FINAL REPORT

WOMEN AND RIVERS STORYTELLING PLATFORM CO-DESIGN

Welcome!

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The Women and Rivers Storytelling Platform emerged as an idea during the Women and Rivers Congress - Asia in 2020, that women need a place to connect with each other to share knowledge, stories, and information about rivers.

The co-design process has been undertaken to provide this idea with evidence and perspective to support the development of a technology solution.

As a form of knowledge co-production with elements of participatory action research, the production of this platform has the potential to empower women and help to build their technical and leadership capacity.

The co-design work is based on assumptions on the part of the principal partnership: Open Development Initiative, Oxfam, International Rivers, and the University of New South Wales:

- Sharing knowledge and approaches in a safe and deliberate space will enhance learning and support the modeling of workable solutions; and
- Inclusion, being heard and seen, and connecting to a network of other women will elevate standing (legitimacy) and will confront inequal power dynamics and support women to enter, or have their stories enter, spaces and contexts that have been previously inaccessible.

The development process of such a platform will support communication of lived experiences, collaboration and networking across borders.

Stakeholders will be part of the development process, which allows for security and inclusivity concerns to be taken into account from inception, with regular and continued opportunities for consultation, feedback, and support. Buy-in and participation in the co-design process from inception to implementation increases the likelihood of regular use. In addition, regular training on both the platform as well as digital literacy will be provided, in order to increase usability of the platform while also addressing concerns about security.

INTRODUCTION

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

MAJOR REQUIREMENT : Inclusivity

LEGITIMACY
The platform should serve to legitimize women's knowledge

ACCESS (TECH)
Aligned with bringing access: connectivity through networks and equipment

TRANSPARENCY & INTEGRITY
Being clear about who the stories will be for (public or network) and how they will be used – 'safe space', benefits explained clearly

ACCESS (LANGUAGE)
From the earliest stages, be designed to serve multiple languages

INNOVATIVE
Driving innovation from the ground up

Figure 1: Key considerations and values underpinning the Women and Rivers Storytelling Platform

"In terms of inclusive – there is more capacity to engage with others using technology rather than orienting to 'in the room' or face to face. But generating deeper, collaborative work will require significant investment in time and energy – from participants, and from 'coordinators or facilitators.''

**W A R S P   C O - D E S I G N
I N F O R M A N T**

An initial process of engagement solidified the key values and considerations that are required for any technology solution, detailed in figure 1

The initial co-design interviews, email exchanges, and surveys engaged 54 people from across the globe, with approximately 80% of informants being focused on the Mekong and Salween basins. All sectors were represented: International NGOs (28%), Local NGOs (22%), Civil Society (20%) representing more than half of the informants.

A full discussion of the key considerations and project methodology is available in the Initial Findings Report, available at https://knowledgecocreation.org/women-and-rivers-storytelling-platform/

WARSP CO-DESIGN FINAL REPORT

AUDIENCE SEGMENTS & PLATFORM COMPONENTS

The result of the initial findings report was to identify three audience segments and three platform components.

The audience segments represented below are not intended to be exclusive, rather to serve as a starting point for developing, testing, and implementing the platform.

AS1: Cambodian Community Women

Cambodia has been chosen as a pilot to be able to engage women who have limited literacy and digital literacy, where many active partnerships and projects are currently underway to support women's inclusion and empowerment.

AS2: Thai River Leaders

Thailand has been chosen to engage women who have a rich history of speaking out and taking leadership, with a history of Thai Baan research and more digital access and connectivity.

AS3: Regional Professionals and Academics

The regional audience will be targeted through a future Women and Rivers Congress and through Women and Rivers Fellowship Program which is currently in development (International Rivers).

Ooh! I can't wait to meet everyone on the platform!
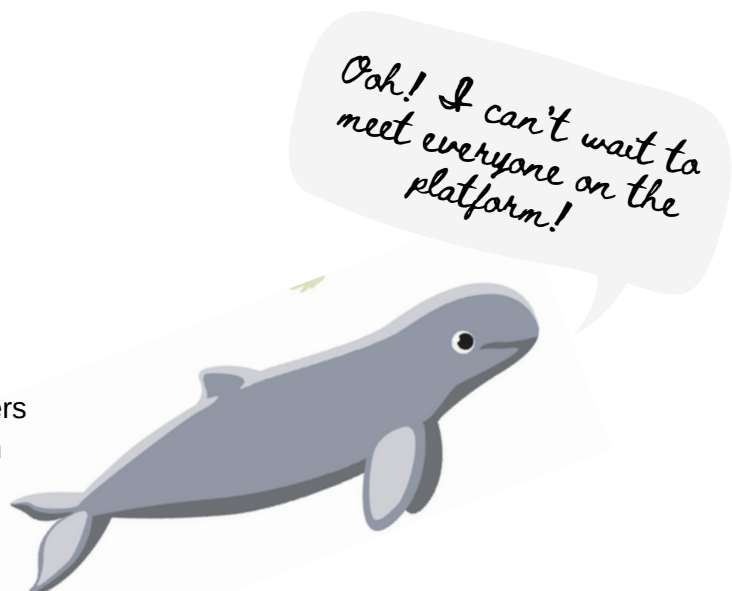
AUDIENCE SEGMENTS & PLATFORM COMPONENTS

Three platform components emerged during initial engagement with a fourth component emerging during focus group discussions.

Share

Share would allow for registered users to be able to upload and consume audio, video, and written content in a variety of formats

Learn

Learn will allow for registered users to be able to access knowledge in local Mekong languages to understand concepts related to water governance and also to shape the landscape around digital literacy and privacy.

Connect

Connect provides a way for women to connect with one another in a safe and secure manner.

Influence

Influence provides information of how to reach and engage with the policy community. Findings can be disseminated through this part of the platform.
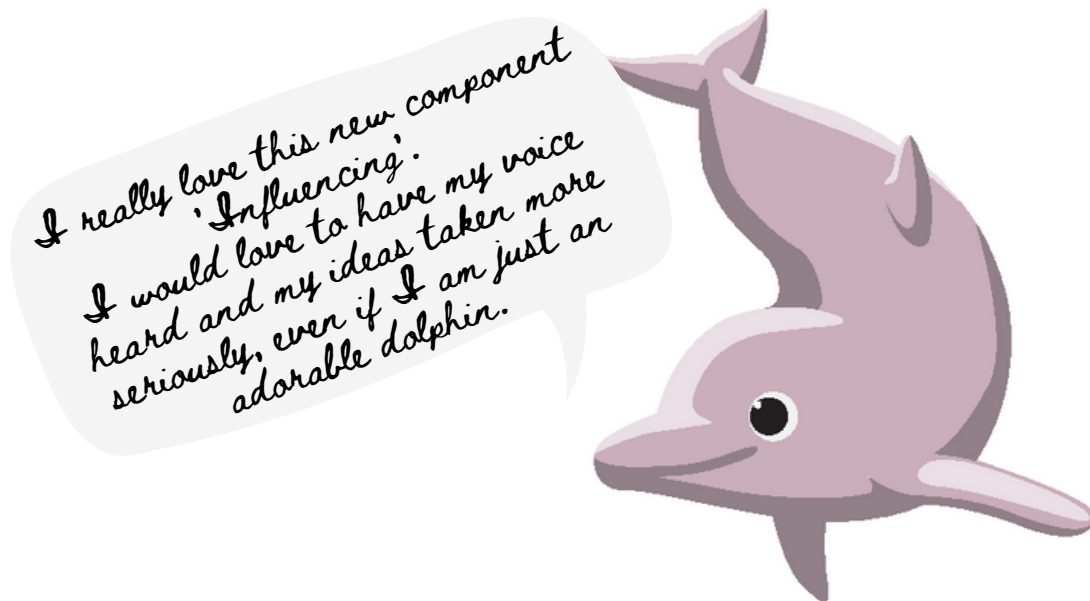
FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION FINDINGS

User profiles have been developed, and now need to be tested with a working prototype.

Five focus group sessions were conducted with participants from SE Asia, Europe, South America, Australia, and the United States to develop eleven user profiles representing each of the audience segments.

Audience Segment	Cambodia	Thailand	Regional/Global
Profiles Developed	Five profiles developed: farmers, community leaders	Four profiles developed: from elder to youth leader, also farmers	Two profiles developed: one of environmental professionals/researchers; the other of 'agenda setters'.
Key findings	Technology, language, access needs are high - we need to think creatively about overcoming multiple barriers.	Empowering youth leaders to facilitate for women who are not tech savvy could be also a way to address intergenerational tensions.	The platform needs to be clear about what differentiates it and needs ongoing, valuable engagement.
Additional Considerations	Efforts need to link to other community priorities and consider gendered impacts assoiated with technology.	'Safe space' needs to be determined through gender and social impact study.	The potential to link the global community to the local community has tremendous potential, and also needs to be done in a way that does not compromise safety or ethics.

The eleven fictional profiles that have been developed are available upon request, and can be viewed at https://knowledgecocreation.org/women-and-rivers-storytelling-platform/ when available.

The purpose of the focus groups was to 'give life' to the three audience sectors and to identify nuances associated with each of these sectors being able to engage with a technological solution to support inclusive water governance. What emerged was that a 'fourth' component is needed: **Influencing**; and that community-level engagement is critical - the women identified also need to be brought into this co-design process as a next step.

I really love this new component 'Influencing'. I would love to have my voice heard and my ideas taken more seriously, even if I am just an adorable dolphin.

Moving from ideas to reality

In moving forward from concept to prototype, some additional findings emerged through the focus group process :

- The ideas need to be tested in the local context, and additional data about connectivity (what phones people are using, internet access) needs to be considered.
- Youth will likely play a major role in supporting community members to be involved, and they need to be consulted and engaged as a part of any next steps.

60% The percentage of people who have a phone in Cambodia (not a smartphone, particularly - but a phone)

NEXT STEPS

You may find this surprising, but we river dolphins have a very sophistocated communications and governance approaches. Maybe we can help with this. Unfortunately we do not videoconference.
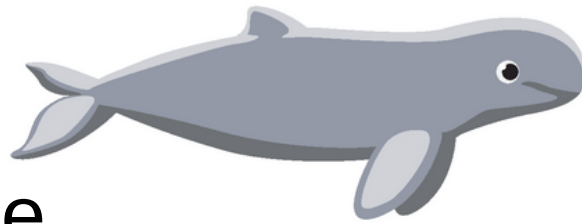
Four next steps are identified and are outlined below.

Each of these next steps will require their own sets of project partners and implementation plans. What is outlined below represents a broad strategy for moving from the co-design stage, through proof of concept, to implementation (both tech and engagement). A workplan will be developed to support each of these steps in coordination with project partners.

01 Prototype development

Working with a graphic designer, a prototype will need to be developed based on the four components and translated into (at a minimum) Thai and Khmer. Community partners will need to test these prototypes with the three audience segments and gather feedback to inform product development.

02 Governance structure

A governance structure will need to be developed to develop the necessary governance systems to guarantee ethical principles are upheld: a Code of Conduct; Editorial and communication policies and strategies. The governance team will also develop a comprehensive map of existing prograns to identify how the platform will enhance work already underway.

03 Initial product development

Based on the prototype and feedback, and incorporating the requirements determined by the governance structure, the initial product will go into development.

04 Engagement

An engagement effort will need to be undertaken to get the platform populated with knowledge, stories, and information. Different structures have been proposed, including providing mini-grants to community partners

This report could not have been developed without the support of the many informants that contributed their time and ideas to the co-design process. The members of the project team acknowledge and thank those who have volunteered their time and energy to the co-design of the Women and Rivers Storytelling Platform

We thank you for your continued support and dedication to this idea.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

So if I'd like to get more involved, these are the people I'll need to get in touch with. I hope that they will appreciate my sense of humour. Some find it fishy.

Contact

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