


REPORT SUMMARY



Towards Gender Equality In The Ranger Workforce:

Challenges & Opportunities





Towards Gender Equality In The Ranger Workforce: Opportunities & Challenges,
a Universal Ranger Support Alliance
(URSA) report by Joni Seager,
will be available on 8 July 2021.

Report summary

Towards Gender Equality In The Ranger Workforce: Opportunities & Challenges, is the first comprehensive and global analysis of the challenges and opportunities for bringing gender equality into ranger workforces.

Women are as eager as men to join ranger workforces: being a ranger is not just a job – it's an opportunity to contribute to conservation and protection of the planet. But the barriers for women to become a ranger are high: the profession is heavily male-dominated, and women globally represent only an estimated 3 - 11% of the ranger workforce.

Towards Gender Equality In The Ranger Workforce: Opportunities and Challenges, examines key factors contributing to the gender skew in the ranger workforce while also providing concrete policy and program recommendations for governments, NGOs, ranger associations, and other public-private institutions to work towards agendas of greater equality. It ultimately highlights how bringing gender balance into ranger workforces is possible and critical for conservation's future: it will expand capacities and perspectives on conservation, sustainability, and resource management.

- » The report draws from the **Ranger Perception Survey**, the largest and most comprehensive database on rangers – accounting for more than 7,000 rangers surveyed across 28 countries – and **personal interviews** with more than 40 rangers, managers, and conservation experts.
- » It was commissioned by the **Universal Ranger Support Alliance (URSA)**, a global coalition of conservation organisations building a network of well-supported, professional, and capable rangers, who can act effectively as custodians of the natural world. Join us at ursa4rangers.org.
- » It was written by **Joni Seager**, a feminist geographer and environmentalist. She has worked in environment and development fields for many years, including gender assessments of community conservation and previous work on gender inequalities in ranger workforces.

Key takeaways

1. More than just being male dominated, ranger work has a 'macho' representation.

- » The narrow and male-dominated public image of what a ranger does, and what a ranger 'looks like' deters women.

2. Women face distinctive gender-specific barriers that prevent them from entering and thriving in the ranger workforce. For example:

- » Women rangers experience pervasive and extraordinarily high levels of violence and harassment – from fellow rangers, from supervisors, and from community members.
- » Harassment is exacerbated by the absence of women managers, and the fact that almost no ranger employers have strong equality and anti-harassment policies. Male managers also tend not to understand the obstacles women face.

3. Other obstacles to attracting and retaining a professional ranger workforce – such as low pay, poor working conditions, and limited training opportunities – affect men as well as women, but with gender-differentiated effects.

- » In much of the world, both men and women rangers are not on permanent contracts but it is worse for women.

4. Bringing gender balance into ranger workforces is critical for conservation's future: it will expand capacities and perspectives on conservation, sustainability, and resource management.

- » Evidence presented in this report suggests that bringing gender equality into the workforce has the potential to improve conservation, relationships with communities, park management, and wildlife management.

5. Solutions must be informed by gender analysis – and there are some global ‘best practices’ that point the way towards gender equality.

- » This report presents concrete policies and program recommendations (best practices and specific practices) for the public-private sectors – especially governments, NGOs, and ranger associations – to adopt and implement.
- » Ranger organizations can take the lead in modelling commitments to social change in women’s empowerment. To the extent that conservation organizations demonstrate commitments to women’s empowerment and to gender inclusivity within their own organizations and, importantly, through projects and programs, they can be powerful influencers in changing socially dominant norms – norms that are damaging for men as well as for women.

6. There is almost no analysis of distinct barriers or opportunities experienced by racial, ethnic or sexual identity minorities. These identity or intersectional effects are likely to be very significant.

- » Gender and intersectional diversity in representation within organizations is an effectiveness amplifier – in project planning, programme development and execution, priority-setting, decision-making groups. The likelihood of better decision-making is amplified when representatives of the whole – not just half – of the population have the opportunity to be involved.

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Cover photos (Counterclockwise from top left): 1) Dawn inspection during early morning drills © James Slade / Re:wild; 2) CONANP ranger Iliana Gonzalez leads an integration dynamic workshop with the community © Hector Garduño, 3) A ranger from Huai Kha Kaeng Wildlife Refuge, Thailand, orients her team during camera trap placement © Panthera / DNP / WCS, 4) Park ranger Deneb Saldierna performing underwater monitoring in support of the Sea Shepherd in Socorro Island Protected Area, Mexico © Melissa Romao / CONANP, 4) A ranger guides tourists through Nyungwe Forest National Park in Rwanda © guenterguni / istock.

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