

**GENDER, WATER AND SANITATION**  
**15 CASE STUDIES ON BEST PRACTICES**



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## Foreword

Gender mainstreaming was established as the key strategy to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women at the Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW) in 1995. The Beijing Platform of Action which was adopted thereafter articulated the strategy which has since become widely accepted. The United Nations ECOSOC Agreed Conclusions 1997/2 on Gender further underscored gender mainstreaming as an essential component of programme and policy related work at the country, regional and international levels.

Since 1995 gender mainstreaming as a strategy has been implemented in all sectors with varying degrees of success. Various tools have also been developed to support the strategy. Nonetheless continuing challenges remain especially linked to monitoring and evaluating the impact of gender mainstreaming on the condition of women and men. Some of these challenges are related to the absence of appropriate and context-specific indicators that can capture the impact of interventions to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women. Additional challenges include the absence of methodologies that assist replicability of successful interventions in order to speed up the pace of gender mainstreaming.

This handbook represents a set of 15 case studies on gender mainstreaming in the water and sanitation sector. It is meant to provide information, insight and evidence of how gender mainstreaming works in practice in many diverse situations. The best practices depicted here are a contribution towards closing the gaps that are evident in the implementation of interventions to promote gender equality.

I thank the Government of Norway for providing the necessary funds to undertake this project. Besides the production of these case studies, 15 experts were trained and are now in a position to continue documenting best practices in gender mainstreaming in various sectors in their own countries and elsewhere. In addition, a manual on a new case study methodology for documenting best practices in gender mainstreaming will be produced to provide a tool to a wider group of researchers.

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## **Acknowledgements**

The production of these case studies was undertaken by a team whose members included Team Leader Wariara Mbugua (OSAGI/DESA), Dana Peebles (Director of Kartini International) and Nadine Jubb (also of Kartini International).

The process commenced with recommendations for researchers from the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE). The IANWGE Task Force on Gender and Water chaired by Marcia Brewster (Division for Sustainable Development/DESA) was instrumental in identifying nationals who eventually participated in the research and in preparing the final document for publication.

The case study methodology workshop that took place in Addis Ababa was ably hosted by the Africa Centre for Gender and Development of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). Deputy Director Wambui Karanja facilitated all the arrangements, while Consultant Veronica Agbor ensured that all the logistics went smoothly.

However, none of these case studies would have been possible without the commitment and the enthusiasm of the researchers themselves.

The Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women thanks everyone who participated in making this project a success. We wish to thank, in particular, our technical collaborators in this undertaking. The office was assisted by Dana Peebles and Nadine Jubb of Kartini International, a Toronto-based consulting firm that specializes in gender equality services. Our thanks also go to the UNECA Africa Centre for Gender and Development for hosting the methodology training workshop in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Finally, we are indebted to Marcia Brewster, Task Manager of the Inter-agency Gender and Water Task Force, and her team – Margaret Garrison, Magano Ickua and Zhang Jin -- for their detailed scrutiny and finalization of the manuscript.

## Introduction

Wariara Mbugua, Principal Social Affairs Officer  
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The 15 case studies presented in this handbook depict best practices in securing sustainable safe drinking water and sanitation for communities by engaging both men and women as critical stakeholders. The case studies are drawn from 14 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. They illustrate what happens when communities become involved and actively engaged in addressing issues related to clean water and sanitation from a gender perspective. This perspective ensures that the concerns of women who have the primary responsibility for water are not only addressed but become part of the solution.

The case studies demonstrate that at the community level, solutions to clean water and appropriate sanitation problems are context-specific. One context that must be addressed is related to the prevailing gender systems and the attendant gender division of labour that determines women's primary responsibility for water in the household. Gender systems also determine the distribution of power between men and women. The case studies show that in pursuit of common goals and through dialogue, innovation, participation and collaboration, answers can be found that respond to the different interests of men and women in ensuring access to clean water and sanitation, and in the process break down many barriers based on prevailing traditional gender paradigms. It is successes such as these that become the building blocks to the realization of the Millennium Development Goals.

During its 58<sup>th</sup> Session, the United Nations General Assembly declared the period 2005-2015 the International Decade for Action "Water for Life," starting on World Water Day, 22 March 2005. It adopted resolution 58/127 which states *inter alia* that "the goals of the Decade should be a greater focus on water related issues at all levels and on the implementation of water-related programmes and projects, while striving to ensure the participation and involvement of women in water-related development efforts, and the furtherance of cooperation at all levels, in order to help to achieve internationally agreed water-related goals..."

The decade is thus meant to accelerate the realization of the Millennium Development Goals, and in particular goals seven, which aims to "ensure environmental sustainability," and ten, which seeks to "halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation."

According to the "Mid-Term Assessment of Progress" (2004)<sup>1</sup>, the Joint Monitoring Programme of WHO and UNICEF stresses that extra efforts must be made if this target is to be reached. The report notes that:

- Without a sharp acceleration in the rate of progress, the world will miss the sanitation target by half a billion people.
- An estimated 2.6 billion people – half of the developing world – lack access to improved sanitation.

<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization and United Nations Children's Fund (WHO/UNICEF) Joint Monitoring Programme, Meeting the MDG Drinking Water and Sanitation Target: A Mid-term Assessment of Progress. New York and Geneva, 2004.

- Despite major progress in South Asia, little more than a third of its population use improved sanitation; access to adequate sanitation in sub-Saharan Africa is only 36 per cent.
- Global population growth is cancelling many of the gains already made. Although more than a billion people gained improved sanitation between 1990 and 2002, the population without coverage declined by only 100 million.
- From now until 2015, greater effort must be made to reach the poor and those in rural areas, whose deprivation is hidden behind national averages.
- In developing this project, the UN Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (OSAGI/DESA) had several objectives.

The first objective was to add to current knowledge the importance of applying a gender perspective in designing sustainable development interventions. These case studies show that a gender perspective leads to far more positive gains than originally anticipated. In fact, the community as a whole often reaps significant dividends. Benefits accrue to both men and women and this seems to tip the scale towards a shift in power relationships between men and women, whereby men, even in traditional communities begin to see the value and accept the need for change in women's roles. This is particularly borne out with regard to women taking on leadership roles at the community level.

A second objective of the project was to use a case study methodology for documenting best practices in gender mainstreaming in many diverse settings. To do this OSAGI developed a new methodology. This required critiquing many existing methodologies and extracting those elements of each that were most suitable. The result was a series of approaches that a researcher could use depending on the theme of his or her case study. The case studies therefore show the different choices of methodologies. A manual on the methodology will be produced separately so that other researchers can also benefit.

The third and final objective was to create a new pool of young researchers, men and women, for issues related to gender and empowerment of women. In November 2004, OSAGI/DESA invited 15 young professionals to participate in a research project on gender mainstreaming in the water and sanitation sector. The participants came from 14 different countries from various regions of the world. They all have highly diverse backgrounds and include academics, community activists, journalists and civil servants. Selection criteria included a track record of leadership in their field or community and experience in either water, sanitation or gender equality. The idea was to bring together younger professionals who are not necessarily linked to global movements so as to connect them with major development initiatives such as the Millennium Development Goals and in that respect, foster the development of a new network of gender, water and sanitation experts. Equipped with a sound methodology for documenting best practices, the researchers have lent their own voices to the case studies.

The three case study methodologies adapted for this research project include:

- The Harvard Business Case Study Methodology
- Appreciative Inquiry
- Feminist Analysis

The first two methods need to have a system of gender analysis integrated into them whereas the latter focuses more exclusively on women and the underlying patriarchal power structures that affect their lives. The gender analysis tools selected to help the researchers analyze the data they collected from a gender perspective included:

- Practical Needs and Strategic Interests Comparison
- Access and Control Framework
- Empowerment Framework

The research team had three months to conduct their research in their home countries. In the process they have documented stories and processes that otherwise would not have come to light. A common thread in their research results is that the integration of gender mainstreaming elements in each project, institution and programme has served to enhance the success of the water and sanitation programme. All the case studies offer powerful lessons to be learned about gender mainstreaming in practice. The case studies validate gender mainstreaming as a useful and important strategy, and reveal the processes that make it successful in different situations.

#### **Case Studies** (In order of presentation)

1. Sabrina Mello Souza – Brazil
2. Ghada M. Hamman – Egypt
3. Johdah Bokhari – Pakistan
4. Jabu Masondo – South Africa
5. Nila Ardhianie – Indonesia
6. Sena Alouka – Togo
7. Leontine van den Hooven – Guatemala
8. Luckson Katsi – Zimbabwe
9. S.H.M Fakhruddin – Bangladesh
10. Adekana A. Majekodunmi – Nigeria
11. Nana Ama Poku Sam – Ghana
12. Magda Lanuza – Nicaragua
13. Berna Ignatius Victor – India
14. Florence Ebila – Uganda
15. Sanganagouda (Sandeep) Naik – India

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## **Bangladesh: Gender Mainstreaming Processes in Community-based Flood Risk Management**

### **Challenges**

In Bangladesh, household and community responses to extreme recurring events such as floods are an indicator of the extent of their vulnerability, their level of capacity to cope with the event and the intensity of the hazard. The better informed people are ahead of time, the better they can prepare for the hazard and reduce the risk of damage in their community.

Flood preparedness is to a large extent dependent on two elements: first, the ability of relevant national, local and community institutions to orchestrate communication; and second, determining and prioritizing the content of communications on the basis of user needs and priorities. The lead time of the traditional hydrologic forecasts is very short, and local people do not understand danger-level terminology. There is no mechanism to relate forecast information to user needs at specific locations.

Men and women have different capacities and vulnerabilities in regards to information dissemination due to their different roles and conditions. Therefore, they are affected by disaster differently. In many contexts, men are better connected to early warning mechanisms due to their movement in public spaces and access to various channels of communication, such as radio and TV, informal community networks and interaction with officials. Women have limited access to information and knowledge related to disaster risks in their communities as they are more active in the home and thus have less mobility in the community and understand hazards less. Women's voices are barely heard regarding risk reduction in policy and decision-making.

### **Programme/Projects**

In early 2004, the Centre for Environmental and

Geographic Information Services (CEGIS), together with other national agencies, took the initiative to implement a project on flood vulnerability, risk reduction and better preparedness through a community-based information system in a flood-prone zone. It included an analysis of the impact of gender mainstreaming on the flood risk programme in relation to reduced vulnerability and risk. The objective was to identify best practices regarding flood preparedness, information dissemination, especially to women at home, and vulnerability and risk reduction.

The process began by organizing a sensitization meeting at a local government institute with the participation of NGOs and the Disaster Mitigation Group (DMI) to identify men's and women's needs. Research was carried out using interviews, questionnaires, focus groups and open-ended discussions to identify their specific needs. The process was pre-tested in the field and then implemented. There was a 98 per cent response rate for the household survey done by CEGIS.

As a result of this research, which *was* done in preparation for that year's monsoon season, new forms of communicating flood information were tested. The danger level for river flow was set for every village. Flood warnings in the local language were prepared using different media, including posters, photographs and audio tapes. These were selected as ways of strengthening local institutions and providing access to information, in particular to illiterate people, regarding such activities as evacuating cattle, crop and emergency food preparedness and organizing boats for evacuation.

### **Outcomes**

In the 2004 flood, men and women in the community studied benefited greatly from new mechanisms introduced, such as the flag network, microphones in mosques and drum beating. Some

women in the community said that they are now trying to understand the flag network and the importance of flood.

Responses to the programme:

**Padma Rani**, said that timely messages which address the concerns of women in the village could enable them to prepare for floods. *“I can store dry food, my poultry, shift my paddy and raise my plinth level if I understand the language of the forecast.”*

**Omar Sultan** was concerned with saving his stock of paddy (about 150 mounds) at a higher location and was about to invest in moving it as the water was rising every day. But when he saw the white flag of the warning system (meaning water level decreasing), he did not shift it. He was able save his investment on shifting. *“We understand the flag network warning system and it is helpful”.*

### Key Factors for Success

- Gender analysis framework: *The framework was developed to study various community-wide patterns related to disasters that could be analysed in the context of gender. These included traditional gender roles, access to and control of means of communication and other resources and impacts of the disaster that differed by gender, before, during and after the event.*
- Additional frameworks: *After the gender analysis framework provided insight into gender and disasters, the Harvard analytical and the access and control frameworks were used to make women’s roles visible in risk management.*

### Main Obstacles

- *Forecasts not adapted locally:* All of the men and women involved in the survey said that they were unable to relate to the forecasts as they were not adapted to their local situation. Either the language and the metric system were alien to their culture or the information provided about the river water was not helpful on the flood plain.

- *Gender disparity in information reception:* In general, women receive very little information in comparison to men before and during floods as they are busy taking care of children, collecting drinking water, and preserving seeds, fuel, food and cash. Men have greater access to warning information because of their interpersonal communication with others and their access to radios and TV.

### Looking Ahead - Sustainability and Transferability

In order to continue disaster risk reduction in other locations, two roles need to be successfully fulfilled:

- *Community:* The community is imperative to disaster risk reduction. Community members are the key actors as well as the primary beneficiaries of disaster risk reduction.
- *Government:* National and local government agencies must engage and encourage women to participate along with men in implementing flood preparedness measures. They should take into account the different roles and needs of men and women, while planning all stages of disaster preparedness, relief, and rehabilitation. To aid this effort, gender mainstreaming in flood risk reduction needs to be institutionalized.

### Further Information

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## **Brazil: Conscious Fostering of Women's Leadership**

### Challenges

The community of São João D'Aliança is located in the central plateau region of Brazil, where much of the original vegetation has been cleared to plant cash crops. It is home to about 6,700 people, most of whom work in agriculture. The municipality does not have a sewage collection or treatment system, and 23 per cent of the population in the area use alternative sources of water. Concerns in this area include:

- The disposal of animal scraps in the das Brancas River and domestic waste on the river banks;
- The impact of farm pesticides on people and the environment;
- The increase in diarrhoea during the rainy season, when rain brought pesticides into the river; and
- Gender inequalities stemming from a long heritage of male chauvinism.

### Programme/Projects

In 2000, in response to farmers' concerns about the deterioration of water in the area, the local Union of Rural Workers in collaboration with University of Brasília (UnB) designed a water project with the community. The project identified that there was a need to join efforts to stop pollution of the das Brancas River and to rehabilitate the river banks' original vegetation in a women-led initiative, called the 'Water Women' project. The approach was designed to have each group of women adapt environmentally-friendly practices to their every day activities. Some activities that formed part of this project included:

*Raising awareness, education and training on the environment:*

- A collective effort to plant native seedlings in the most depleted riverbanks to rehabilitate the soil, prevent erosion, restore the original

vegetation and improve water quality and levels;

- A waste clean-up campaign organized to raise awareness on the importance of proper garbage disposal and its effects on local quality of life and the environment; and
- A teacher training course in environmental education developed in 11 local schools to raise interest about water protection and conservation and enable the teachers to integrate the issue in their school lessons. Student workshops and school-based contests promoted the awareness of preservation and rehabilitation of the local environment and culture.

*Gender mainstreaming and involvement of the entire community:*

- A woman's group within the union formed with the purpose of mobilizing public involvement and assessing the community's needs. They visited community members to introduce the project, identify their needs and obtain their support. They also held a meeting to discuss future plans;
- Women were in leadership roles, including the positions of local union president and the technical assistant from the UnB; and
- Men protected the new planted seedlings and created artwork and music to support the clean-up campaigns.

### Outcomes

*Environmental impact:*

- There is a visible absence of waste in the river and domestic garbage by the river banks, a considerable growth of new vegetation of native species on the river banks and decreased soil erosion.
- There is an increased community mobilization of people of all ages and backgrounds; and
- Community awareness of the immediate

environment has significantly increased.  
*Women's empowerment and participation in project leadership:*

- The women involved led a successful process of environmental education and river and vegetation rehabilitation. In the process, women's political participation was strengthened and public perceptions regarding their leadership capability were changed.
- *National recognition of positive effects:*  
The organization has gained recognition at the national level through the award of third place for the 2002 Environment Prize von Martius sponsored by the São Paulo Chamber of Commerce and Industry Brazil-Germany.

*The creation of an NGO:*

- In the wake of this project, the participants decided to create an NGO to continue their work. The 'Water Women' (Mulheres das Águas) NGO was launched in April 2002 to support social and environmental development of the region, with a focus on improving women's situations, generating new jobs and income, providing education to youth and adults and preserving the existing culture and traditions; and
- The Water Women organization has gained formal recognition of its leadership skills through a recent appointment to integrate the mobilization committee for the local implementation of the national Zero Hunger programme.

*Change of attitudes:*

- The Water Women NGO has acquired respect and sympathy from the community's men; and
- There is now an increased acceptance of, and respect for, women's new roles as community leaders, resulting in more equitable sharing of organizational tasks for community meetings.

### **Key Factors for Success**

*Capacity building and mobilization:*

- Technical support from an interdisciplinary group throughout the entire process;
- Provision of courses on environmental education and participatory fieldwork. Provision of courses on income generation assisted women to promote sustainable livelihoods; and
- Use of diverse activities to enable all community members of different ages and

abilities to participate, including an active school level educational programme and the documentation and rehabilitation of regional traditions.

*Gender mainstreaming:*

- Inclusion of a gender mainstreaming approach in the project design, especially the decision to encourage and support women's leadership in all projects.

### **Main Obstacles**

Gaining men's support was a slow process and participants in the group workshop reported that a couple of women who started in the project left because the lack of support from their husbands. The issue of male support was particularly challenging for the married women involved.

### **Looking Ahead – Sustainability and Transferability**

*Future challenges:*

- Developing new projects to subsidize their work, setting specific goals and indicators to evaluate the work and finding resources to closely monitor the actions already implemented;
- Improvement of the Water Women group's internal organizational capacity; and
- Finding of ways to work in partnership with the city administration that target the education, health, environment, tourism and agriculture departments.

### **Further Information**

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- For a look at the Water Women project in São João D'Aliança (in Portuguese):  
<http://www.prac.ufpb.br/anais/anais/meioambiente/mulheres.pdf>

## **Egypt: Empowering Women's Participation in Community and Household Decision-making in Water and Sanitation**

### **Challenges**

This study documents how the Better Life Association for Comprehensive Development (BLACD) used a gender-integrated approach as an integral part of the water and sanitation project they implemented in the village of Nazlet Fargallah in Upper Egypt from January 2003 to December 2004. The project was aimed at approximately 700 households without sanitary facilities; 60 per cent of the people targeted were women (BLACD, 2002). Most of the residents work as casual labourers in agriculture and have little predictable income. There is one primary school and one health unit in the village. Prior to the project, more than half of the 1500 households in Nazlet Fargallah lacked latrines and access to clean and reliable running water. The most common preventable illnesses, including diarrhoea and kidney disease, were directly correlated with the lack of potable water and poor sanitation practices. Women are responsible for providing their families with water for drinking and washing and for waste disposal. Before the project, their main water source was communal hand pumps. Important concerns in Nazlet Fargallah included:

#### *Water and sanitation:*

- Gathering water, which required much time and effort as women had to make up to four separate trips a day to obtain adequate water. The time this consumed kept women from other household tasks, personal sanitation and other activities;
- Washing clothes and dishes in water contaminated with sewage;
- The practice of throwing human waste into the canal, contaminating the water and giving it a yellow colour as well as a bad smell and taste;
- Women and girls having to wait until after dark to relieve themselves. This affected their health and made them vulnerable to violence;

#### *Traditional gender roles and gender imbalance:*

- Traditional gender roles, allotted few rights to women. Women rarely took part in activities outside the home, and were fully occupied collecting water, looking after their children, and performing other household tasks. They were unable to participate in external social roles and most are illiterate; and
- Using legal obstacles to prevent women's participation in community life. Many lack proper identification, since as women, it has not been deemed important for their births to be registered.

### **Programme/Projects**

The people of Nazlet Faragallah first approached BLACD for help after observing successful installation of latrines and taps in neighbouring villages. The project in Nazlet Faragallah had three main components: water connections; latrine installation at the household level; and hygiene education. BLACD worked actively to integrate gender considerations into its new projects, to strengthen gender-mainstreaming initiatives and increase project effectiveness. This led to the development of the health visitor model in which women could still be actively involved at all levels despite male objections to their formal presence in project management.

BLACD helped the village health visitors plan awareness raising campaigns about water and sanitation, and provided training on water and sanitation, basic health, nutrition, child and reproductive health and first aid as well as communications skills. The health visitors participated by choosing the project beneficiaries based on agreed-upon criteria. Both women and men were involved in the project's planning as well as household-level decisions to participate in the project.



## Outcomes

BLACD's success includes the following:

*Impact on health and sanitation:*

- Provided 700 households with two taps and a latrine each, giving them direct access to a clean, convenient source of water and a more sanitary means to dispose of their waste;
- Increased awareness of disease prevention, leading to change in sanitation behaviour; and
- Decreased time spent (mainly by women) collecting water and disposing of waste.

*Gender mainstreaming and empowerment:*

- Successfully integrated gender and the particular needs and interests of women into the project in a traditional male-dominated community;
- Demonstrated that female health visitors can have a significant impact in the community;
- Significantly and visibly increased women's empowerment in decision-making at the community and household levels, particularly with regard to health, well-being and livelihoods;
- Developed a sense of pride, in both men and women, over their households' independent access to water; and
- Increased women's security, dignity and sense of self-sufficiency.

*Further activities and development goals:*

- Established a women-based community development association for those who wanted to continue their community activities after the project's completion;
- Provided a basis for women seeking other rights in addition to access to water; and
- Increased the likelihood of achieving other development objectives.

## Main Obstacles

Existing power structures hindered women's empowerment, particularly at the management level. Although the project was welcomed by both villagers and local authorities, initially there was resistance to women's involvement. Community leaders insisted that only men serve on the project management committee.

Some health visitors faced opposition from male family members, as did some women who wanted to participate in the water connection programme.

Despite numerous obstacles, the development association that was formed as a result of this project has now been formally registered.

## Key Factors for Success

The project provides an effective model for implementing gender-sensitive water and sanitation programmes. It further demonstrates that women's active participation in water and sanitation projects is essential because of their key roles in the provision and maintenance of water, sanitation and hygiene at the household level. The project also recognized that in working together in partnership, women and men are effective and can foster increased collaboration between the two sexes at the household level.

## Looking Ahead – Sustainability and Transferability

This project has shown that it is possible to both respond to the needs of marginalized communities while promoting changes in traditional gender roles. The development association formed provides a base for further activities using the experience gained through the course of this project.

## Further Information

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- For information about Diakonia: [http://www.diakonia.se/main\\_eng.htm](http://www.diakonia.se/main_eng.htm)

## **Ghana: Gender Integration in a Rural Water Project in the Samari-Nkwanta Community**

### **Challenges**

In Ghana, traditionally, women and children are the primary collectors, users, and managers of household water. When water systems break down women and children are the most affected, since they then have to travel far to search for water for household use. Women are the key players in implementing changes in hygiene behaviour; however, despite the knowledge and experience that they bring to water resource management, the contribution and roles of rural women are often overlooked or under-utilized in the drafting of water and sanitation policies.

The community in which this project took place is Samari-Nkwanta, with about 650 inhabitants and situated about 373 km from Ghana's capital, Accra. It is located in the Ejura-Sekyedumasi District, which represents about 7 per cent of the Ashanti Region, and is home to a World Vision Ghana (WVG) Area Development Programme. The community is in a rural area where farming is the main source of livelihood and engages 60 per cent of the economically active population. Before the water project, women in this area worked a daily average of 19 hours, while men worked around 12 hours a day. During the dry season when the community's regular water sources dried up, women and girls had to walk about three to four miles over dangerous terrain to bring water and firewood to their families, sometimes more than once a day. Their primary water source area was described as "Aberewa nnko", meaning old women cannot get there. Many girls also had to abandon their schooling to search for water.

### **Programme/Projects**

The community's water and sanitation programmes came about in response to the need for interventions to address a serious infestation of guinea worm, which had existed among the

community members for several decades. In Ghana, guinea worm is prevalent mostly in remote areas where there are few wells and where people draw their drinking water from ponds and water holes. It is extremely painful and can cause permanent disability. This problem combined with poor access to potable drinking water in the region led to the birth of the Samari-Nkwanta Water and Sanitation Project (SWSP) in 1992.

In response to a severe drought in Ghana in 1982-1983, WVG commissioned the Ghana Water and Sewerage Corporation (renamed the Ghana Water Company in 1993) and the Ghana Water Resource and Research Institute to conduct a survey on water supply in communities where WVG operated. The 1984 survey reported the lack of potable water as a great constraint to WVG's rural development programmes. In response, the organization developed the Ghana Rural Water Project (GRWP). Since then this project has shifted from a strictly technology-driven, "get it done" approach to a community-based, people-oriented, demand-driven focus, which includes an acknowledgement that there is a significant correlation between gender issues, poverty alleviation and the well-being of children.

Through the GRWP initiative, WVG supplied the Samari-Nkwanta village with two boreholes fitted with hand pumps, two public Ventilated Improved Pit latrines (VIP) and a urinal. The community has since identified this water and sanitation project as having had a high level of community participation and gender integration and that it has brought them considerable relief in many areas of their lives.

### **Outcomes**

Positive outcomes of the project include:

- Promotion of gender equality: a shift from male-dominance to a more equitable sharing of

power and decision-making, particularly within the WATSAN committee;

- Gender roles: women have on average five more hours per day to use more productively on their farms, in their households and for other activities;
- Education: girls now make up 53 per cent of primary school students, compared to 43 per cent in 1995;
- Access to water: farming practices have improved due to reliable access to water; and
- Health and hygiene: guinea worm has been eradicated among the entire water user group.

Overall, the project has allowed for increased education for more community members, healthier individuals, and a deeper respect for women. The women also now have more time to spend with their families. One man in the village noted, “My marriage has improved and become more cordial. We have time for other economic development projects”.

#### Key Factors for Success

The main factors that contributed to the success of this project were:

- Gender sensitizing and mass awareness training and promotion used at the start of the project;
- Ensuring that both men and women were equally represented on the WATSAN committee and received relevant training to support their participation;
- Ensuring that both female and male water users were responsible for the water system’s maintenance and operation; and
- Fostering sensitivity to both women’s and men’s concerns in the community.

Additionally, the use of these gender mainstreaming and participatory approaches contributed significantly to:

- An increase in the recognition and visibility of women’s roles, equal to that of men, in the WATSAN Committee, the PMVs and latrine construction artisans and in the community in general; and
- A real sense of ownership of their water and sanitation resources by both the male and female members of the Samari community.

#### Main Obstacles

Regarding traditional gender roles, the male dominance prevalent in some Moslem communities in Ghana was especially apparent in Samari-Nkwanta. The women assumed that they should not seek new roles as water facility managers and discouraged other women from engaging in what was perceived as a male role. However, WVG’s decision to consciously involve both women and men in drilling led community members to re-evaluate their existing gender roles. This was reinforced by the WVG ensuring that women and men were represented equally on the WATSAN committee. The women were given equal access to training in water systems operations and maintenance and environmental sanitation methods.

#### Looking Ahead - Sustainability and Transferability

The community was able to achieve these results as well as more equitable access to clean drinking water and sanitation facilities primarily because the project was facilitated within an atmosphere of cooperation and coordination between men and women, as well as between the Ghanaian government and World Vision Ghana.

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## **Guatemala: Meeting Women's and Men's Water Needs in the "El Naranjo" River Watershed Organization**

### **Challenges**

The watershed of the El Naranjo River is located between the departments of San Marcos and Quetzaltenango in Guatemala. Where there used to be plentiful and clean water, the upper watershed now has a scarce and polluted water supply. The communities that depend on its water have a variety of different water needs that vary between men and women and urban and rural communities. For example, men use water mostly for their animals, irrigation and construction, whereas women need water for domestic tasks such as cooking, cleaning and washing. Women also spend a lot of time and effort every other day hauling the water they need. These various needs have generated conflicts which go beyond local institutional capacity as well as traditional dispute-settling mechanisms. They have raised many questions for local authorities and leaders regarding the current state of legal regulations, and their application to the administration of water.

In order for men and women from the communities to improve their access to and control over water, they need to be organized so they can both manage funds for productive community and environmental projects, as well as advocate for their needs in municipal decision-making. An essential part of this process is for women to be equal participants in defining and representing the communities' interests.

### **Programme/Projects**

The Fundación Solar is a private development organization in Guatemala that promotes the creation of social capacities among all stakeholders for the integrated and sustainable management of renewable natural resources. In its model, women are equal participants in gender-mainstreamed and participatory methods that enhance equity and efficiency in the management of water resources.

In 2002, the Fundación Solar started a three-year

with the support of NOVIB (Oxfam Netherlands) to promote social peace through the construction of a more sustainable resource-community relationship. It is supported through several international and local NGOs and focuses on the rights and obligations of users, service providers and local public authorities. The project works by researching trends in water use, training municipal authorities and grassroots leaders and supporting social planning and organization processes, so that local leaders and authorities will develop and execute joint plans for sustainable management to meet the communities' needs.

### **Outcomes**

- *Joining together under a single objective:* Before the project, people worked independently and looked after their own interests. They fought over the water resource. Now 10 legal associations have been organized with over 74,000 men and almost 78,000 women beneficiaries. The associations are devoted to promoting social strategies to improve integrated water resource management.
- *Training, sensitization, and men's and women's participation:* The project provided training and sensitization sessions in the communities. People expressed their interest in the training and the organizational processes. Workshop topics included caring for the environment and the watershed, reforestation, gender equity, conflict resolution and organization. Now, people are much more open to the ideas, problems and needs of others. Women comprise 51 per cent of the community association members and several women are on the board of directors. They set an example for other women in their communities.
- *Advocacy in water policy:* Water problems

and needs still exist, but now people are more organized. As a result of their advocacy work, the water problems of rural and isolated communities are now being taken into greater account by the municipalities.

- *Income generation:* The associations are starting to have some funds, which they are using for small productive environmental and community projects, such as a greenhouse. These small projects provide resources to invest in other projects, which enable the associations to meet the needs of more people.

### Key Factors for Success

*Creation of community associations:*

- The associations specifically addressed various water needs of men and women in both urban and rural communities; and
- Women represented over 50 per cent of the members and participated actively in the associations.

*Gender Mainstreaming:*

- Different water needs of men and women were taken into account;
- Consciousness was raised that women are the primary water users and therefore need to participate;
- Women participated in the organization and decision-making processes as well as in building income-generating environmental community projects; and
- Women are empowered through control over their incomes.

*Participatory Processes:*

- Civil society designed municipal water policies;
- The first association of municipalities was formed for the integrated management of water resources in Guatemala; and
- Joint actions are taken by the municipalities and civil society regarding water resources.

### Main Obstacles

At first it was not an easy task to bring people together. A public information and education campaign had to be launched in the local language, spreading information through radio, posters, public forums, and vehicles with loudspeakers. Finally, people were willing to meet on the subject of the watershed.

### Looking Ahead – Sustainability and Transferability

*Lessons learned:* Community education about water, the environment and societal roles will continue to promote positive change in communities around the globe. In the words of community member **Yolanda Pérez Ramírez:**

“We learned a lot from this project. We received training on working in an association, income-generating projects and the environment. Now we have a greenhouse where peppers grow with rainwater. This gives us income. We also learned how to use the water in an efficient way. Furthermore, we learned that we have to reforest when we remove trees, so we will continue receiving enough water to live. For women, this has been a very important experience, because it was the first time that we were included in an organization process and now people are listening to our problems... This has given us a lot of experience and others like to hear about it.”

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- For information about NOVIB’s role in Guatemala:  
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## **India: Evolution of Gender Mainstreaming in Human Resource Policy of BAIF Development Research Foundation, Pune**

### **Challenges**

Prior to 2002, the Bharatiya Agro Industries Foundation (BAIF) had only one gender-based policy – a 60 day maternity leave for both birth and adoptive mothers. Apart from this there were no other gender-based benefits. The evolution of human resources policies in the last few years and a gradual change in how the organization looked at equity issues led to the evolution and formulation of a gender mainstreaming policy. While many of the related policies came into effect in 2002, the gender policy as a whole was officially adopted in April 2004 and a committee was formed to tackle different issues related to the new policy. The challenge the organization faced was how to actually implement their new gender mainstreaming policy.

### **Programme/Projects**

BAIF Development Research Foundation is a voluntary organization established by a disciple of Mahatma Gandhi, the late Dr. Manibhai Desai of Urlikanchan near Pune. BAIF has implemented multidisciplinary rural development programmes throughout the 11 states of India for the last three decades. Its basic programme objectives are to provide gainful self-employment and sustainable livelihoods to the rural and tribal poor. The organization has a strong in-house research base and over the last few years has been able to consolidate its ongoing programmes through the use of improved technology and more efficient systems, including the integration of gender equality measures.

In this study, BAIF embarked on a gender policy to sensitize office staff, as well as the participants and stakeholders in their programmes. The Foundation established policy procedures, including committees drawn from all staff levels, to facilitate the implementation and administration of its gender policy. These include a Complaints Committee which must be headed by a woman, with equal male and female membership drawn from different departments as well as, if possible, a third party

representative from an NGO, conversant with sexual harassment. Within the communities, BAIF instituted a policy that women must be a part of the decision-making process regarding water source management. It also implemented programmes to build women's capacity in decision-making, as well as their participation in programme planning, operation, monitoring and evaluation.

### **Outcomes**

*Impacts of gender mainstreaming at the employee level:*

- Creation of a paternity and adoption leave system;
- Increased availability of paid leave for mothers;
- Increased recognition of paternal responsibilities and men's family needs;
- Increased gender sensitization among staff related to evolving gender policy and gender-integrated programmes; and
- Freer environment for women to participate in organization level decision-making.

*Impacts of gender mainstreaming at the community level:*

- Installation of women-friendly equipment for agricultural operations;
- Increased access to dependable source of clean water through installation of non-reversible hand pumps circulating water in all the required areas;
- Participation of women in Village Meetings for local governance and influencing policy-making in water and sanitation;
- Adoption of community needs assessment process that focuses on women's water and sanitation and health needs as a major input for policy decisions at the local level; and
- Initiation of use of sex-disaggregated data and indicators in BAIF's monitoring and evaluation processes.

### Key Factors for Success

- *Self Help Groups*: BAIF realized the important role of Self Help Groups in improving community access to water and sanitation, while addressing the need to involve women integrally in this process. To this end, its programmes encourage women's groups to initiate various community development activities and give them an opportunity to display their latent talents.
- *BAIF's gender policies*: Gender mainstreaming policies were introduced in both project and field offices simultaneously, in order to highlight BAIF's commitment to improve gender equality.
- *Implementation at the field level*. BAIF's policy aims to ensure that all of its development activities are gender-sensitive at the planning and implementation stages and that women's concerns and contributions are addressed and recognized so that the benefits of development reach them adequately.

### Main Obstacles

In order to successfully carry out their gender mainstreaming programme, BAIF needed to:

- Increase the sensitivity of one gender to the other; and
- Create an environment in which the needs of both women and men can be openly discussed.

### Looking Ahead - Sustainability and Transferability

During the period of the case study research, BAIF underwent a serious reflection process about the organization's commitment to its gender mainstreaming policies in the long run. In the process BAIF learned that gender mainstreaming is not just about meeting women's needs more effectively, but also about gaining greater understanding of the ways women and men can work together to the benefit of both sexes. In the process, the organization has discovered that supporting increased empowerment of women at the field and employee levels is of critical importance to programme success. BAIF has observed that its new gender mainstreaming policies are making a positive difference in the lives of both its male and female employees as well as having a significant impact on women's empowerment at the community level.

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## **India: From Alienation to an Empowered Community - Applying a Gender Mainstreaming Approach to a Sanitation Project, Tamil Nadu**

### **Challenges**

In India, only 43 per cent of the urban population has access to basic sanitation. In the low-income slum settlements, 15 per cent of the households have their own toilets and another 21 per cent have access to community toilets. This case study documents a community sanitation project in eight slums in the Tiruchirapalli district of Tamil Nadu State, in southern India. The slums in the study had six community dry latrines in which the human waste fell into an open pit and was collected manually and two latrines with septic tanks constructed by the municipal corporation. However, the structures had all become unserviceable due to the poor maintenance of any municipal infrastructures created before April 1999.

The women in Viragupettai reported that “the non-maintenance of the latrines caused faecal worms to generate and reproduce, and they could be found nearby the water taps, and even inside the walls of their houses.” Poor sanitation and contaminated water affected all families with disease, increasing their medical expenses.

Male community leaders did not take any steps to provide improved facilities. Requests to the government for better services were of no avail until the people joined forces with Gramalaya, an NGO that works with communities on water and sanitation projects.

### **Programme/Projects**

To address this situation, in 2000 the state authorities for urban affairs in the Tiruchirapalli district proposed involving NGOs to encourage people’s participation and empower women under the Namakku Name Thittam (We for Ourselves) programme. Gramalaya and two other NGOs formulated the project with funding from Water Aid. The funding enabled the project to serve a total of 25

local slums in various communities, with guidance from the district collector and the Commissioner of the City Corporation. In Gramalaya, 8 slums in total benefited from the project.

Gramalaya had prior experience in water, sanitation and hygiene projects in rural areas, and in working with women’s groups as the focal point for dissemination and change. The project design called for the installation of drinking water facilities and individual toilets, as well as community mobilization with a focus on gender mainstreaming. Water Aid covered the equipment and installation costs, while Gramalaya covered the capacity building and community mobilization components. The government provided the land sites, electricity, water supply, and loans to community members.

### **Outcomes**

- Women’s empowerment;
- Men’s involvement;
- Income from ‘pay and use’ toilets;
- Community development by women;
- Vermicomposting - sanitation and income;
- Creation of innovative child-friendly toilet (CFT) complex for children;
- Improved sanitation facilities; and
- Changes in key hygiene behaviour.

### **Key Factors for Success**

The key reasons for this integrated water and sanitation project’s success were:

- The project’s focus on women’s empowerment, including the formation of women’s self-help groups and the related savings and credit scheme run by the women;



- Open discussions with male community members regarding the benefits to themselves, their families and the community of women's empowerment;
- Capacity-building of the women's groups in the areas of accounting, and accessing government services;
- Provision of family counseling on domestic violence and communal problems;
- Development of communal sanitation facilities managed by the community;
- Adoption of a pay and use system that supported both facility maintenance and community development activities; and
- Collaboration between the government, NGOs and the community.

### Main Obstacles

- *Hesitancy from within the community:* The project staff's initial work was slow and difficult. As a result of having been let down in the past community members were reluctant to trust the efforts of government, politicians and NGOs. Gramalaya worked with the community to change this situation by forming women's self-help groups, convincing men to support the women in their new roles and cleaning up garbage and waste.
- *Lack of meaningful aid from the government:* The usual government practice was to contract companies to do waste and sanitation-related construction work without any consultations with community members. A lack of supervision led to unfinished work and, in one instance, the contractors simply locked the new toilets and did not open them for two years. For Gramalaya's project the government gave land, electricity, water supply and loans to the community but was not expected to provide the services themselves.

### Looking Ahead - Sustainability and Transferability

- *Success of gender mainstreaming in development programmes:* The development of water and sanitation facilities using a model based on women's empowerment will bring success to a country where the majority of the population currently still defecates in the open. This project's

impact clearly demonstrates that a gender mainstreaming approach should be included in all development programmes to address major concerns more effectively and obtain the maximum benefits.

- *Respect for women spreads from the community to the government to the world:* In Tiruchirapalli, not only is the community benefiting from improved water and sanitation facilities, improved health and increased resources to support community development initiatives, but the women have also gained enormous self-confidence. Women who were once treated shabbily by officials are now given respect and invited to sit on chairs when they visit government offices. Not only their men, but the world also now admires them, and they receive a stream of visitors from all over. Their life has a new meaning filled with hope.

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## **Indonesia: the Impact of Women's Participation in the Aqua-Danone Advocacy Programme – A Case Study in Klaten District, Central Java**

### **Challenges**

A bottled water plant was opened in 2002 by Aqua-Danone in the Klaten district of Java in Indonesia. The company extracts a huge quantity of spring water just 20 metres away from the Sigedang spring, which is the area's primary water source. Every month, the plant produces 15-18 million litres of bottled water, causing a drastically decreased water supply in the district. Since the opening of the plant, the community, consisting mostly of farmers, has found its access to irrigation water decreasing and its wells starting to run dry. Pumping groundwater for irrigation purposes also dries out community wells. Some farmers have been forced to stop farming and to seek work as construction workers or market labourers.

### **Programme/Projects**

In response to these water-related problems community members came together in 2003 to establish KRAKED (Klaten People's Coalition for Justice) to advocate on their behalf. Despite prevailing cultural values, this also gave Klaten's women the opportunity to participate in the advocacy activities. KRAKED's main objective is to close down the Aqua-Danone plant in Klaten; their short-term objective is to reduce its extraction rate and establish a community monitoring system.

Women in the communities utilise water for household and other uses every day. Women have traditional roles with key decisions being made by their fathers, husbands, and brothers. In this case, the women involved in KRAKED were highly motivated to participate in the programme and had the possibility to do so. In the earlier meetings their role was restricted to preparing food and drink for other members. However KRAKED set up a research project to get a better picture of the impact of Aqua-Danone's Klaten operations. Eight women and a couple of men volunteered to conduct the research.

The project also targeted local government and members of parliament, journalists and Aqua-Danone personnel. KRAKED asked each of its members to share their knowledge and information about the water shortages with as many people as possible.

### **Outcomes**

#### *Information, mobilization and capacity building:*

- More community members are aware of the water shortage issue due to KRAKED's information-sharing methods. Their individual approach works well with the local community; and
- Increased ability among participants to present strong arguments in dialogues with other advocacy stakeholders.

#### *Impact on Advocacy Programme objectives:*

- Stakeholders such as the local government, the local parliament and Aqua-Danone, are starting to include KRAKED in their meetings and discussions; and
- On 7 March 2005, KRAKED's second anniversary, the local parliament asked for a re-evaluation of Aqua-Danone's water extraction license. The license will expire soon and the company plans on asking for a new license with an increased extraction rate. Consequently, the re-evaluation request from parliament received a lot of publicity and response from KRAKED.

#### *Research on gender aspects in information dissemination:*

- Women's participation in this process made it more effective and facilitated KRAKED reaching a wider audience. Better insight was gained in the way women and men share information and how these differences can be useful in raising awareness; and
- In general, the women appeared to be more

effective in sharing information within their families and through informal networks and the men in sharing information outside their families and through formal networks.

*Women's skill development and empowerment:*

- Participation in the advocacy programme has increased the women's self confidence and skills. They have learned to conduct research, share advocacy-focused information and discuss issues effectively with other members;
- Women in the community are more aware of water resources issues and have learned to appreciate water better and to use it more efficiently. They are also more aware of, and motivated to work with, issues concerning gender imbalance;
- Women involved in the advocacy project are now more interested in participating in advocacy and research activities and in activities providing them equal opportunities with men; and
- Male members of KRAKED concluded that, as both women and men suffer the negative impact of Aqua-Danone's operation, both should have the right to participate fully in the advocacy process.

### Key Factors for Success

*Previous Experience in organisational work:*

- Most of the participating women were also members of a Small Entrepreneurs Network for Women that had successfully established a women's cooperative in Klaten.

*Women's financial independence or access to financial services:*

- Unlike most women in Klaten who work in the home and are housewives, most of KRAKED's women members have their own small businesses.

*Support from family and male community members:*

- Particularly important is that the women's families have been willing to share household tasks so that they have more time for advocacy activities; and
- KRAKED's male members were willing to give a chance to women to participate in the advocacy initiatives and saw the women as allies.

*Evaluation by all community members:*

Data collection was done mainly through focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with different community stakeholders, both those involved and

those not involved in the programme. Programme reports were also used to get background information.

### Main Obstacles

- Initially the division of responsibility in KRAKED was not gender-balanced. Women participated only at the service and then the discussion level and were not given a decision-making role; and
- A negative aspect of this project is that women have been spending so much time promoting advocacy activities, their small businesses have suffered. This has led to a decrease in their incomes.

### Looking Ahead – Sustainability and Transferability

This study indicates that to empower women, a specially made programme with complex methods is not needed. Providing the initial opportunity to participate can empower both women and men. Advocacy organizations can formalize a women's empowerment process by ensuring that there are women representatives at all key meetings with stakeholders and by providing leadership training for the women and gender-sensitivity training for the men. After conducting the research on the impact of Aqua-Danone's operations in the area, the women became more motivated to continue and expand their roles in the advocacy process.

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## **Nicaragua: Gender Equality as a Condition for Access to Water and Sanitation**

### **Challenges**

In Nicaragua, 43 per cent of the population lives in rural areas, and only 46 per cent of this subset has access to potable water and sanitation. The departments of Leon and Chinandega are characterized by vast underground water sources; however, the population and local authorities emphasize water scarcity as the main problem. This issue has been aggravated by population growth and the inherited environmental deterioration resulting from agricultural industrialization.

In the latter part of 1998, Hurricane Mitch hit Nicaragua, leaving in its wake more than 4,000 deaths. Leon and Chinandega, located in the northeastern region of the country, were the most affected and to this day still bear the signs of tragedy. By 1999, the rural communities of this area faced a double tragedy: a period of drought (characteristic of the area) and high levels of contamination of the scarce water sources.

For the members of the communities located in this area, the transport, use and management of water resources, as well as sanitation activities, were considered the responsibility of women and children. During this period there were no mechanisms that supported gender equality to accomplish these tasks or social recognition of the problems the women faced as they conducted these activities.

### **Programme/Projects**

The human and environmental impact and the losses due to Mitch resulted in the creation and expansion of several institutional programmes in the area. CARE-Leon already had expertise in water and sanitation and health education, thanks to their implementation of an earlier Water, Latrines and Sanitation Project (PALESA I), from 1995 to 1998. In early 1999, the Water and Sanitation Programme (AGUASAN) of the Swiss Development and Cooperation Agency (COSUDE) began a partnership

began a partnership with the Leon Office of CARE International in Nicaragua, to implement the second phase of the project (PALESA II) and later continued with the implementation of the PALESA III project between 2002 and 2003. The goal of this project was to exercise the right and access to water for the 17,000 inhabitants living in the 45 communities of these two Nicaraguan departments. It sought to achieve this goal through the construction of latrines and new water systems.

PALESA II was characterized by an institutional commitment of both agencies to gender equality, which was deemed a priority in order to achieve the main project's goal of improving the rural population's quality of life. Gender inequalities were identified as a challenge to overcome in order to initiate community participation and to improve the project's sustainability.

Promoters of the project, both women and men, lived in the community three days out of each week in order to gain the trust of all community members. They waited for the time when men would be home (usually in the afternoon) and distributed invitations to the community assembly by sectors. Promoters also recorded the gender inequalities found in the use, transport, and management of water. A gender sensitization workshop was launched to teach both men and women about the importance of their integration into the planning, organization, direction, construction, and administration of water systems. After conducting three sessions (one consisting of only females, one of males, and one mixed), men's perceptions about the use of potable water and sanitation changed. This resulted in more than 85 per cent of the 687 male participants understanding that handmade wells may not be secure sources of portable drinking water. They also accepted that household

connections would benefit the community at large, both women and men.

### Outcomes

- *Increased involvement:* The gender workshops conducted in 2001 and 2002 with women and men guaranteed greater women's participation (56 per cent). Women were elected to more than 70 per cent of the committees' posts and gained posts which were previously filled by men, such as coordinators, vice-coordinators and financial managers. Women's participation in training, operation and maintenance of the 276 water works was encouraged, resulting in a 37 per cent participation rate of women. Once the water systems were installed, the female leadership with its capacity and quality moved to other initiatives.
- *Education:* Discussions about sex, gender roles, self esteem, identity, rights and commitments benefited women directly. Moreover, the discussions also changed men's perceptions about the management and use of water. The methodology utilized in the education and training component increased the knowledge and the information levels of women living in rural areas, who were previously in a disadvantaged position.

### Key Factors for Success

- *Community needs assessment with a gender approach:* This approach contributed to the men's acceptance of the construction of home water systems as a right. They continued to have power of expression within the community, but it was also demonstrated that the majority of people in the community preferred women to lead the Sanitation and Water Committees.
- *Institutional practices and methodologies:* The success of integrating gender equality in the access, use and management of water and sanitation within the water project was a result of the institutional practices and specific methodologies developed. On the one hand, the coordination of the gender approach and policies of both COSUDE-AGUASAN and CARE-Leon consolidated the project's goal of providing equitable and participatory access to water in rural communities. On the other hand, the Leon project directors, the Social Area coordinator and the men and women promoters aided the realization of the goal.

- *Significant women participation:* The awareness levels gained by a large part of the population, especially rural women, contributed to achieving a significant participation in different cycles of the project of young, middle-aged and elderly women, including mothers with numerous responsibilities.

### Main Obstacles

- *Natural disasters:* In spite of underground water sources, Hurricane Mitch in 1998 followed by a drought in 1999 has made access to potable water difficult.
- *Disparity between men's and women's need for water:* In a traditionally male-dominated society in which men could list only two uses for water while women could list 11, an improvement in water supply had not been a priority for community leaders.

### Looking Ahead - Sustainability and Transferability

The training investment demonstrated the importance of including an education component in water projects. The education component influenced a change in attitude, particularly among men, of viewing water as vital necessity. They recognized that access to water is a human right, one that should be attainable by all men, women, and children in equal conditions and opportunities.

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- For information about CARE International's work in Nicaragua:  
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## **Nigeria: Using Gender Mainstreaming Processes to Help Protect Drinking Water Sources of the Obudu Plateau Communities in Northern Cross River State**

### **Challenges**

The Obudu plateau is one of two mountain ecosystems in Nigeria and is home to tropical forests with unique flora and fauna, as well as large pastures. The top of the plateau is also home to the Becheve agricultural communities and the Fulani pastoralists. In 1999, the Cross River State Government established a luxury tourist destination, the Obudu Ranch Resort, on the plateau. Large-scale construction of hotel and other facilities resulted in immense deforestation. Combined with pre-existing pressures on the environment, such as overgrazing and unsustainable agricultural practices, the development exacerbated the stress on available water resources. Although the communities saw the development as a welcome source of income, conflicts arose due to the multiple demands on a limited water supply. The Becheve women complained about poor family health, wasted time in collecting water, and poor quality and quantity of water.

### **Programme/Projects**

As a result of the deterioration in the water situation, the Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF), a non-governmental organization working on the plateau, started a Watershed Management Project. The NCF has mainstreamed gender concerns into its organizational policies and priorities nationwide. Using participatory approaches, the necessity of women's involvement was systematically championed throughout the project cycle. Women were included at every stage, in the design, implementation and monitoring of the project.

In January 1999 a multi-stakeholder management committee for the Obudu plateau was formed. Members were from the NCF, Development in

Nigeria (DIN), Cross River National Park, the Obudu Ranch Resort, Becheve Nature Reserve, the villagers and the Fulani herders. After discussions, villagers allowed one woman to be elected out of three representatives from every village to the management committee. At its inception meeting, the management committee conducted a two-day workshop analyzing current problems in order to plan a long-term solution for the sustainable management of the plateau's watershed. The NCF used the meetings as a forum to educate the communities about participatory watershed management and the dangers of unsustainable practices to ecosystems, as well as to sensitize the Becheve communities and Fulani herders on their gender biases and the important role of women in collecting water for families.

In the first stage, from 2000 to 2001, a watershed and watercourse mapping survey was conducted, concentrating on drinking water points on the plateau. Between 2002 and 2003, the second stage, a manual on watershed ecology and monitoring was produced by NCF. Six groups of women and a small group of youth were trained on preserving a watershed's ecology, stressing the temporary nature of the benefits of sand mining. It was recommended that fruit trees be planted around the headwaters of drinking water sources to prevent erosion and siltation, and to provide an income source. Conservation clubs were started to increase awareness about environmental education. Most significantly, women were encouraged, not only to attend management committee meetings, but also to participate actively in this predominantly male domain. In the third stage, from 2003 to 2004, discussions were held with the local health clinic on water-related health issues, especially diarrhoea, and the two reservoirs were built.

## Outcomes

### *Impacts on women's empowerment and gender equality:*

- Women's voices were heard for the first time as they contributed to the decision-making process within the community; women were encouraged not only to attend management committee meetings but to participate actively in this predominantly male domain. Electing women leaders on the management committee became a source of great pride for all women in the community;
- Women were involved in the construction and maintenance of the reservoir;
- Considerably reducing the time it takes for women to collect water allowed women to spend more time on income generating activities, farming and marketing;
- Women's healthcare burden was reduced with a 45 per cent reduction in cases of diarrhoea in 2004;
- The time available for both girls and women to go to school was increased;
- The community's men were sensitized to the necessity of women's participation and shown how it will benefit them directly; and
- The Fulani herdsmen and the Becheve women were able to accommodate each other's water resources requirements through a negotiated process.

### *Empowerment of the whole community:*

- The project taught a greater awareness of sustainable watershed ecosystems and their importance to the environment and nearby communities;
- Community participation increased as the community felt they owned the process and the project;
- The community learned how to approach the government to aid community development; and
- The project led to improved health and cleaner and closer water resources.

## Key Factors for Success

### *Volunteers:*

- The four volunteers working with staff of the BNR had a very positive effect on the outcome.
- Two were Canadians (2000-2003) while the other two were Nigerian (2003-present). Three of them

were women, which made access to the Becheven women easier for project leaders. The female volunteer presence also provided role models that demonstrated that women could be in positions of leadership and contribute to the decision-making process.

### *Gender sensitization:*

The male volunteer facilitated a process where the Fulani herdsmen realized that they were discriminating against the women in denying them timely access to water. This new awareness led to an agreement where the cattle would be watered at lower points to avoid contamination once the reservoirs were built.

## Main Obstacles

- The traditional village system is patriarchal, and endows men with all decision-making powers.
- Conflict arose between the Fulani herdsman and Becheven women over water availability.
- Before the tourism development, water resources were already strained because of overgrazing and unsustainable agricultural practices.

## Looking Ahead - Sustainability and Transferability

- Women were encouraged to pass along their knowledge from the conservation clubs to their children so there are now school conservation clubs, which ensure the planting of approximately 1,000 tree seedlings along water courses.
- Achievement of gender equity is a long process and, in planning programmes and projects, gender sensitization and community participation should be broken into different stages.

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## **Pakistan: Initiative of One, Relief for All – Women’s Leadership in the Banda Golra Water Supply Scheme**

### **Challenges**

Banda Golra is a small village in Pakistan with about 120 households. Most men work as day labourers, while women have traditional roles in the household and take little part in decision making. Most of the families are large, as women are usually not allowed to use family planning methods. The majority of women are illiterate, while most men have primary education. Women work at home, manage livestock and do other household work. Access to water in this area has been a problem for decades. The village’s only water sources were two natural springs, which are used by the people as well as by village livestock and wild animals. Collecting drinking water is the women’s responsibility and they spend three to four hours daily just completing that task. Obtaining water for livestock and other household purposes traditionally required another full day every week. In the only communal government pipeline to this village, water only runs twice a week and is not sufficient to meet local water demands. Diarrhoea is a major health concern among the children. Given these circumstances, the need for improved access to water and sanitation was urgent.

### **Programme/Projects**

In Banda Golra, the village women, through the leadership of Nasim Bibi, a poor woman with no land to cultivate and whose husband works in construction, motivated other villagers to organize their own water supply scheme. Nasim Bibi had formed a community-based women’s organization (CBO) in 2002 in order to be eligible for credit from the Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP), a regional NGO which could lend money to community-based groups.

CBO members started a saving scheme and, over a two-year period, 21 women received loans from SRSP, all of whom have successfully repaid the loans. During their monthly CBO meetings the women identified increased access to water as a priority for action and decided to develop a village water supply scheme. The project involved installing seven new hand pumps in

different locations in the village. The community had to contribute 20 per cent of the costs and SRSP 80 per cent. This case study documents how the group succeeded in bringing water to their village through the individual leadership of Nasim Bibi, and the strategies women used to gain acceptance for the water scheme. Nasim Bibi’s role helped other women become involved as community leaders. She herself served as the water scheme project manager and three committees were formed to manage the project. Every participating household had to take turns providing food and accommodation for the labourers engaged in hand pump drilling. Village women also helped soil the ground for drilling and with construction of hand pump platforms.

### **Outcomes**

#### *Sanitation and health:*

- There is now increased frequency in bathing for families, particularly women and girls, and increased frequency of clothes washing from a weekly to an almost daily basis.
- The time needed for collecting water has greatly decreased, resulting in a large increase in time available for other activities.
- The sense of security regarding the cleanliness of their new water sources has significantly increased.
- The contamination of the new water sources due to animal waste has decreased.

#### *Women’s empowerment and recognition of women in leadership roles:*

- An open discussion of health issues related to frequent pregnancies is now possible in this community. Many women up to 35 years report that they are now able to decide to keep their families smaller.
- The decision-making power at the



household level has increased for the majority women involved in the water and credit schemes, the value of participation in public activities increasingly recognized.

- There is a growing understanding of how these activities can benefit the women's families through gaining access to new services and an increased acceptance by men that women can be effective community leaders.
- Women's social relations outside their homes and sense of independence due to greater social mobility are significantly increased.

#### *Education:*

- Girls' access to education has improved. A non-formal school has now been established in the village that offers both primary and secondary classes, mainly to girls.

#### *Community involvement and higher rate of participation:*

- The number of new CBO members has significantly increased, with support from male family members. Villagers who did not participate in the scheme now perceive it as something that is being done on behalf of the entire community.

#### **Key Factors for Success**

- The women's CBO was able to gain men's support for the water scheme because it started with a base of people who trusted each other due to their familial relationships and the proven success of the credit scheme. The support of the husband of Nasim Bibi of his wife's leadership helped her considerably in the organization of both the credit and water schemes.
- Because the women were able to provide additional financial support for their families through the SRSP micro-credit scheme, women received increased respect from male family members as well as increased decision-making power at the household and community levels.
- CBO Members' male relatives realized that the women's participation was benefiting the entire family. This helped the women gain male support for the water supply scheme, as did the fact that the women consciously involved the village men in a shared management model.

#### **Main Obstacles**

The men own and control most of the village resources, including houses and land. According to the state and

Islamic law women can inherit property, but most cases they do not receive their inheritance property or are pressured to waive their inheritance rights in favour of their male relatives. The men in the village exercise greater decision-making power than women, although the majority of women involved in the water and credit schemes have found that members of the community are starting to listen to their views. More women are now receiving support for the CBO activity from their family members, rather than resistance.

#### **Looking Ahead – Sustainability and Transferability**

After the successful completion of the credit and water supply schemes, the community members now see Nasim Bibi as an informal leader and a person with strong linkages with NGOs, and often come to her for help seeking jobs and credit. Increased understanding of the importance of sanitation in the village is a long term result of this project. Women interviewed indicated that they plan to propose a resolution to organize a village sanitation scheme at their next CBO meeting.

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## **South Africa: Women in Sanitation and Brick Making Project, Mabule Village**

### **Challenges**

Mabule village in South Africa encompasses 450 households. Mabule's men are generally migrant workers. Their absence leaves women with the full responsibility for children, eldercare, feeding the family, as well as time consuming tasks such as firewood and water collection. In this village, the high prevalence of diseases such as cholera was due to an unhygienic environment and lack of suitable sanitation facilities. Little attention was paid to personal sanitation. The nearest water source was 10 kilometres away. For many women and girls, visiting the sanitation facilities had become very difficult because of the poor construction and hygiene. Boys and men often relieved themselves in nearby bushes. The lack of hygiene-awareness, scarcity of basic building materials such as bricks and the villagers' low skill level made it difficult to change this situation.

### **Programme/Projects**

The Mabule Sanitation Project was developed to respond to these problems through a joint initiative of the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAf), the community and the Mvula Trust. The latter is an NGO implementing water and sanitation projects in South Africa, focusing on women's empowerment. The strategy chosen was aimed at ensuring that women participate fully in service development, since it is women who generally ensure that the services developed meet everyone's needs.

The Department of Health (DoH) had been carrying out health-related activities in the Mabule Village area, educating people on issues such as preventative healthcare for children, but the programmes had not been effective in changing the community's behaviour towards good hygiene. A group of women in the village had brought up grievances about the village's deteriorating health and hygiene situation and expressed a wish to

change this situation.

Impressed with the Mabule women's commitment to developmental change, the Mvula Trust and the DWAf provided project resources and material support for the sanitation project. At the government level, the DWAf made a decision to fund sanitation projects only where there was gender balance in terms of decision-making. The project was run by a committee that was elected by the community, which established clear criteria for membership eligibility. Due to the educational criteria, women who had benefited from the DoH's previous education programmes were elected to fill eight of the 10 seats. Moreover, a brick-making project was established to obtain materials for latrine construction and generate cash. Both the sanitation and brick-making projects faced challenges that were gender-based. An analysis of the gender division of labour was made as part of the project to help the community members understand the importance of women's contributions to the community and to the project in particular. Committee members raised awareness of the benefits of good hygiene.

### **Outcomes**

#### *Health and sanitation*

- The community now has safe, hygienic and attractive toilets; and
- The community is experiencing improved health and hygiene, including more dignity and privacy for both women and men with regard to waste evacuation.

#### *Women's empowerment*

- There is increased acceptance of women's leadership roles by community members, local government and NGOs, as well as an increased collaboration between women and men; and
- The Committee's women have learned to manage the entire life cycle of a project.

### *Community development*

- The brick-making project has employed up to 10 people, four of whom are men and six of whom are women, and the community has access to affordable bricks; and
- Other related income-generating activities have been established and now there is more money being retained in the community by both women and men.

### **Key Factors for Success**

#### *Assessment and mobilization of the entire community*

- People were sensitized to gender issues in the context of their community;
- The interests and welfare of women and men were built into project design and management;
- Diverse approaches were used to draw wide participation to promote changes in hygiene behaviour; and
- The entire community, including city councillors and leaders, were involved in order to illustrate to community members that they are in control of the process.

#### *Gender analysis and mainstreaming*

- Time constraints that women and men face related to water and sanitation were assessed;
- Gender roles and responsibilities were explored in a sensitive and unthreatening manner to see how and if they could be altered;
- An enabling environment was created so that women could participate, e.g., meetings scheduled when women could attend and support provided at all stages of the project for women participants; and
- Opportunities were created for men and women to work together in diverse roles.

### **Main Obstacles**

- The community did not initially support the idea of women leading the development project. The municipality did not want to let the women open bank accounts, because it was felt that the project committee did not have enough skills to manage funds.
- Some husbands did not approve of their wives participating, especially in a sanitation activity, as in this part of South Africa it is still taboo to talk about sanitation issues.

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## **Togo: Integrating Gender into the Promotion of Hygiene in Schools**

### **Challenges**

In the rural village of Effumani, in the province of Est-Mono, Togo, 15 year old Gentil Weleke was attending the only primary school close to home. Every morning, Gentil would collect water from a distant river, then sweep the courtyard and inside her hut. Afterwards she would put a limited amount of that red-coloured water in a recycled plastic bottle to take to school. She would arrive late, but she still had to clean the teacher's office. Three times a week, she would also have to collect water from a river 2 kilometres away and return to class after lessons had already started. On weekends, lest she be punished, she and her girlfriends would collect water for her class and clean the headmaster's office; meanwhile her brother would play soccer.

How Gentil used to spend her days reflects some general statistics of Togo, and the province of Est-Mono in particular. In Est-Mono, one of the ten thirstiest zones of Togo, only 10 per cent of the population has access to potable water, in comparison to the national average of 51 per cent. While five per cent of Togolese have drinking water piped into their home, 27 per cent get water from unprotected wells and 19 per cent from rivers. Only two per cent of the population of Est-Mono has access to sanitation at home. Men usually use nearby forests for sanitation, whereas women walk to distant farms.

Plan Togo, an international NGO, sought to address the lack of water and sanitation facilities in Gentil's village as well as two others, using a gender perspective. But the toilets did not meet everyone's needs and fell into disuse, with "girls paying the heaviest cost," as one teacher explained. Plan Togo sought support from the African-based network CREPA (Regional Centre for Cost-Effective Fresh Water and Sanitation), to identify the original project's limitations and correct them in a pilot project. They identified lack of

consultation and a lack of gender perspective to be the problems.

### **Programme/Projects**

Given the problems identified in the original water and sanitation project for schools, CREPA encouraged the participation of all villagers in the design of the pilot project. Three local coordinators stayed in the villages for six months, developed close ties with the villagers and presented the project to all the stakeholders. Their work included visiting households; advocating a high level of participation of boy and girl students, as well as men and women teachers and administrators; and diagnosing the water and sanitation situation at schools to detect hygiene and sanitation problems.

Based on this input, an action plan for hygiene promotion was approved by the schools and the villages. The final project and the shared responsibilities it entailed were presented to the villages' General Assemblies for their feedback and validation. The project provided water and sanitation facilities, as well as educational resources, to each village and school. They included:

- The construction of a hand-pump in each school;
- A sanitary latrine for girls;
- A hand-washing pot;
- A garbage dump;
- A plastic drinking pot for potable water for each classroom; and
- Nine colourful educational kits adapted to local conditions for each school.

To ensure the success and sustainability of the project, two committees were established in each village:

- The Water Committee manages the money, maintenance and repair of equipment; and
- The School Health Committee controls all the equipment and oversees hygiene.

The members of the School Health Committee are teachers and pupils selected to ensure a gender balance. The School Health Committee has implemented its mandate to bring about change. Students who are unclean are sent back home. Those who do not wash their hands are requested to do so and unclean students are punished.

### **Outcomes**

#### *Income Generation*

- By selling water considered to be sacred, not only are the schools now endowed with the status of nurturing life, they are also generating an income. The three Water Committees have already saved 182,000 F CFA (about US\$ 330); and
- Women now have more time to dedicate to income-generating activities.

#### *Impact on Health*

- Villagers now understand that the source of many diseases is unclean water and inappropriate sanitation; and
- The health of the community, especially school-attending children, has improved and students are absent less often due to illness.

#### *Impact on Gender Equality*

- Many people can identify sources of gender imbalances; and
- Women had been empowered and they wanted to organize public debates to address gender inequality issues.

#### *Impact on the Communities:*

- Community members have changed their behaviour to adopt hygienic practices with water, food and waste; and
- There are now stronger social ties among the four ethnic communities of Agan

### **Key Factors for Success**

Addressing gender imbalances among students and ensuring the participation of the entire community has led to impacts far beyond the immediate results. For example, girls have increased their self-esteem and they are respected as leaders. Gender-balanced School Health committees control the equipment and oversee hygiene.

### **Main Obstacles**

- Poor sanitation habits and facilities; and
- Lack of access to clean water.

### **Looking Ahead – Sustainability and Transferability**

CREPA and Plan Togo instilled in the communities the belief that gender mainstreaming contributes to the success of any project. CREPA and Plan Togo have signed contracts for similar projects in other areas of Togo.

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## **Uganda: Mainstreaming Gender into Policy: Examining Uganda's Gender Water Strategy**

### **Challenges**

Although Uganda is known for having a gender-sensitive approach to development, in the late 1990s some policy areas still needed improvement, including in the water and sanitation sector. In 1999, the government had formulated a Water Policy, and in 2003 the Directorate of Water Development (DWD) published an explicit strategy to help mainstream gender into its plans and activities. This study uses the case of the DWD to measure the commitment of the Ugandan government to mainstreaming gender in its policies and plans, as outlined in the National Gender Policy.

### **Programme/Projects**

The Water Sector Gender Strategy (WSGS) is an initiative of the DWD that aims to enhance gender equity, participation of both women and men in water management, and equal access to and control over water resources in order to alleviate poverty. The Strategy sets out clear aims, rationales and targets. It is designed to provide guidelines to water sector stakeholders on how to mainstream gender in their work plans and for the planning and implementation of water and sanitation programmes within the decentralized districts.

All four DWD Departments have technical staff who handle water sector 'hardware' activities, as well as social scientists who handle the 'software' activities. Gender falls under the software activities, while the hardware activities include engineering and physical infrastructure. The Strategy outlines DWD's gender targets for 2003-2007 and gives specific measures and targets to manage the integration of gender into both the software and hardware sides. The targets include:

- Women and men will be represented in all decision-making forums of the sector.
- Commitment will be secured from top management and investors in the sector to work towards greater gender equality.

- Institutions feeding personnel into the sector will collaborate to incorporate appropriate gender curriculum and improved admission targets by 25 per cent. Recruitment criteria and procedures will be altered for gender sensitivity.
- The Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation (PHAST) tool will be adopted to integrate hardware water supply with awareness building on gender at the community level, hygienic use of water and community based monitoring of water supplies.

### **Outcomes**

The work plan from the Rural Water Department reflects how gender mainstreaming has been translated into planning for rural water development. In 2004 a plan was made for the implementation of software activities. The 2004 plan was able to allocate 12 per cent of the total budget to the software activities which formerly had only been done in an ad hoc manner. "The sector guideline for 2005/6 also specifies that up to 12 per cent of the total water sector conditional grants can be spent on software steps ..." (Ministry of Water, Lands & Environment, 2004). These steps include activities related to advocacy, meetings, and trainings at every stage of the technical work to be done.

The Senior Water Officer in Charge of Management Information Systems at the DWD noted that "there is now funding for community mobilization. It has risen from 3 to 12 per cent. The funding for districts can be used for software activities and gender falls there." This addresses gender concerns because women within the communities are to be trained together with men through such

initiatives. It is hoped that government will continue to increase funding to these and other software activities as the need arises and that budgets are consciously allocated to gender mainstreaming and not just by proxy.

### Key Factors for Success

- *Gender integration in planning:* The gender perspective planning has helped develop a highly gender-responsive approach. The objectives of the related action plan have clear gender-integrated activity profiles, time frames and actors for each activity. The officials in charge in each department are also held accountable for integrating gender according to the guidelines.
- *Gender-sensitive monitoring:* Prior to the Strategy, the DWD used eight indicators to measure performance in the water sector. Using gender-sensitive indicators is a best practice that can be replicated by others who may have difficulties in measuring how effective their gender activities are. It also forces the implementers to measure the gender impact of their activities, because it is directly incorporated into the reporting format.
- *Collaboration:* The collaborative approach used by DWD in working with multiple NGOs and institutions throughout the country was a critical part of the DWD's new approach to water and sanitation service development and delivery.

### Main Obstacles

- *Lack of guidelines:* The DWD realized there were not any clear guidelines as to how to mainstream gender in this sector, despite the fact that gender cannot be divorced from effective water management and use.
- *Lack of trained women:* At the time of the study, there were only a small percentage of women employed by the DWD. This was mainly due to the fact that until recently, water issues focused primarily on technical skills related to science and engineering. In Uganda historically there have been few women in the sciences so this created a significant gender imbalance within the DWD.
- *Lack of control over recruitment:* The DWD does not have control over other arms of the government. For example, recruitment in the water sector is advertised and handled by the Public Service Commission, which has a different

mandate from the water sector. This has had negative implications for the Directorate's plans to improve their male/female staff ratios.

### Looking Ahead - Sustainability and Transferability

The Water Sector Gender Strategy sets a good example of how gender can be strategically mainstreamed into policy and plans at the national level. The Strategy demonstrates that national level policies and plans can be linked effectively and directly with work plans and activities at the decentralized district level. The DWD has developed indicators for monitoring the success of the strategy and plans to continuously review it to avoid loopholes. The Strategy also encourages collaboration between Ministries and like-minded organizations to mainstream gender into the water sector. This, in turn, has helped the Directorate coordinate and develop a sustainable gender-integrated approach to water-related development activities throughout the country. The development of a national water sector gender strategy has also dispelled the misconception that gender mainstreaming only occurs due to donor conditionalities and agendas.

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## **Zimbabwe: Gender mainstreaming in water supply and sanitation in Manzvire Village, Chipinge District**

### **Challenges**

Water supply systems installed soon after Zimbabwe gained independence in 1980 were often based on a supply-driven approach and not sustainable. Women lost much of their productive time travelling long distances to fetch water for their families. This also adversely affected girls' school enrolment – a trend further exacerbated by high dropout rates at puberty due to the lack of sanitary facilities at most schools.

In recognition of the imbalances which existed in the water sector and the question of sustainability of facilities, Zimbabwe embarked on a water sector reform in 1993. Women's participation in project activities was encouraged in line with global trends given the critical links between gender, water and sanitation. Four years later, the Chipinge district adopted a Community-based Management approach to water resource management and introduced it into some of its wards, including the village of Manzvire.

Manzvire village has a population of just over 5,500, with 514 households. About 290 households have access to individual 'Blair' toilets (Ventilated Improved Pit latrines) and 180 have access to pit latrines. At least 45 households were said to have no access to any form of decent sanitation but were allowed temporary access to their neighbours' facilities. There is no surface water in this village, with the closest source the Save River, approximately 15 kilometres away. People use boreholes and shallow wells as water supply sources. The village has 10 bore-holes with at least eight reported to be functional. HIV/AIDS and rural/urban migration contribute to at least 80 per cent of the households being female or orphan-headed.

### **Programme/Projects**

In 2003, the United Nations Children's fund (UNICEF) contributed approximately US\$ 4,000 to the Chipinge Rural District Council (RDC) for rehabilitation of

water supply systems, mainly bore-holes.

Given high external contracting costs, the RDC adopted a community-based approach and targeted funds for community mobilization and training workshops for local well sinkers and latrine builders.

Planning and selecting appropriate technology and sites for new water points, as well as upgrading and rehabilitating existing systems, are jobs that are increasingly based on both men's and women's participation. In Manzvire, the women selected the technology to be used as well as the site locations. An elder remarked, "It is the women who spend much of the time with this resource and we saw it fit for them to have a bigger share when it comes to decisions."

The women also established savings and credit with revolving funds to purchase the locally available spare parts and greasing materials. In Manzvire, women established a cooperative garden. Their male counterparts and husbands were asked to make contributions to the fund when required. The women opened a Post Office Savings Bank account to deposit these community funds.

### **Outcomes**

- Women are actively involved in decision-making and now feel strongly that they are equally effective agents of change with men;
- Since the women's maintenance work is done on a voluntary basis, the work costs significantly less;
- The financial resources provided by UNICEF were targeted to rehabilitate 15 boreholes, but with active women's participation in operation and maintenance,



- 60 boreholes were rehabilitated;
- Women have more time for productive activities such as market gardening, which apart from giving them some cash, improves their nutritional base;
- Women are using interest charged from the savings and credit clubs to maintain bore-holes;
- Girls stay at school longer since they do not have to spend so much time collecting water;
- Better hygiene behaviour is practiced, including use of rubbish pits in local households;
- The health of the village has improved, including a significant decrease in diarrhoeal disease; and
- The village of Manzvire will act as a role model for other communities in UNICEF's documentary.

### Key Factors for Success

#### *Health educators:*

- The Ministry of Health was instrumental in training Village Health Workers, who took up the daunting task of educating and information dissemination to the general public on health and hygiene good practices.
- As a result, in Manzvire, health clubs and other community-led initiatives have been initiated.

#### *Role of elected and traditional leaders:*

- Much of the project's success can be attributed to the effective leadership of their dedicated councillor, Mrs. Chirimambowa, and to traditional leaders who were called upon to resolve disputes.

### Main Obstacles

#### *Males felt their roles were threatened:*

- Initially, in the male-headed households, the husbands felt threatened and disapproved their wives' involvement in project meetings. A UNICEF workshop raised awareness of the benefits of training both men and women, which helped the men accept that their wives were equally important agents of change. The men demonstrated their acceptance by assisting with other household tasks while their wives were attending related community meetings and training.

#### *Traditional dress:*

- The long traditional dress worn by Zimbabwean women inhibited work for the latrine builders, and initially overalls and work-suits were considered inappropriate.

- Women can now freely wear work-suits and overalls during latrine construction and repairing of bore-holes.

### Looking Ahead - Sustainability and Transferability

For future projects, it is important to remember that:

- Gender mainstreaming in itself is not a panacea for solving water and sanitation problems;
- Poverty carries with it limited access to safe water and sanitation and poverty needs to be addressed if true empowerment is to be achieved;
- Labour involved in community-based management must be divided equitably between men and women so that the women do not wind up with even heavier workloads that offset the benefits of the improved water and sanitation facilities; and
- There is a need to invest heavily in capacity building at village, district and national levels. There is also need for institutional set-up to spearhead and assist with the research, documentation and distribution of findings on gender mainstreaming for implementation.

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