Women in Europe for a Common Future

Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF) was created in 1994 following the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, to give women a stronger voice in sustainable development and environmental policy. The aim of balancing environmental, health and economic perspectives. WECF strives for a Healthy Environment for all.

Today, WECF is a network of 100 women’s and environmental organisations in 40 countries. Our work is implemented in the EECCA region and the EU region. WECF has three offices: in the Netherlands, Germany and France.

Our project work brings safe ecological solutions to local problems in the areas of chemicals, sanitation, energy and food production. Our policy work at national, European, UK and international level brings women’s perspectives to policymakers.

WECF works on four key issues:

- Safe Chemicals for All
- Safe Energy for All
- Safe Foodproduction and local development for All
- Safe Water and Sanitation for All

Our vision is that by 2020:

- All women and girls have access to safe and affordable water and sanitation
- All have access to safe, affordable and renewable energy
- All have access to safe, regional and diverse food
- All have access to safe and affordable water and sanitation

To reach these goals WECF promotes:

- Poverty reduction
- Public Participation and Environmental Rights
- Gender equality

WECF is a NGO member of United Nations Economic & Social Council (UNESCO)

WECF is a implementing partner of the Dutch National Environment Programme (MNP)

WECF is a member of the European-D区域内与健康委员会（DCEH）

Why does WECF work at the local level?

"Together with our partners we work on improving the environmental and health conditions of people where it is most needed."

We are providing individual solutions to local problems, often in very small villages. These solutions can only be sustainable if they are adapted to local culture; therefore, it is logical for me to involve local people right from the start. By working for gender equality and equity, we encourage both women and men participation.

Why does WECF work at the international level?

"Our main strength is that we don’t just talk about issues, we solve them!"

We work on practical projects at the local level, and take our results and experiences to the international policy level. We encourage our partners to raise their concerns at international policy level. We encourage our partners to take our results and experiences to the international policy level. We encourage our partners to raise their concerns at international policy level even though they may not speak English or have no public speaking experience. Policy makers need the chance to hear from real people affected by real problems, often in very small villages.

"Our children are the most vulnerable members of society. All of us share a responsibility to protect them from harmful pollution, which causes physical and mental damage. Children have the right to grow up in a healthy environment, – without being exposed to hazardous chemicals in their food, toys and environment – so their brains and bodies can be developed to their fullest potential."

Why does WECF support women?

"For us, “Europe” is the whole European region from Ireland to Tajikistan. In Western Europe we focus on advocacy and policy work. In the EECCA region we implement projects at the local level. Our neighbours – just a few hundred kilometres away – suffer from poor sanitation, energy poverty and environmental pollution. As one of the few Western NGOs working there, we support our partners and encourage the exchange of capacities and knowledge. In today’s globalised world, we cannot afford to ignore anyone."

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Safe Agriculture

Carla Baer Manolopoulou
Ela Priwieziencew

Levels of hazardous chemicals and world food security are threatened.

In the 1900s, in Germany new born babies’ bodies contained 1,500 apple sorts alone, 1,500 apple sorts are threatened. Agro-biodiversity is part of our culture, nature and tradition and must be protected at the regional level. If we lose it, what legacy will we be able to leave my own children? With our WECF project “Green Bridges” between Ukraine, Germany and Poland we exchange knowledge to save agro-biodiversity.

My organisation works for sustainable rural development in Armenia. Many people in our rural areas suffer from energy poverty. In daily life this often means they can only afford to light or heat one room. To survive, people burn whatever they can: plastic, kerosene etc. without considering health risks. In our project village Hayastan, schoolchildren suffer from coughs and other respiratory diseases like asthma because of the smoky stoves in the classrooms. For me, this is unacceptable! We started to carry out a solar energy project to improve the situation. I believe everyone, including the poor, has the right to switch to renewables.

To achieve a world with safe chemicals we have to work locally to have a global effect.

Facts

Two farm animal breeds become extinct worldwide every week. In the 1990s, in Germany alone, 1,500 apple sorts existed; today only three varieties cover the European apple market.

Safe Energy

Elena Manvelyan
Svetlana Slesarenok

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Safe Water and Sanitation

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