

CAMBODIA: GRANT 0018
TONLE SAP RURAL WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION SECTOR PROJECT¹
By Tulin Pulley, ADB Consultant, and
Samvada Kheng, Former Gender Specialist, Cambodia Resident Mission



Context:

Cambodia has one of the lowest levels of water and sanitation coverage in Southeast Asia. In rural areas, only about 32% of the population has access to safe water and 13% to sanitation. As a result, poor people--especially women, children and the elderly—suffer greatly from waterborne and water related diseases. Cambodia's infant mortality rate is the second highest in Asia. Providing access to water and sanitation is integral to the Government's efforts to improve health and living conditions and meet the Cambodian Millennium Development Goals.

Expected Outcomes and Scope:

ADB's *Tonle Sap Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Project* aims to enhance the health of low-income communities in rural areas by improving their hygiene and sustained access to safe drinking water and effective sanitation. The Project is implemented by the Ministry of Rural Development (MRD) to provide rural water supply and sanitation (RWSS) facilities to about 1,760 villages in five provinces around the Tonle Sap basin (Battambang, Kampong Chhnang, Kampong Thom, Pursat and Siem Reap) through the following components:

¹ Grant 0018-CAM: Tonle Sap Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Project was approved on 20 October 2005 for \$18 million (out of total cost of \$24 million). The Project became effective 2 February 2006. Expected Project completion date based on 2008 information from Project Director is 31 December 2011.

1. Community Mobilization and Skills Development to strengthen the community capability to design, co-finance, build, operate and manage community based water supply and sanitation facilities and increase hygiene awareness through information, education and communication campaigns;

2. Water Supply Improvement to increase access to safe water to 1.09 million people through the construction of adequate facilities based on community demand;

3. Sanitation Improvement to expand access to sanitation facilities for about 0.72 million people;

4. Capacity Building and Institutional Support to improve the capacity of government agencies, particularly at the local level, to plan and facilitate provisions for quality water and sanitation services in target communities.

Gender Inclusive Design:

Women in Cambodia have important roles in the RWSS sector as they are responsible for a variety of tasks related to water, sanitation and hygiene (e.g. collection of water, cooking, and cleaning). During the design phase in 2004, about 52% of the total population in the five targeted provinces of the Tonle Sap basin was female including 29% female headed households. The Project was classified with a Gender and Development theme because women were expected to benefit substantially from (i) the time savings and improved access to safe water by having more time to participate in income-generating activities and to attend school; (ii) their active membership in Water and Sanitation User Groups (WSUG) and Boards by having equal opportunities for technical training and RWSS-related skills development; and (iii) improved health by the reduction of waterborne and water-related diseases. A Gender Action Plan (GAP) was prepared to address gender disparities in the RWSS sector and ensure Project benefits accrue to both men and women. The component-wise GAP is summarized below:

1. Community Mobilization and Skills Development:

- Participation in Project Awareness Promotion Campaigns will be gender-balanced.
- At least 25% of NGO community mobilization teams will be female.
- Women's concerns will be included in the selection of sub-projects.
- Women will have a major role in technology choices and preparation of village water supply and sanitation plans.
- 40% female membership is targeted in WSUG Boards. At least 50% of the WSUG Board members receiving training will be women.



- Mixed gender participation will be promoted in the Hygiene and Sanitation Education and Promotion Campaigns. However, at least 40% of all hygiene and sanitation education participants will be men.
- At least 40% women will be targeted in RWSS skills development training programs (installation, construction, and operation and maintenance of latrines, wells, rainwater harvesting, filters and jars).

2. Water Supply Improvement:

- Specific considerations that affect women (e.g. access to water points, child safety, and operating hand pumps) will be reviewed prior to rehabilitation and new construction of water points.
- Female headed households will receive equal compensation and allowances according to the Land Acquisition and Resettlement Framework.
- Consultation with men and women will take place regarding the location of groundwater testing and soil resistivity surveys.
- Qualified females will have equal access to training and employment opportunities for quality testing of water supply systems established by the Project.

3. Sanitation Improvement:

- Both men and women will participate in water use and hygiene education trainings and public awareness campaigns. Water use and hygiene improvement messages will be designed to appeal to both men and women.
- Focus group discussions will be held in separate gender groups as well as mixed gender groups to address the sanitation and hygiene concerns of both men and women.
- Latrine designs will be prepared with gender considerations (safe, private and convenient in terms of location and adequate space).
- Various designs and types will be introduced for informed choice to fit individual requirements and financially affordable levels.
- Women will participate in the choice of latrine type and design selection.
- Women will be trained in the care and maintenance of household latrines.
- At least 40% of all hygiene and sanitation education participants will be male.

4. Capacity Building and Institutional Support:

- Gender training will be provided to MRD staff at all administrative levels and in commune councils. Women will have equal access to employment and training programs in water and sanitation sector management.
- Capacity building of private entrepreneurs will include women's better knowledge for household level water security and better sanitation and hygiene practices.
- National RWSS database, monitoring and evaluation and management information systems will include gender monitoring data and indicators.
- Gender Working Group of MRD will prepare national guidelines on mainstreaming gender in the RWSS sector within 3 years.

5. Project Implementation Arrangements:

- The Project Steering Committee will include the chairperson of Gender Working Group of MRD as a permanent member.

- The Project will consult with the Ministry of Women's Affairs and its provincial departments for gender action plan implementation as needed.
- The PMU will include one Gender Officer to supervise the Gender Action Plan implementation and each PIU will include the Community Development Officer to implement and monitor gender activities at provincial and community levels.
- At least one member of the female commune council will cooperate and oversee the Project's Gender Action Plan implementation.
- The community mobilization process and village engagement plans will mainstream gender needs and concerns in Project activities.
- Project benefits and impacts will be monitored through gender-disaggregated data. Survey respondents will include both men and women.
- Progress reports to ADB and the Government will include gender-based updates prepared by the PMU.
- The international and national gender and social consultants will conduct gender awareness training for project units, establish gender-disaggregated indicators for project performance monitoring and evaluation and coordinate with other specialists during sub-project preparations and implementation.
- The independent Monitoring and Evaluation specialist will monitor implementation of the GAP.

Progress and Results to Date:

After two and a half years of implementation (from February 2006 to September 2008), the Project has begun to report significant gender-based achievements which have already resulted in (i) providing women stronger influence in the management of water supply and sanitation systems; (ii) improving their leadership skills; and (iii) increasing their participation in identification, construction, operation and maintenance of water supply and sanitation schemes which will contribute to the sustainability of the constructed facilities. Details of gender-based achievements to date are discussed under each Project component below:

1. Community Mobilization and Skills Development:

At the district level, information workshops were held in 17 districts to inform district officers, commune councilor (CC) Chiefs, CC members, all village leaders and NGOs about the Project, with an emphasis on women's key roles in household level water management and sanitation, on participation of both men and women in the village action planning process and the Project's requirement to have at least 40% of female members in the WSUG Boards. Due to the limited number of women in these positions, women's participation in district workshops ranged from 8% to 13%.



At the village level, 1,020 village information meetings were organized by NGOs and PIU-CD, in close cooperation with commune councilors and village leaders, to inform villagers about the Project and villagers' expected contributions. Each family was asked to send at least one representative. Due to men's migration for work far away from home, many women attended meetings and could express ideas about the location of wells and community ponds, as well as each family's contribution. Female participation ranged from 46% to 62%.

Participatory rural appraisal (PRA) methodology was used in the village selection, taking into consideration the needs of the poor women and men, women related health incidents and women's and girls' difficulties with fetching and transporting water for family use. Female participation varied from 48% to 60%.

The Project Implementation Unit (PIU) teams conducted rapid participatory assessment of water supply situation in selected villages and formed the WSUGs for each potential water point to facilitate well site locations. 2,094 meetings for water point site selection and land acquisition process were held where female participation ranged from 42% to 60%.

From 2006 to 2008, about 5,199 WSUGs have been formed through the village engagement process, covering 115,731 households. On average, 48% of the WSUG members are female. To ensure women's leadership positions at the WSUG Boards, project staff explained women's key roles in water management to communities and women candidates were elected separately from male candidates to have at least 2 women among 5 Board members. A total of 5,228 WSUG Boards were formed including 37,877 members with 42.90% female representation which already surpasses the 40% target in the GAP. Most of female Board members are treasurers collecting family contributions before the construction of wells or community ponds or they are in charge of hygiene control around the wells.

Female participation in training on roles and responsibilities of WSUG Board members varied from 40% to 49%. MRD agreed to change its policy which stated that "the Chief of the WSUG Board should be the Head of the family" to allow married women to be Chief of WSUG Board and to avoid the situation of wives attending training on behalf of their husbands.

4,664 training sessions on checklist and supervision of well construction were organized with 27,799 participants, including 11,269 women (40.53%). Female participation, among the five provinces, varied from 28% to 49%. 1,837 training sessions on hand pump Operation and Maintenance were held for 7,473 Board members, including 2,859 women. Female participation varied from 33% to 40%; due to low literacy level and lack of technical knowledge.

Under the Project, communities are expected to provide 7% in-kind and 3% cash contributions. While cost escalation for materials has resulted in the villagers' willingness to contribute their share to the Project, it has been difficult for poor villagers to meet their in-kind labor contributions as this relates to an opportunity cost for villagers to earn income for their families.

2. Water Supply Improvement:

During 2006-2008, the Project contracted 2,583 drill wells out of which 1,283 are completed, and 1,387 combined wells out of which 493 are completed, and 227 hand dug wells out of which 75 are completed. The PIU teams provided training to WSUG members on contract supervision during well construction and on operation and maintenance after well construction. An Operations and Maintenance Manual was also provided to the WSUG. Moreover, 6 community ponds have been completed while 5 other ponds are still under construction with community participation (both in-kind and cash contributions). The Project has opened income generating opportunities by hiring skilled people in the communities to build wells.

Family contribution to one new well ranged from 20,000 riels (around US\$5) to 40,000 riels (around US\$10). The Project has identified poor female headed households and promoted WSUG members to support each other by allowing poor female headed households to contribute 10,000 riels and the middle-off families contribute more to cover the 3% community contribution for each well.

Interviewed female villagers were very happy with their new wells since their children could take a bath several times a day and had fewer illnesses and their daughters no longer carried the burden of collecting water from 1 to 2 km away and of taking a bath far from home, facing insecurity.

3. Sanitation Improvement:

Prior to household and public latrines construction, PMU and 5 PIUs conducted 5 public awareness promotion campaigns in each province on “No open defecation in villages.”, and also held 724 sanitation consultations, totaling 67,387 WSUGs members and villagers (42.82% women). Although the GAP targeted at least, 40% of all hygiene and sanitation education participants to be men, this was only achieved in Battambang (57%) and Pursat provinces (46%). In the other three provinces, male participation ranged only from 32% to 36%.

3,329 household latrines have been completed. As a pilot, community managed household latrine construction program (small contracts not more than US\$5000 per package) was introduced aiming to promote the community’s active participation and leadership for sanitation improvements at the local level. The PIU teams and district officers trained and assisted WSUG Boards in community education campaigns and project management at the community level to lead the community mobilization process in 10 villages (two villages per province), by identifying household latrine requirements and offering villagers four different latrine design options. The Project also asked local authorities (commune Councils and village chiefs) to submit the proposals for public latrines (at pagodas, commune council offices, health centers, rural market places, tourist places and schools) with recipient institutions sharing 50% of the construction cost and being fully responsible for operation and maintenance management. Seven places for construction of public latrines were approved.

4. Capacity Building and Institutional Support Component:

The target set by the GAP for contracted NGOs assisting PIU in community mobilization and sanitation promotion to have at least 25% of female staff was achieved in all provinces. In Siemreap, 50% of contracted NGO staff are women (2 men and 2 women) while in the other 4 target provinces, 25% of contracted NGO staff are women (1 woman and 3 men). In each PIU, there is a female project staff responsible for gender and community development mainstreaming gender needs and concerns in Project activities; emphasizing gender issues at village and district level meetings; and ensuring all PIU progress reports include sex disaggregated data. Project staff capacity development programs have also included 30% female trainees.

5. Project Implementation Arrangements:

The GAP has been integrated in the Village Engagement Plan and key gender indicators from the Gender Action Framework have been included in the Project Performance Monitoring System. The PMU Gender Officer is included as a member of the MRD Gender Working Group and the group's chairperson has been appointed as a permanent member of the Project Steering Committee. One international consultant (6 months) and one domestic consultant (30 months) have been recruited for community development including gender based activities.

