

Gender Issues in Water Sector

Mainstreaming Gender Equality in Infrastructure Projects
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Gender in Water

Rationale for Support

More women's participation at the community level and better capturing of gender-differentiated needs result in:

Women Empowerment

- Women's increased access to direct project benefits (training, agri extension, sanitation, access to quality water)
- Women's increased access to indirect project benefits (confidence, gender stereotypes, participation in local decision-making/governance)
- Time saving and better health outcomes for women

Better Project Performance and Outcomes

- Improved efficiency in water use and distribution
- Better cost recovery
- Improved O&M
- Sustainability through community capacity development

Irrigation—not traditional women's domain

- Women's participation in WUAs/committee
- Women and men to participate in training (gender sensitization, financial management, O&M, canal and drainage cleaning, irrigated agriculture)
- Wage labor – equal pay for equal work
- Capacity of EA in gender mainstreaming (including consultant team and field workers)
- Sex-disaggregated input, output, outcome data collection
- Policy issues (landowning household heads to be WUA committee members)

Rural Water Supply & Sanitation —women's domain, but...

- Still limited representation of women in decision-making (WUGs, project staff, NGO staff, EA) – needs to be addressed
- Women and men to participate in training (particularly men for sanitation)
- Income generation component to provide women's economic empowerment (e.g., SRI 3rd RWSSP)
- Sex-disaggregated input, output, and outcome data
- Capacity of EA in gender mainstreaming (including consultant team and field workers)
- Sector policy link : Ministry's guidelines on gender mainstreaming in RWSS (e.g. Cambodia Tonle Sap RWSS) to institutionalize in the sector

Challenges of Large-Scale Subsectors

In 2004-2005 ADB conducted a "GenScan" of 21 water sector projects approved in 1995-2002 (25% sample)

- Effective gender mainstreaming only observed in projects with community participation elements (15)
- Large-scale flood protection infra, urban waste water treatment, urban piped-water system—'No gender benefit' category, but should we care and how?

For Discussion

- Some efforts made in these subsectors:
 - Equal pay, equal wage; HIV/AIDS and trafficking prevention
 - Addressing gender equality and women's empowerment through livelihood restoration and resettlement planning among affected communities (e.g., BAN Jamuna-Meghna River Erosion Mitigation Project)
 - Institutionalizing gender responsive sector policy/roadmaps and women's representation in water related decision-making bodies (e.g. water board BAN?)
 - Scholarships/internships to women engineers to increase their opportunities in the water sector (e.g., Lao PDR)

For Discussion

- Possible gaps for future consideration
 - Is gender really not so relevant to these subsectors? - Research needed on the impact of these types of water infra on gender equality and women empowerment to articulate benefits – A myth buster for 'gender neutrality'?
 - These large scale infrastructure investments can go beyond simply building physical infrastructure to build better systems and services (e.g., urban water customer services section – Kathmandu)

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