another evaluation for the second phase, the only mention of gender is in relation to counting the number of men and women involved in the project (from 10 to 18 men and 8 to 15 women between the third and fourth visit), the project's understanding of methods to apply a gender focus (ranked three out of five in the third visit and four out of five in the fourth visit) and the ability of the project to incorporate gender needs, interests and the opinions of women in the project (ranked three out of five in the third visit and four out of five in the fourth visit). No

²⁵ Though evaluations were requested from the GEF SGP Ecuador and ECOPAR, it was only possible to obtain three reports which, along with interviews and observation, were used as the basis from which to study how SGP monitoring and evaluation relates to gender.

explanations are given to support these increases (ECOPAR 2010 b, 85-86). In another report – the final evaluation of the first phase of the Intag project – one of the only references to gender in the document states that because the project is working with all the members of families, this implies the inclusion of both women and men (SEDAL N.D., 32). It also asserts that equality increased during the first phase of the project from 50 percent at the start of the project to 60 percent in the second year. No information is provided to justify the supposed increase, nor is it clear whether it is in reference to gender or other forms of equality. No other references to gender are made in the final evaluation for the first phase (SEDAL N.D., 32).

Nor is attention paid to the lack of Afro-Ecuadorians or indigenous peoples involved in the project in project evaluations. One report (for the second phase) ranked project activities in relation to the project proponents' understanding of interculturalism and application of tools to promote interculturalism as four out of five over the third and fourth visit (ECOPAR 2010 b, 85). No explanation is given to support these numbers. There are no references to interculturalism in the other available report for the second phase, or in the final evaluation for the first phase (ECOPAR 1 2010a, 8; SEDAL N.D., 32). In ECOPAR's tri-annual evaluation workshop, questions were posed related to the other two focal areas (gender and age) of the SGP equality of opportunities requirement, but no questions were related to race/ethnicity. No indigenous peoples or Afro-Ecuadorians were in attendance at the evaluation, nor were any consulted (Personal Observation 2010). In an interview carried out with an ECOPAR official, this point was brought up and the official agreed that this omission is something that should be looked into, but had not been up to that point (Anonymous Interview ECOPAR Official 2 2010).

Moreover, as noted in chapter 4, evaluation teams are responsible for ensuring

there is a specialist within the project evaluation group with an expertise in project development with an emphasis on the environment, gender and participation (PPD N.D., 4). However, ECOPAR is made up mainly of hard scientists such as biologists, geologists and forestry engineers and does not have a strong sociological base. ECOPAR's only gender expert has recently left the organization (Anonymous Interview ECOPAR Official 2 2010) and as a result, they no longer meet the requirement to have an expertise in gender. As noted by one official, in comparison to the gender expert, the rest of the ECOPAR team has more of an intermediate position when it comes to gender. As opposed to the gender expert's strong interest in orienting the evaluation of projects through a gender lens, the rest of the team does not place such a strong emphasis on gender. The official noted that she had never been in agreement with the idea that women need special treatment. In terms of participation she goes on to note "What is the problem? If you are married and your husband goes [to a meeting or capacity building], you go and tell them [his spouse] about it and they all benefit. The important thing is that someone goes and involves the rest in this process" (Anonymous Interview ECOPAR Official 2 2010).

When the project proponent's gender efforts do not meet policy requirements, the monitoring and evaluation team in principle has the ability to make recommendations in their tri-annual evaluation reports to increase their efforts. The evaluation agency can even go so far as to recommend that the SGP withhold funds until gender is adequately addressed. However, this action has never been taken in any SGP project that has been evaluated by ECOPAR (Anonymous Interview ECOPAR Official 1 2010). The project's clear lack of a gender focus has not been tied to any incentives or repercussions.

These findings have a number of implications. First, they show evidence of

erroneous understandings of the local context. The assumption in the final report of the first phase that men and women benefit equally from the project is incorrect as chapter 6 has shown that women and men start from different structural positions and require differential treatment. This assumption implies that a lack of gender analysis in this project has implications for the treatment of gender in monitoring and evaluation.

Second, these findings convey that gender is treated non-systematically and often only in passing in project evaluations. Little focus is placed on gender in the evaluation documents. ECOPAR does not ask for gender-disaggregated data regarding who is benefiting from this project and who is losing (only who is involved). Requirements such as women's participation (in particular the degree of women's participation) in the project, women's decision-making, the promotion of spaces for working with women to rethink their conditions and positions and women's empowerment are not analyzed. Nor are questions of women's contexts, the division of labour and the integration of men and women's different local visions into the project to promote gender equality. This oversight occurs despite SIMONA's obligations to assess these areas (Quintero N.D., 10).

Third, this evidence shows there is a lack of understanding of how Afro-Ecuadorians and indigenous women are involved or not in the project. Oversights in relation to interculturalism in ECOPAR's monitoring and evaluation activities is particularly surprising considering interculturalism is a focal area under equality of opportunities and the National Strategy and SIMONA require that attention is paid to this issue, including in monitoring and evaluation activities. (Quintero N.D., 11; PPD 2004, 32).

Fourth, not having a gender expertise (or experts with an interest in gender) has implications for the quality and extent of gender considerations monitored and evaluated.

The assumption, as conveyed by one official, that participants who attend meetings will report back to their spouses is not guaranteed and such a way of conceptualizing gender risks making women more dependent on their husbands (who are more likely to attend the meetings). Moreover, such a conceptualization of gender implies no special efforts need to be taken to promote women's participation (despite national policy requirements to do so), which effectively increases the likelihood women are excluded and risks disempowering them.

Fifth, as monitoring and evaluation requires tri-annual visits to communities and assessments, there is ample opportunity to improve on the shortcomings outlined above, such as women's limited participation, throughout the project cycle. However, these opportunities are not taken up by ECOPAR. Few recommendations to improve on gender are included in the evaluations and these are not tied to any incentives or repercussions.

Summary Discussion of Monitoring and Evaluation and Gender

The treatment of gender within project evaluations is thus inconsistent with the monitoring and evaluation and National Strategy policies outlined in Chapter 4 (and with international gender requirements), which in turn lessens the ability of this project to contribute to gender equity. Monitoring and evaluation fails to raise the status of gender within the projects, ensure that women's strategic interests (participation, decision-making and empowerment) are promoted and ensure that different women (e.g. according to race and ethnicity) benefit from the project. Monitoring and evaluation activities are maintaining gender inequities. This evidence lends support to the three hypotheses of this thesis.

Conclusions about the Main Hypotheses of this Thesis Related to the Project Level

It is clear from the above analysis of the biodigester project from design to implementation and monitoring and evaluation that gender is largely a missing component in this climate change project even though gender considerations are mandated within the UN and at through the Ecuador SGP National Strategy. Gender requirements have only been met to a limited degree. The evidence presented in this chapter overall lends support to the three hypotheses of this thesis. It shows how gender is low on the overall agenda and not meeting broader international UN gender standards in relation to hypothesis one. It conveys how women's strategic interests were not actively pursued through this project and as a result, opportunities are being missed to address gender inequities. Furthermore, that the project did not differentiate among women according to class, race and ethnicity lends support to the third hypothesis of this thesis as evidence shows that Afro-Ecuadorian and indigenous women and to a certain extent poor women (particularly landless women), who are often among the most marginalized populations in the Intag zone, have been excluded from participating in and benefiting from this project. This project overall has thus maintained existing gender inequities.

It is encouraging, however, that there is a general interest among the population of Intag, including both women and men, in addressing inequitable gender relations. Also, officials involved in the project have conveyed openness to improving the project in relation to gender elements (Anonymous Interview ACAI Official 1 2010). There is a great deal of potential to improve gender considerations in this project and promote women's strategic interests among different women. Using what was learned from this particular case study, the following chapter turns to some of the ways in which the GEF SGP climate change projects in Ecuador could better promote gender equity.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS AND MOVING FORWARD

8.1 Conclusions: Revisiting the Research Hypotheses

A gender analysis of the GEF SGP from the international to the local level provides some mixed results in terms of the promotion of gender equity, as outlined below in relation to the main hypotheses of this thesis and in table 11. The treatment of gender is uneven within and across levels. A trend can be seen to emerge however in which overall, the SGP project in this case maintains existing gender inequities through its project activities.

Hypothesis 1

- GEF SGP funding mechanisms for climate change mitigation projects are falling short of broader UN requirements for gender equity.

In relation to the first hypothesis, findings in this thesis have shown an inconsistent emphasis on gender at different levels. At the international GEF and SGP policy level, while there are some gender references in policies, despite international and UN gender commitments, the existence of gender criteria is weak and low on the overall agenda. At the national level of Ecuador, gender policies are considerably stronger. At the local level, gender considerations (required by national and international policies) have largely failed to make it into the design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of the biodigester climate change project used as a case study. Thus, with the exception of the national policy level of Ecuador, these findings overall lend support to the first hypothesis of this thesis.

Hypothesis 2

- When women's strategic interests are not actively pursued in climate change mitigation projects, opportunities are being missed to address gender inequities.

At the local project level, findings in chapter 7 convey that except in the case of the gender workshops, the project has largely failed to promote strategic gender interests. This omission is in relation to questions of access, use and control of the biodigester

(women have been less involved in learning related to its functioning and maintenance), participation in the project design and capacity building (barriers to women's participation have not been targeted and women have been less involved) and women's voices and empowerment (which has not been specifically targeted in project design, implementation or monitoring and evaluation). In turn, women have less control over the biodigester, less input into the project (and thus the ability to promote their needs, interests and perspectives) and less knowledge gained and potential empowerment opportunities. Opportunities to promote gender equity are missed and structural gender inequities are maintained which lends support to the second hypothesis of this thesis.

Hypothesis 3

- Climate change mitigation projects that do not differentiate among women according to class, race and ethnicity risk excluding marginalized women.

Evidence presented in this thesis has portrayed how the project has failed to differentiate among women. In turn, indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorian, and to a certain degree poor women, who are generally among the most marginalized groups in Ecuador, have been left out of the project and any potential benefits. This omission maintains inequities among women and lends support to the third hypothesis of this thesis.

There is clearly room for improvement in the promotion of gender equity through this case study of GEF SGP international climate change funding. The remainder of this chapter explores some of the lessons that can be learned from this analysis. Section 8.2 speaks to recommendations to ensure gender equity is high on the agenda. Section 8.3 turns to an analysis of how to promote women's strategic needs within SGP climate change mitigation projects. How to ensure marginalized women benefit from the SGP is examined in section 8.4. Section 8.5 closes with some overall concluding remarks.

Table 11: Summary of How GEF SGP Policies and Programs Relate to Gender

Level	Program/Project	Extent to which policies & programs address gender equity	Extent to which policies & programs maintain gender inequities
International	Global Environment Facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resource allocation is supposed to take into account how a country promotes gender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No reference to gender in mandates No policy specific to gender No gender requirements in the GEF Operational Strategy Women only included as an example of a group to be consulted GEF Project Cycle depends on gender requirements of implementing agencies which has not been successful in practice Lack of gender perspective in most policies
	Small Grants Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reference to how funding will be directed to marginalized communities, women and indigenous peoples Reference to gender training to ensure project's success Monitoring and evaluation requirements in terms of participation and gender analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No policy specific to gender Few references to gender in the SGP Operational Guidelines and Strategic Framework Lack of gender perspective in most policies
National	Ecuador Small Grants Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Strategy emphasizes women's participation, decision-making, needs and empowerment, analyzing project's effect on women and how to address negative effects Project templates ask how project will promote gender equality Monitoring and evaluation requirements include promoting: women's participation and decision-making, spaces for women to rethink their positions, analyzing roles and responsibilities, division of labour and integrating different visions into project, promoting gender equality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No reference to gender in objectives
Local	Bio-digester Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotes health and time-savings related to practical needs Gender workshops addressed structural gender inequities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No gender specific objectives or criteria and erroneous gender assumptions permeate project No gender analysis conducted to inform project of gender context Failed to incorporate teachings of gender workshop into all other project activities Failed to promote women's access, use and control, participation, voices and empowerment in project design and implementation No distinction made among women and indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian women excluded Monitoring and evaluation does not account for gender shortcomings

8.2 Recommendations to Ensure Gender Equity is High on the Agenda

From the analysis in this thesis, several factors may be identified that would help raise the importance of gender equity on the agenda of SGP climate change projects. These include: stronger gender mandates in international GEF and SGP policies; a clear understanding of gender responsibilities at all levels; strengthening gender requirements in project conceptualization and design; gender disaggregated data; and financial and human resources.

8.2.1 Stronger Gender Mandates in International GEF and SGP Policies

Clearer gender mandates at the GEF and SGP level that are consistent with UN gender requirements are necessary. There should be gender specific mandates in addition to specific requirements woven into all policies. For example, the GEF public involvement policy should have criteria specific to gender. Gender specific policies would help ensure that evaluations have mandates by which to measure the success of the program in relation to gender. Adding such criteria would heighten the importance and necessity of gender equity.

8.2.2 Clear Understanding of Ecuador SGP Gender Responsibilities at All Levels

At the country level of Ecuador, SGP projects involve a multi-level program design in which there are three levels of responsibility: the local UN GEF office, the project evaluators, and the non-governmental organization (NGO) or community-based organization (CBO). In promoting gender equity, all three levels have a role to play to ensure that considerations are incorporated into projects. There are areas, however, in which it is unclear who has responsibility for what. For example, while the Ecuador GEF office has developed a strong gender manual, it is uncertain who is responsible for ensuring it is used in practice. Moreover, in the case of the Intag project, no gender

analysis was conducted, leading to a lack of understanding of women's needs and interests at the outset. Despite requirements in Ecuador's National Strategy and SIMONA to understand women's context (such as inequities in the gender division of labour), this omission was not mentioned in project evaluations and is not being addressed by the GEF SGP (PPD 2004, 32; Quintero N.D. 10). As such, it would be advisable to clarify who has what responsibilities in every stage to ensure gender considerations are incorporated into projects during design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

8.2.3 Strengthening Gender Requirements in the Project Conceptualization and Design

The SGP Ecuador model is set up in a manner that does not promote strong gender criteria in project conceptualization and design. The gender manual is not available on the SGP Ecuador website where the project proposal templates are hosted and project proponents do not receive the manual until the project has been approved (Anonymous Interview ECOPAR Official 1 2010). Nor do project templates ask questions specific to whether the project proponents have undertaken a gender analysis. Once the project has been approved, there is less incentive to make the extra effort to undertake these gender workshops. Moreover, the project templates are not designed in a manner that requires reporting on women and men's participation in the project conceptualization and design. As a result, there is no guarantee that women are contributing to the project conceptualization and design or that the project is informed by the local gender context. These findings highlight the need to incorporate formal requirements into the project templates for project proponents to follow practices that will help ensure gender equity is promoted at an early stage.

Incentives or repercussions would also help ensure project proponents take up gender criteria. For example, one likely reason the gender manual was not followed is that it is not a requirement. There are no incentives to use it, nor are there repercussions for not using it. Nor are there incentives or repercussions, for example, related to incorporating gender into project design and implementation and facilitating women's participation, voices and empowerment. While the project evaluators in principle have the ability to withhold funding unless gender there is an adequate accounting of gender, the monitoring and evaluation NGO has not done this in practice. Incentives or repercussions for staff to follow gender requirements (outlined in Ecuador's National Strategy), use gender resources (such as the gender manual) or to receive training (as discussed below) would prove beneficial in this case.

8.2.4 Gender Disaggregated Data

For a project to address inequitable gender relations, it is necessary to understand the specific ways in which women and men are impacted by and involved or not in the project. In order to understand these factors, gender disaggregated data are essential. However, this aspect of the project has received very little systematization and is acknowledged as a weakness by the project organizers (Anonymous Interview ACAI Official 1 2010). When gender indicators are limited in quality and quantity, it is difficult to measure advances or retractions in the promotion of gender equity (PPD y Fundación OFIS 2008, 19).

Gender disaggregated data should not be limited to counting women as this will obscure the quality of participation. Increasing numbers of women will not necessarily address issues of power and ensure that women's interests and needs are being met. An understanding is needed of how gender is about gender relations (UNDP 2006, 2) and

goes well beyond representation of females in various project forums and phases. In gathering information, attention must be paid “to gender dynamics, gender relations [and] the contexts in which the data were produced” (Cornwall 2003, 1336). Data should include an understanding of whether and how women are structurally underprivileged (IBID) and should be disaggregated according to class, race/ethnicity and other factors pertinent to the context and region. Questions must be directed at whether both women and men (including different women and men) are contributing to discussions related to the project, whether and how they are benefiting from the project, and whether there are any negative implications for gender equity (Young 1997, 52).

8.2.5 Financial and Human Resources

Funding specific to gender and human resources to incorporate gender considerations is also necessary to promote gender considerations. The case of Intag points to areas where lack of funding was a hindrance in promoting gender considerations. Due to limited resources, it was not possible to continue the extent to which the project was promoting gender by maintaining the gender promoter throughout the project. In cases in which no gender expert is locally available, funding is necessary to hire an external gender expert or receive training. In addition, the CBO in the case of Intag has not collected gender-disaggregated data due to a lack of resources and expertise (Anonymous Interview ACAI Official 1 2010). There is also a need for funds to ensure, for example, that women who have more difficulty leaving the home are provided with transportation to and from meetings (as discussed below) or additional meetings are set up in areas closer to women’s homes. In addition, at the design stage of the project, funding needs to be put aside in order to carry out a gender analysis and larger participatory processes to gain community input into the project conceptualization.

Funding for human resources is also important. As mentioned by one ACAI official, there are very few resources that can be applied to staffing for this project and ACAI staff members are involved in other projects and which also prevents devoting much time to the biodigester project. The limited staff making up the community-based organization does not necessarily have the availability of time to further explore what is happening in terms of women's participation in the project. One repercussion in this sense has been the inability to collect gender-disaggregated data (Anonymous Interview ACAI Official 1 2010).

Gender expertise is also necessary in order to properly promote gender equity. "Gender" is a complicated subject. For example, a gender evaluation of the UNDP has pointed out that there is a significant degree of confusion among UNDP staff with regards to how to carry out gender mainstreaming in practice and how this term is defined and interpreted (UNDP 2006, 2). A lack of interest in gender can also be a significant barrier. As one GEF official from Ecuador stated, "People get really tired of the theme of gender" (Anonymous Interview GEF Official 2010). Within the UNDP, successes in gender mainstreaming have been largely dependent on personalities, that is, individuals who have an interest in gender (UNDP 2006, viii). The unsystematic manner of addressing gender highlights the need for gender training among staff or the hiring of a gender expert, which lends further support for the need for resources and incentives and repercussions so as to promote gender equity. In the absence of gender training or a gender expert, the guidance in the gender manual outlines the important aspects of gender and how to promote gender equity.

8.3 Recommendations to Ensure the Project Advances Women's Strategic Interests

This section examines the ways a climate change mitigation project can ensure it promotes strategic gender interests, including: conducting a gender analysis; challenging the dominant narrative; equitable access, use and control of the biodigester; and addressing barriers to women's participation which relates to voices and empowerment.

8.3.1 Conducting a Gender Analysis

The first step in promoting women's strategic interests is to conduct a gender analysis. The biodigester program cannot be separated from the daily realities of women. Gender awareness involves analyzing the different gender roles and responsibilities that are social and cultural constructs, their implications for gender equity and how the project intersects with this context. Such an analysis requires understanding women's needs, interests and perspectives and continually asking "which women," and "which men" will likely benefit from or be negatively impacted by the project or whether the project is leaving out particular women. In understanding this context, measures can then be designed into the project to promote gender equity (Kabeer 1994, 289). Gender awareness involves moving from promoting equality between men and women to gender equity and ensuring that measures are in place to promote women's specific needs and interests which arise according to differences in gender roles and historical contexts and lived experience.

8.3.2 Challenging the Dominant Narrative

Another recommendation is that the project proponents challenge rather than reinforce gender inequities in their narratives, including the project proposal and project activities. For example, the project proposal stated it would benefit women because they work in the kitchen, reinforcing the notion women's roles and responsibilities naturally

occur in the home. By simply noting that the biodigester project aims to benefit both men and women in the kitchen, then an educative process about gender equity would unfold, however small it may be. Another example specific to project implementation is finding ways of ensuring gender inequities are not reinforced in project actions, in this case, that women are not required to cook during the construction of biodigesters, such as bringing bag lunches. If women insist on cooking (which is then their choice), other steps include encouraging men to help out in the kitchen and taking the time to guarantee women receive capacity building on all aspects related to the biodigester so that they also benefit from knowledge building from the project. That is, specific efforts must be made to ensure that women benefit from this project.

8.3.3 Equitable Access, Use and Control

Another recommendation is to clarify at the outset what resources and benefits (i.e. in this case the biodigester and knowledge gained through capacity building) will be made available through the project and who is likely to have access to them, use them and control them. This analysis involves determining how this distribution will impact gender relations and how any inequities in relation to questions of access, use and control could be addressed through the project (Kabeer 1994, 302). It should be noted that promoting equity in relation to access, use and control could contribute to the objectives of the biodigester project in that if both men and women are knowledgeable in the biodigester's management and how to fix it, this helps ensure its continuous functioning.

8.3.4 Addressing Structural Barriers to Women's Participation in the SGP Biodigester Project

The analysis in this thesis points to barriers to women's participation being a fundamental reason for their lesser involvement in the project. This section provides some recommendations regarding how to address these barriers.

Meeting Times, Location and Transportation

One manner of addressing gender barriers to participation is to adjust meeting times so that they are more convenient for women's busy schedules, hold meetings closer to women's homes and provide transportation for women (Oxaal and Baden 1997, 11). Funding needs to be available for transportation to and from meetings and potentially if additional meetings need to be held closer to women's homes.

Actively Seeking Women's Voices and Opinions

While taking measures to promote women's presence in meetings and capacity building is a start, it is necessary that their voices and opinions be actively sought. As noted above, in some ways, simplistic interpretations of addressing gender have resulted in merely adding an activity for women to a project or counting the number of women who have benefited from a development intervention in an evaluation (UNDP 2006, 2). This understanding risks giving only the illusion of promoting gender equity, which can in fact be counterproductive. As noted by Mohanty (2002, 1 in Cornwall 2003 1330), "the mere presence of women in the decision making committees without a voice can be counter-productive in the sense that it can be used to legitimize a decision which is taken by the male members."

Raising Confidence Levels and Facilitating Empowerment

It is also vital to ensure that not only the most prominent and vocal women (and men) are participating (Cornwall 2003, 1330; Mohanty 1987). Part of the process of

ensuring the participation of marginalized women involves increasing their confidence levels. One manner of doing so involves making known spaces for women such as gender-progressive NGOs or women's organizations. As noted by Andrea Cornwall (2003, 1330), "membership makes women more self-confident, assertive and vocal in mixed gatherings." Project implementers can also make special efforts to increase women's confidence and awareness by, for example, holding workshops and capacity building forums related to confidence building and stressing the value of women's voices and opinions in formal meetings (IBID). As advocated by Southern feminism, there is a need to validate the experiences and voices of disempowered women (Visvanathan 1997, 29). Such actions facilitate women's empowerment.

Changing the Format of Meetings

It is also recommended that the format of meetings be analyzed to ensure they provide a forum that makes participants feel comfortable participating. For example, one format to consider is for some meetings to be held among only women. As conveyed by Agarwal (1997a, 34), "In general it is noted that village women are more comfortable and vocal in all-women's groups than in mixed ones." Another mechanism is one-on-one meetings, which can help ensure that people who do not have experience speaking in front of an audience feel more comfortable expressing their voice. For example, one Afro-Ecuadorian woman interviewed noted that she only felt comfortable speaking one-on-one. She explained, "Here with you I speak but from there, with many people, what if I speak badly since I can't (sic). I feel very timid, nervous" (Anonymous Interview Afro-Ecuadorian Woman 3).

Capacity Building to Promote Dialogue and Coordination of Roles and Responsibilities

As examined in chapter 6 and 7, a key factor in addressing women's ability to participate in activities related to the project is their time burden. This situation is a result of the gender division of labour based on perceptions of natural roles and responsibilities that have women carrying out multiple tasks in the home and working an additional 6.5 hours on average per day than men. These roles and responsibilities make it more difficult for women to have the time and ability to leave the home and participate in meetings and capacity building activities.

One way in which to address this barrier through the project is by undertaking capacity building that promotes a more equitable distribution of household roles and responsibilities. First, there is a need for awareness and comprehension. That is, men need to be aware of women's multiple responsibilities, additional workload and the repercussions of this inequitable distribution of roles and responsibilities in limiting women's participation in meetings that affect their lives and capacity building that can facilitate their empowerment. There is also a necessity to be conscious of women's needs and interests and evidence that women are not content being confined to the home. Several interview participants noted the need for awareness and comprehension (e.g. Anonymous Interview Man to Receive Biodigester 4 2010; Anonymous Interview Man with Biodigester 6). One man (Anonymous Interview Man to Receive Biodigester 6 2010) stated, "I think equity is found in comprehension" and that a husband has to be conscious enough to help his wife.

Second, there is a need for dialogue and coordination of roles and responsibilities. Many interview participants, when discussing how to lessen women's burden, spoke of this need. For example, one woman noted "It is a lack of coordination since the

beginning. The majority of people here have not done these things, nor our parents – to have a conversation that ‘I will do this’ (sic). In the countryside there is not this coordination. It is a lack of understanding” (Anonymous Interview Woman with Biodigester 2 2010). Men expressed similar sentiments. For example, one man noted that if a woman wants to work the field there has to be an agreement that the man then helps her in the house (Anonymous Interview Man to Receive Biodigester 6 2010). Another man explained it is a matter of having conversations to ensure that the workload is more equal. He asked himself “why don’t I wake up as well and while she makes breakfast I sweep or do some other thing for the house. That is, it would be a lack of conversation, no? (sic) Because if there were dialogue, normally all of this would be figured out and the work would be equal” (Anonymous Interview Man to Receive Biodigester 5 2010).

These opinions point to the need to open up a forum for dialogue among men and women in order to increase awareness of gender inequities, discuss barriers to promoting gender equity and ways of challenging these barriers. It should be noted that project proponents have already undertaken such capacity building to a certain extent through its gender workshops. However, these workshops were not informed by a gender analysis that understands the local context and factors that need to be overcome to ensure both women and men benefit from the project.

Participation as Empowerment

As conveyed in chapter 7, that women become more involved in meetings and capacity building is an important factor to facilitate their empowerment and change inequitable gender relations. These sentiments were reflected in the interviews. For example, one woman explained that changes in inequitable gender relations are coming about thanks to studies and increasing participation in organizations and people are

beginning to talk more about gender inequalities (Anonymous Interview Woman with Biodigester 4 2010). Another woman noted the importance of women's participation in order to change inequities:

This [inequities] can only change when we have the spirit of participation. Because here those that participate change. One says yes, now I know this issue. But if there are still people who don't participate then they don't understand anything. They are, one can say, slaves to the things of the house (Anonymous Interview Woman with Biodigester 6 2010).

It should be noted that women's empowerment, through access to knowledge about climate change, can help ensure that women are better able to adapt to changing climate conditions and as well as contribute to solutions to climate change. Questions of gender equity and national policy requirements convey the necessity of ensuring the project encourages and facilitates women's participation and empowerment.

8.4 Recommendations to Ensure the Project Differentiates Among Women

8.4.1 Seeking out Different Women's Voices

The findings in chapter 7 support Southern feminism's emphasis on the need to analyze how development efforts relate to marginalized women in the South (Antrobus 2004, 11; Braidotti et al 1997, 61; Visvanathan 1997, 26). The gender implications of a project do not simply relate to women and men but differences among them and promoting gender equity requires engaging in larger struggles based on multiple sources of oppression (Antrobus 2004, 11-12). As noted in chapter 7, in the case of this project, some of the most marginalized groups in the Intag zone have been left out of the project, including poor women to a certain extent (particularly landless women), indigenous peoples and Afro-Ecuadorians, with implications for maintaining inequities among women (Kabeer 1994, 81; Antrobus 2004, 77).

It is recommended therefore that the project differentiate among women, according to differences of class, race, ethnicity, etc., in order to ensure that marginalized women have the opportunity to participate in and benefit from this project. As noted above, designing a project in a manner sensitive to differences among women involves conducting a gender analysis that continually asks “which women?” in order to understand their specific context and histories that extend beyond their gender identities (Kabeer 1994, 279). The project needs to ensure that different women are involved in, actively contributing their voices to and benefiting from the project.

8.5 Concluding Remarks: the Potential of the SGP to Promote Gender Equity

Gender awareness in development requires going beyond a technical understanding of women’s roles to an appreciation of gender relations, including questions of the division of resources and responsibilities, claims and obligations between different social groups of women and men in which women are often disadvantaged (Kabeer 1994, 280). Gender, as has been reinforced throughout this thesis, is a socially constructed concept (Benería and Roldán 1987, 11-12; Reeves and Baden 2000, 18). Thus, to comprehend and properly address inequitable gender relations, attention must be paid to the context and history of women’s lives including differences among women according to race, ethnicity and class and recognizing that women and men may have different needs and interests that require their differential treatment (Benería and Roldán 1987, 11-12; UNDP 2006, 2). The goal of gender aware policy and planning is to promote transformative change that leads to more equitable gender relations (Kabeer 1994, 298-299; Reeves and Baden 2000).

This thesis has undertaken a gender analysis in order to evaluate how a SGP climate change mitigation project relates to gender equity in the context of the Intag zone

of Ecuador. There are a few important achievements to date that may be highlighted from this case study. Gender requirements in the National Strategy, the development of a comprehensive gender manual, the incorporation of gender criteria in project proposal templates and evaluations, obligatory gender workshops, and evidence that the project is providing women with time and health benefits represent an important start in promoting gender equity.

There is, however, much room for improvement in ensuring this climate change mitigation mechanism, in accordance with UN and Ecuador's national-level gender commitments, advances gender equity. There is a need for a gender analysis, particularly one that continually asks "which women." Such an analysis enables an understanding of any existing inequities within the local context and mechanisms that can be designed into the project in accordance with women's needs, interests and perspectives and differences among women, in order to address these inequities. Promoting women's strategic interests, including efforts to enable women's participation and voices at every stage of the project, ensure equitable access, use and control of project resources and facilitate conditions for their empowerment, would further enable this project to meet its gender obligations. These measures will help move this project towards an agenda that links climate change mitigation with human development and equity.

Appendix 1: List of Interviews

Interviews with Officials	Anonymous GEF Official, June 8 2010
	Anonymous ECOPAR Official, June 16 2010
	Anonymous ECOPAR Official, August 12 2010
	Anonymous ACAI Official 1, July 5 2010
	Anonymous ACAI Official 2, August 18 2010
	Anonymous ACAI Official 3, August 19 2010
	Anonymous Women's Coordinator Official, August 19 2010
Interviews with Participants with Biodigesters	Anonymous Interview Woman with Biodigester 1 – July 16 2010
	Anonymous Interview Man with Biodigester 1 – July 16 2010
	Anonymous Interview Woman with Biodigester 2– July 21 2010
	Anonymous Interview Man with Biodigester 2 – July 21 2010
	Anonymous Interview Woman with Biodigester 3– July 22 2010
	Anonymous Interview Man with Biodigester 3– July 22 2010
	Anonymous Interview Woman with Biodigester 4 – July 30 2010
	Anonymous Interview Man with Biodigester 4 – July 30 2010
	Anonymous Interview Woman with Biodigester 5– August 1 2010
	Anonymous Interview Woman with Biodigester 6, August 4 2010
	Anonymous Interview Man with Biodigester 6, August 4 2010
	Anonymous Interview Woman with Biodigester 7, July 20 2010
	Anonymous Interview Man with Biodigester 7, July 20 2010
	Anonymous Interview Woman with Biodigester 8, July 23 2010
	Anonymous Interview Man with Biodigester 8, July 23 2010
Interview with Participants to Receive Biodigesters in the Future	Anonymous Interview Woman to Receive Future Biodigester 1 July 20 2010
	Anonymous Interview Man to Receive Future Biodigester 1, July 20 2010
	Anonymous Interview Woman to Receive Future Biodigester 2, July 22 2010
	Anonymous Interview Man to Receive Future Biodigester 2, July 22 2010
	Anonymous Interview Woman to Receive Future Biodigester 3, August 3 2010
	Anonymous Interview Man to Receive Future Biodigester 3, August 3 2010
	Anonymous Interview Woman to Receive Future Biodigester 4, August 3 2010
	Anonymous Interview Man to Receive Future Biodigester 4, August 3 2010
	Anonymous Interview Woman to Receive Future Biodigester 5, August 4 2010
	Anonymous Interview Man to Receive Future Biodigester 5, August 5 2010
	Anonymous Interview Woman to Receive Future Biodigester 6, August 5 2010
	Anonymous Interview Man to Receive Future Biodigester 6, August 5 2010
Interviews with Afro-Ecuadorian Participants	Anonymous Interview Woman 1, August 18 2010
	Anonymous Interview Woman 2, August 18 2010
	Anonymous Interview Woman 3, August 18 2010
	Anonymous Interview Woman 4, August 18 2010

Appendix 2 – Gender Analysis Frameworks

1. *Social Relations Framework*

1. What are the goals of the intervention? Are they shared by both women and men? Equally by all women and men? If not, what are the grounds for supporting the intervention?
2. Whose needs or potentials are being addressed through the proposed intervention? Who identified and prioritized them and who was consulted in designing implementation strategies?
3. Who is being targeted by the proposed interventions? Is the targeted group defined in generic, abstract terms, in gender specific or gender inclusive terms? As household units or as individuals? How is the target group being conceptualized: as producers, consumers, experts, agents, victims, clients, participants, beneficiaries?
4. What assumptions are being made by the intervention about the gender division of resources and responsibilities? What evidence is there that these assumptions are well-informed?
5. What resources are being made available? Who is likely to have access to them, who will manage them, and who is likely to control them? If extra responsibilities are entailed, are extra resources being made available to match them?
6. What benefits or gains flow from the intervention? Who is likely to have access to them, who is likely to manage them, and who is likely to control them? Who is likely to lose from this intervention (which men and which women)?
7. Does this intervention address women's strategic gender interests? Does it have the potential to do so and how can such potential be realized? What kinds of resistances is it likely to meet and how can they be dealt with?

(Kabeer 1994, 302)

2. *The Characteristics of DAWN's Analysis*

- It's focus on the daily experiences of poor women living in the economic South
- It's acknowledgement of regional diversity
- It's linking of economic, social, cultural and political factors
- It's attempt to link experience at the micro level of women's daily lives to an understanding of the macroeconomic policy framework, and global trends
- It's understanding of the political nature of development
- It's use of a feminist framework – rejecting dichotomies of personal and political, private and public domains; validating women's work, experience and knowledge, and working in solidarity with women

(Antrobus 2004, 77).

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