

**Promoting conservation:  
Collaborative social accountability encouraging biodiversity, gender and equity**

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**Santo Domingo, 17 March 2025** – In a world where environmental and social challenges are intricately intertwined, innovative and collaborative solutions are essential to build a sustainable future. One promising approach is collaborative social accountability (CSA), as a set of methodologies that allows for comprehensive interaction between citizens, civil society and the state. This approach not only promotes biodiversity conservation but also includes other social factors such as gender equity and the participation of the younger generations during the process. This powerful combination of objectives reflects the interdependence between the health of our planet, social justice and the decisive role of women in biodiversity conservation.



*Young people from La Sabina at the Promoting Conservation in Rural Communities Workshop.*

*Credit: INTEC.*

Biodiversity, a fundamental pillar for healthy ecosystems, is under threat in a world experiencing an alarming loss of species and habitats. CSA is a strategy that not only assesses the perception of environmental impacts in a holistic manner but also integrates the traditional knowledge of the local communities and recognises the value of women's role in protecting nature.

Women have been guarding biodiversity for generations, playing essential roles in the sustainable management of natural resources, the conservation of native seeds, and the preservation of traditional agricultural practices that foster ecosystem resilience. This watchful process becomes an oversight system when linked with the goals of collaborative social methodologies and their mechanisms.

Adopting an intersectional lens, CSA strives to understand how different groups may be disproportionately affected by environmental and social impacts. For example, rural women may face unique challenges due to their gender identity, their role in a peasant community, and their close relationship with the land and the natural resources. By incorporating this perspective, the social accountability tools become more sensitive to the specific needs of diverse groups allowing for the development of more inclusive solutions that can be reflected in public policies and sustainable development.

Intersectionality also helps identify and address potential conflicts between different objectives. For example, a conservation project that apparently benefits biodiversity could have negative impacts on the local communities if their culture, needs, and livelihoods are not adequately considered. By analysing the intersections between gender, ethnicity, class and other factors, CSA helps mitigate the lack of participation and involvement and find fair and sustainable solutions for stakeholders.

We can say that within this intersectional approach, CSA allows women to bring their experience and knowledge to the centre of the decision-making process in natural resource management. By being actively involved in the evaluation of projects and policies, women can bring unique perspectives to conservation and social demands that often go unanswered by the State, creating a good governance experience. This is especially important at a time when creative and multifaceted solutions are required to address biodiversity challenges. Recognising the role of women in this context is essential for a full understanding of human-nature relations.



*Lissary Parede presenting the final CSA project for the Hispaniola pine (*Pinus occidentalis*) reforestation programme in Jaraboa, La Vega, as part of the Collaborative Social Accountability Diploma for Biodiversity Conservation at a national event.  
Credit: INTEC.*

Gender equity is not only a moral goal, but also a pragmatic necessity in the pursuit of sustainability. Empowered and equitable communities are more resilient and able to adapt to environmental changes. When women have access to resources and participate in the decision-making process, we create an enabling environment to effectively implement conservation measures. Collaborative social accountability

thus becomes a catalyst to empower women, by providing them with the tools and space necessary to influence the design and implementation of strategies that affect their environment and livelihoods.

The direction towards a consensus between women and men and the incorporation of the gender perspective in the collaborative social accountability approach enriches the understanding of the challenges and opportunities involved in protecting people and biodiversity. Therefore, solutions arising from this approach are more complete, inclusive and effective. By recognising and celebrating the role of women in the protection of nature, we are not only moving towards equity but also laying the foundations for a future where ecosystems flourish and communities prosper.

In a world that demands bold actions to address environmental and social challenges such as climate change and entrenched inequalities, collaborative social accountability stands out as an inclusive framework for action, working together to strike a balance between nature and society. By recognising the essential role of women in this quest, we are building a more resilient and cooperative fabric for generations to come.

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