

IAF SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
In Orbit - Postgraduate Space Education (4)

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RALLYS OF GEOSPATIAL TECHNOLOGIES: EMPOWERING RURAL WOMEN IN WATER AND
AGRICULTURE

Abstract

Gender equality is critical to economic and human development, therefore women participating in water management and in agricultural systems are essential for the development of rural communities, and often the role of women in these areas are overshadowed and poorly valued. New ways of women leadership can be promoted using space technologies, such as global navigation satellite systems (GNSS) and Earth Observation Satellite data, combined with Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) and Geographic Information Systems (GIS), this to contribute rural communities. These rallies consisted in bringing together groups of women working in a specific sector, in these cases water or agriculture, for five days. The rally had both, theoretical and practical approaches, talks were given by professors and advanced female students from the School of Geography of the University of Costa Rica, in various areas of interest, such as: Disaster Risk Management, Climate Change, Water Resources, Environmental Management, Innovation, UAV and Geospatial Technology. Additionally, there were practice sessions on the use of open source geospatial applications. These aiming that the participants acquire the knowledge needed to prototype a solution for a chosen problem of their daily basis, and then to present it to a panel of experts. At a subsequent stage there were a follow up of the different projects developed, in matters of keep supporting and measuring the scopes of them. Rallies or hackathons are often confined to academic spaces and university students. These rallies proved that bringing these activities to rural areas, where solutions are most needed and specifically involving women, a population that in these areas has little to no access to technology education, is beneficial for the overall improvement of rural communities; and it made clear the commitment that these women and communities have to take full advantage of the knowledge acquired to implement the developed prototypes.