



GRRIPP

Gender Responsive
Resilience and Intersectionality in
Policy and Practice

AGAPES HIDRICOS PROJECT: WATERWAYS AND LIVES ON THE JOURNEY

UNIÓN COMUNAL DE COMITÉS DE AGUA POTABLE RURAL DE RÁNQUIL; MUJERES MODATIMA; FUNDACIÓN ENLACE CULTURAL; WOMEN WATER LEADERS AND TERRITORIAL DEFENDERS OF THE HUALPÉN WETLAND & ESTERO DE PENCO

Petorca, Ránquil, Curacautín, and Biobío, CHILE

Context

Chile is experiencing water shortages with multidimensional causes linked to its geographical, climatic, ecological, productive, legal, political, and socio-cultural characteristics. These conditions make the country highly vulnerable to the consequences of climate change. That is reflected in a mega drought experienced in a large part of the country and the lack of water management and governance generated by a dispersed institutional framework and limitations of the current legal framework.

Chile's current legal and economic model has its origins in the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet (1973-1990), particularly in the creation of a new Political Constitution (1980) and a new Water Code (1981), which laid the foundations for the creation of a water management model in which water ownership was separated from land ownership. Consequently, this meant the generation of water property rights and transactional markets for this new economic good, turning water into a commodity tradable in the free market and at the disposal of private interests. Such characteristics have meant that there are now landless and landowners without

water, maintaining and deepening gaps in equitable access to water and the satisfaction of the population's basic needs.

Objectives

This project seeks to make visible the structural and multidimensional inequality of the water crisis in Chile and to recognise the actions that are being developed "from the bottom up" concerning water protection as a fundamental right.

In this sense, the project, together with a technical team and the affected communities, carried out a tour of the hydro-social cycle of the basin, understanding by hydro-social process all the possible relationships between the hydrological cycle and the social evolution, thus incorporating social, institutional, infrastructure, economic, legislative, cultural, gender, etc. relationships.



Photograph taken as part of the visits to the Agape site.

Credit: Fundación Enlace Cultural

Courses of action

The project's lines of action include making the role of women and community leaders in the care and defence of water more visible.

Approach

The project developed a series of interviews with women leaders of community organisations linked to water issues in three territories of the country: Petorca, Ránquil, and Curacautín. It also had the opportunity to interview women from Biobío who defend the nature of the Humedal de Hualpén and Estero de Penco for good community use and environmental education.

These interviews addressed the social dimensions of the water crisis and their intersectionalities with various topics: food, health, sexual and reproductive rights, subsistence economies, water scarcity, education, etc. This unique audio-visual material is available as micro-videos on the web platform: <https://observatoriocauce.cl>

Impacts

Among the most significant impacts is strengthening the rural drinking water committees through the delivery of equipment such as wells and a set of tools in the Ñuble region.

Likewise, the leadership of community water leaders and organisations were strengthened. This first approach of engagement with women leaders, and the recognition of their role in the care and defence of water, has provided an opportunity to strengthen their leadership in the territories.

This project gives the possibility to reflect on different themes and identify cross-cutting issues in the territories that, from different theoretical and practical positions, women-led organisations continue to supply their communities, defend their territories, and generate proposals for the consecration of a just and dignified life. From this arises: The Cauce Observatory for Hydro-Social Action.



Photograph taken during visits to the Ránquil site. Part of the project team

Credit: Fundación Enlace Cultural

The Ágape Hídricos Project: Waterways and lives on the journey

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