

Risk Management and Women's
Empowerment: Sierra Leone Bumbuna
Hydroelectric Project

*Mainstreaming Gender Equality in
Infrastructure Projects
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Sierra Leone Background

- 1991-2002: a civil war, preventing the completion of Bumbuna hydroelectric dam that would bring electricity to Freetown and surrounding areas.
- Human development indicators: among the lowest in the world -- high rates of maternal and infant mortality, limited access to health, education, water sanitation and energy services; indicators worsened since the civil war.
- Thousands of men died in the war; child soldiers; large number of internally displaced people; women had to fend for the families.
- In 2002, GoSL's request to donors to re-invest in the Bumbuna project.
- By 2005, works on the dam resumed with additional social mitigation and post-conflict measures.
- The project required the resettlement of 5 villages and livelihood restoration of nearly one thousand people.



Ensure Women's equal participation in public consultations

- Comprehensive public consultations undertaken for project preparation.
- Women included in all of the public consultations.
- Consultations held with women farmers and their farming associations; their suggestions included in project design.
- Consultations with young people: 50:50 male-female ratio; their ideas were developed into youth skills training programs.



Bumbuna Trust for Benefit Sharing

- GoSL, with support from donors and private sector established Bumbuna Trust.
- Portion of profits from electricity sale is deposited in the Trust.
- The Trust supports the Upper Seli Community Development Initiative which aims to share benefits with indirectly affected populations in the area around the reservoir and downstream of the dam and with future generations.
- The Trust has two main activities:
 - **Participatory Community Driven Development:** Community groups are formed through social mobilization. The design sub-projects, receive funds from the Trust and implement them. Sub-projects include rehabilitation of community infrastructure e.g. access roads, water and sanitation; health and school facilities.
 - **Youth Capacity Building.** Grants given to community-based youth organizations. Young men and women equally offered training in business, trade and life skills.



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Strategic interventions for risk mitigation

- **Food Support Program:** included in project design to offset the negative consequences of loss of farmland and relocation.
 - **Food bundles for families:** selected based on interviews and preferences of affected populations (PAPs) and delivered to specified pickup points in towns and villages and with a third party monitoring.
- **Stabilized Agriculture Program (SAP)** for women for both farm and off-farm commercial activities.
- **Livelihood Assessment and Income Restoration (LAIR) Program for women:** alternate livelihood, skill and entrepreneurship development, literacy and management training.



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Resettlement Site Construction at Bumbuna in January 2008





Using Bank's OP for the empowerment of Women

- Compensation mechanisms provide fund and support directly to women.
- Under the project rules, women are required to have access to Savings group, revolving loan facility and skill training.
- Joint titles of lands, houses and assets are given in the names of the wife and the husband.
- Having a title to asset improves women's access to credit.
- Women are the decision makers in community sub-projects e.g. water and sanitation committees; mini-hydropower and renewable energy.
- women are playing key roles as community leaders.