

3.2 Gender, Governance and Water Resources Management

Introduction

Since the 1990s, the international community has recognised and accepted that good governance plays a significant role in improving the livelihoods of people. Weak water management impacts negatively on poor men and women through unreliable services, limited access to services, and higher costs for inefficient and ineffective services which often subsidise the rich. Improved water governance can lead to equitable water resources development and access for all. Persistent development problems, as well as the current and predicted water crises, reflect failures in governance (UNDP, 2002). There appears to be a correlation between weak water governance, persistent poverty and inadequate access to water for vulnerable groups, leading to stunted development.

Good governance can have positive impacts on gender inequalities, including the following:

- Ensuring that poor women and men's human rights and fundamental freedoms are respected, allowing them to live with dignity.
- Introducing inclusive and fair rules, institutions and practices governing social interactions to improve outreach to the vulnerable, such as poor men and women, and the younger and older generations.
- Ensuring that women are equal partners with men in decision making over development, use, technology choice, financing, and other aspects of water management.
- Ensuring that the environmental and social needs of future generations are reflected in current policies and practices.
- Focusing water development policies toward eradicating poverty and improving the livelihoods of women and men.

Given that water is key to meeting most of the Millennium Development Goals, the solution is not only in developing new technologies and increasing supply, but also in managing the available resource effectively, efficiently and equitably. It also entails a rational assessment of the competing demands for water and equitable allocations based on a list of priorities that take into account the needs of all stakeholders.

It is against this background that there has been a move towards water reforms aimed at improved water resources management. During the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg in 2002, world leaders set a target for all countries to develop IWRM and water efficiency plans by 2005. It is through the IWRM planning process, with multi-stakeholder consultations, that issues of equity, access and creation of an enabling environment can be addressed. The major challenge has been the meaningful involvement of women and men from the grassroots.

Challenges of gendered approaches in water governance

Water governance refers to the range of political, social, economic and administrative systems that are in place to regulate the development and management of water resources and provision of services at different levels of society. The involvement of women water users in stakeholder consultations and forums demands specific attention and approaches. The current tools used in multi-stakeholder consultations are mainly suited for an educated, literate group, and will require

adaptation for use at the local level. Many women for example, in conservative social contexts, face cultural constraints that prevent them from speaking in public while poor women face economic constraints that do not allow them to voice their needs.

Water has been classified as an economic good, and has a cost attached to its development, distribution, operation and maintenance. While the principle of paying for water is justified, and sometimes necessary, poor women are often not able to afford the tariffs that have been set. Access to safe and affordable water is also a basic human right and this right should also inform discussions on the economic value of water. It has been acknowledged that those who cannot pay should at least pay in kind — but for the poor there is an opportunity cost to this when their time could have been used for earning income. Often when free labour is required, women usually provide it, but if there is paid work it usually goes to men.

The efficacy of IWRM derives from institutional frameworks with sufficient capacity to manage water resources. It is assumed that the institutions will be accountable and transparent. However, there is little attention to gender concerns in the water governance structures or processes. This problem needs to be addressed and constraints to mainstreaming gender in water institutions identified. Institutions are grounded in norms, culture, market systems and policies that often perpetuate gender inequalities (Odgaard, 2002). Poor women and men's practical and locally important knowledge is rarely recognised or tapped, and many lack the skills necessary for participating in committees. For most poor women and men, time is a valuable resource and its use in meetings has to be balanced with their domestic and income generating activities.

Power relations also influence the way water is allocated and the choice of technology. An irrigation pipeline is generally associated with productive use of water, and men have more influence than women over the utilisation of the resources. A hand-dug well on the other hand is generally associated with women's domestic use of water. While this use can be considered productive, and provides benefits to women and men, it may not be given a priority. The decision-making mechanisms and politics associated with water allocations have different implications for men and women.

The natural environment shapes the way poor women and men access water and the way they relate to water management structures. Frequent droughts or perennial scarcity of water means that the poor often do not have access to water or have to use poor quality water. Women and men in marginalised areas lacking in infrastructure, and removed from the central government will access water through different local systems, rather than through organised services provided by governments. This further implicates their level of participation in decision-making compared to those who are more centrally located.

An emerging challenge in governance is the issue of the rights of girls and boys. In sub-Saharan Africa, the HIV/AIDS pandemic has created a rise in the number of child-headed households. Decision-making in governance has always assumed that there will be adult men (and sometimes women) as heads of households. Children heading households are under age and unable to express their choices in public because of their young age and low socio-economic status. Water governance needs to take account of the needs and roles of girls and boys in water services provision.

Community management has been identified as a mechanism for ensuring effective water governance at the local level, especially for common property resources. It is often assumed that the local institutions are inclusive and take care of fair distribution of resources. However, in reality, communities consist of different categories of men and women in different positions of power aiming to improve their own situations. Effective water governance needs to incorporate a differentiated analysis of community and community management.

The Way Forward

Good water governance designed to ensure effective water resources management that allows for decision making from all stakeholders, including poor women and men, should provide access to safe and affordable drinking water and basic sanitation for all, and meet water needs for improved livelihoods. It would also allow for the development of an enabling environment including supportive policies, legal instruments and fair pricing structures.

Currently there is little evidence to suggest that water management has deliberately and consciously addressed gender concerns. Effective gender-sensitive water management will require:

- A conscious effort to consult with men and women during the planning processes. This can be achieved through the use of gender-inclusive participatory tools designed to engage grassroots women and men.
- A focus on gender in IWRM should not only target civil society, but should also address all water management structures and institutions, recognising the different constraints faced by men and women, and ensuring that there is equity.
- Capacity building at all levels is a critical component of water governance and for the incorporation of gender concerns.
- Issues of gender, governance and water management should not be viewed as women's issues only but should be recognised as broad issues of power relations, control and access to resources by disadvantaged groups, who may be women, children or men.
- The importance of social aspects of water management also needs to be taken into account. Women play a central role in managing water for social, hygiene, health and productive uses.

Four Key steps of a gender-approach in governance¹

Information

Context-specific information about women and men's different experiences, problems and priorities is essential to effective gender mainstreaming. Statistical information should be routinely disaggregated into women and men's experiences, with gender analysis being part of the situational analysis. This will assist in identifying inequalities where they exist and in making a case for developing policies that address these inequalities.

Consultation, advocacy and decision making

It is important that women and marginalised groups have a strong voice to ensure that their views are taken into account. This means promoting the involvement of women and men in consultation and decision making from the community to the highest levels of management.

¹ Adapted from Derbyshire, 2002.

Action to promote gender sensitive beneficiary groups

Action to promote greater equality in decision making and opportunity for poor women and men should be based on context specific sex-disaggregated data and gender analytical information.

Action to promote gender sensitive organisations

Gendered approaches in water governance will depend on the skills, knowledge and commitment of staff involved in implementation and management. Developing appropriate capacity in staff as well as addressing gender difference and inequality in organisations is crucial to creating inclusive water sector organisations.

Water governance cannot be good governance if there is no deliberate attempt to address the institutions, policies, legal frameworks and technology instruments that perpetuate gender inequalities. A gender approach in governance should be an integral part of setting up governance structures and mechanisms.

References

Beltrán, Elizabeth Peredo 2004. *Water, Privatisation and Conflict: The Women of Cochabamba Valley*. Heinrich Böll Foundation.

Anna Grossman A, N. Johnson, et al, 2003. *Diverting the Flow: A Resource Guide to Gender, Rights and Water Privatisation*.

This publication is a resource guide for policymakers, and human rights, environmental, and economic and gender justice advocates working on global policy, to examine the impact that the privatisation of goods and services like water has on the livelihoods of women, particularly poor women.

Available at: <http://www.wedo.org/files/divertingtheflow.pdf>

Aguilar, Lorena. 2004. *Fact sheet: Gender Indicators*, IUCN - Community Conservation Coalition.

Fact sheets about the linkages of the gender equity approach and gender indicators, supported in lessons learned in international initiatives.

Available at:

http://www.iucn.org/themes/spg/portal/seminar/background_papers/iucn_documents/gender/protected_areas.pdf

Begum Shamsun Nahar et al, 2002. *Workshop Report on Pro Poor Water Governance*, Gender and Water Alliance.

This is a summary of a workshop hosted by GWA and gives an overview of the important elements of gender and governance. This report will be of particular use to practitioners, government officials and policy makers.

Available at: www.genderandwater.org/page/732

Cap-Net (2002) *The Importance of Local Ownership, Partnership and Demand Responsiveness*.

This is a brief and succinct introduction to water governance issues giving the rationale for water management and key principles for it. It is useful for those wanting to advocate for governance and convincing those who are still opposed to the principles. There are other documents on this site that give a background to IWRM in clear simple language easily understood by all. It is useful for academics, researchers, policy makers, NGOs, Government officers, water managers and utilities.

Available at:

http://cap-net.org/FileSave/65_Capacity_building_ofr_IWRM_3_principles.pdf

Derbyshire, H, 2002. *Gender Manual: Practical Guidelines for Development Policy Makers*, DFID.

A practical handbook that outlines the concepts of gender, aiming at assisting non-gender specialists with addressing gender issues. It gives key areas for gender mainstreaming. The book is useful for policy level NGO staff, government officers, researchers and academics.

Available at: <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/gendermanual.pdf>

Cleaver, Frances, 1998. *Moral ecological rationality, institutions and the management of communal resources*.

This thesis gives a conceptual overview of water resources management at the local level giving practical examples from working with a local community. It is useful for researchers, academics and policy makers.

Available at: <http://www.indiana.edu/~iascp/Final/cleaver.pdf>

Cleaver Frances and D. Elson, 1995. *Women and Water Resources: Continued Marginalization and New Policies*, London: International Institute for Environment and Development, Gatekeeper Series No. 49.

The article gives an insight into some of the gender issues that need to be considered when introducing IWRM. It is a useful publication that looks at IWRM from a gender perspective throwing caution to the commoditisation of the resource. It is useful for practitioners, policy makers, researchers, academics and water managers.

Global Water Partnership (GWP), no date, *Catalyzing Change: a Handbook for Developing integrated water resources management (IWRM) and Water Efficiency Plans*, Technical Committee

This succinct booklet gives the principles of IWRM and how to carry out water efficiency plans. The document can be downloaded from the web page making it easy to access. The book is useful for water managers, utilities, government officers, NGOs and policy makers.

Available at: <http://www.gwpforum.org/gwp/library/Handbook.pdf>

Global Water Partnership, no date. *Sharing Knowledge for Equitable Efficient and Sustainable Water Resources Management: Tool Box*

The toolbox gives the principles of IWRM, guiding the use to the key principles as well as justification for the necessity of IWRM. It is a good way of understanding the principles and useful for convincing those who may be opposed to IWRM.

Available at: <http://www.gwptoolbox.org/>

MAMA-86, 2002 *Drinking Water in Ukraine: Communication and Empowerment for Local and International Action*. 3rd Edition. Kyiv.

Allély, D, O. Drevet-Dabbous, J. Etienne, J. Francis, A. Morel à l'Huissier, P. Chappé, and G. Verdelhan Cayre, (2002). *Water Gender and Sustainable Development: Lessons learnt from French co-operation in sub-Saharan Africa*. Paris, France : Drevet-Dabbous Groupe de recherche et d'échanges technologique.

Schreiner, Barbara, Barbara van Koppen and Kathy Eales, 2003. *'Gender Mainstreaming in Water Policy and Legislation: the Case of South Africa'*. Paper developed for the Gender in Court Session at the 3rd World Water Forum, Kyoto, Japan.

A paper that gives an overview of progress in water reforms in South Africa from a gender perspective. It is useful as a case study example.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2002. *Deepening Democracy in a fragmented World*, Human Development Reports various years.

These are a series of global reports that show progress in human development and are generally useful in understanding growth trends. The reports have growth indexes from around the world and some data may have sex-disaggregated information.

Available at: <http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2002/en/pdf/overview.pdf>

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2002, *Dialogue on Effective Water Governance, Update*.

The dialogue gives an insight into the governance debate, defining key principles of water governance and helps in clear understanding of the subject. It is a useful document for advocacy and assisting those who may still not be convinced about integrated water management.

WEDO, 2003. *Diverting the Flow: A Resource Guide to Gender, Rights and Water Privatisation*. Women's Environment and Development Organization, New York.

A useful resource for analysing the rights of women and vulnerable groups within the context of privatisation. The book enhances understanding of issues related to water rights, policies and legislation. It is particularly useful to government officials, water managers, utilities, academics and NGOs.

Available at: <http://www.wedo.org/files/divertingtheflow.pdf>

Murshid, Sharmeen, 2000. *Water Discourse: Where Have All the Women Gone?*

Available at: www.iiav.nl/nl/ic/water/water_vision.html

Spanish language resources

Mujeres de la Alianza Social Continental, 2004. *Las Mujeres en la defensa del Agua como Derecho Fundamental*. Disponible en: REBRIP / CUT – Rua Caetano Pinto. 575 – Brás CEP 03041-000 São Paulo – SP – Brasil Tel: (55) 11 2108 9129 e-mail: secc.asc@cut.org.br

La presente publicación presenta dos estudios realizados por el Comité de Mujeres de la Alianza Social Continental, para contribuir a la elaboración de una propuesta de estrategia de acciones y políticas desde la visión de las mujeres, en defensa de uno de los recursos más importantes y preciados para la vida: el agua. Se presenta los resultados y problemáticas surgidas de los estudios de caso de Bolivia y Brasil llevadas a cabo el 2003.

El conflicto generado por la privatización del agua en Cochabamba, Bolivia en el 2000, es un caso que ejemplifica claramente los procesos de privatización del agua, muestra los grados de impacto y la diversidad de factores y tensiones en las que desarrolla la problemática. Además evidencia una contradicción que existe en torno al agua en el mundo de hoy: privatización versus bien común.

El otro estudio de caso analiza los impactos de la privatización de servicios relativos al agua sobre los derechos de las mujeres, a través de un proyecto realizado en las represas del río Xingu de la región amazónica del Brasil. El proyecto fue el motivo por el que las mujeres de Altamira y de Transa masónica en Pará, se movilizaron durante muchos años para impedir su construcción

Las propuestas de acciones pretenden contribuir a la lucha de las organizaciones de mujeres en el mundo para evitar que las políticas neoliberales sigan trabajando con el agua, profundicen los impactos negativos, impulsen la no valoración los saberes locales para la gestión del agua y las implicaciones negativas de la privatización en los derechos de las mujeres,

Gender and water Alliance, 2003. *Género y Agua, Informe de Desarrollo sobre Género y Agua. Perspectivas de Género en las Políticas del Sector de Agua*. Gender and Water Alliance.

El contenido es un aporte al análisis de los avances en políticas de género y agua en diferentes países. Un documento que es un primer paso en el proceso central de la promoción de género que se está traduciendo en políticas por los gobiernos y donantes en los últimos años.

Comentarios:

El análisis del manejo sostenible de los recursos hídricos y la equidad de género en el campo del manejo del agua, provee de argumentos para afirmar que: i) Involucrar a hombres y mujeres en roles influyentes en los diferentes niveles de decisión puede acelerar la consecución de la sostenibilidad en el manejo de los escasos recursos hídricos, ii) La gestión del agua realizada de una manera integrada y sostenible, puede contribuir significativamente a mejorar la equidad de género porque aumenta el acceso a los recursos hídricos y a los servicios relacionados con el agua, tanto de mujeres y hombres para cubrir las necesidades básicas. Así se aborda el progreso que los gobiernos y las agencias de cooperación han logrado en la aplicación de estos argumentos.

Soto, Betty, María Esther Udaeta, Gloria Lizárraga, 2004. *Políticas Públicas de Género, Auditoria de Género: Sectores de Saneamiento Básico y Riego de Bolivia*.

El libro presenta una investigación que muestra los avances y el desarrollo de la incorporación de la perspectiva de género y equidad en las políticas públicas, coadyuvando a la lucha contra la pobreza, la superación de la marginalidad y el impulso al capital social.

Comentario:

Las políticas públicas según el texto son las posiciones que toma un gobierno respecto a un problema determinada y su importancia radica en que define medidas concretas que orientan las acciones y recursos para la solución del problema, para lo cual es importante la participación ciudadana, que las políticas respondan a las demandas y necesidades de la mayoría.

Los resultados de la investigación muestran a nivel bisectorial que las políticas de género en el país han desarrollado los macro lineamientos que fueron la base para la formulación de políticas sectoriales. Los enfoques de género sectoriales no dejan visualizar la integración de equidad de género en sus políticas.

Permite identificar los efectos en hombres y mujeres de la población de las políticas sectoriales, a nivel de las y los profesionales operativos a través de la ejecución de programas, proyectos que han generado diversas experiencias, que no se encuentran sistematizadas. Las y los usuarios de los sistemas de agua y riego demuestran una gran sensibilización por el tema de género y una práctica de la equidad a nivel comunal y familiar, por lo que se hace necesario tomar en cuenta esos avances en la formulación de políticas a partir de las diferencias existentes a nivel local entre hombres y mujeres ricos y pobres de ámbito rural y urbano

El instrumento metodológico ha permitido analizar y llevar adelante la auditoría con objetividad, lo que se demuestra por los resultados claros y concretos y permite concluir que existe un estancamiento de la Transversalización del género en los sectores auditados.

BID, no date, *Plan de Acción del BID para la integración de Género*

This Gender Mainstreaming Action Plan seeks to reactivate efforts and generate new energy around the advances achieved to date. The Plan builds on accumulated experience indicating that promoting gender equality and investing in women's capabilities are fundamental for improving the impact of development interventions in Latin America and the Caribbean. Investing in women - in their access to information, resources, opportunities and spheres of political decision making - contributes to poverty reduction, economic growth and good governance at the local and national levels.

The Action Plan brings together the commitments of all operations divisions and relevant departments of the Bank in the development of actions that aim to improve equality between men and women. The likelihood of success implementing this Plan is high because it represents a collaborative agreement and shared commitment between different members of the institution, including the high levels of the Administration, professional staff and assistants involved in the design, supervision, monitoring and evaluation of operations supported by the Bank.

Disponible en:

<http://www.aprchile.cl/pdfs/Plande%20Accion%20para%20Integracion%20generoSbid.pdf>

Villalobos, Guiselle Rodríguez, Montserrat Blanco Lobo y Francisco Azofeifa Cascante. 2004. *La Diversidad Hace La Diferencia*. UICN y HIVOS.

This book intends to highlight the importance of biodiversity in the broadest sense of the term, by making visible and illustrating the differentiated relations that women and men establish with nature and the consequences thereof in regard to development promotion. This document is basically focused on the recognition of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the National Biodiversity Strategies (NBS), as participation and awareness-raising mechanisms of our societies to build a new form of relation between human beings and their environment.

Disponible en:

http://www.generoyambiente.org/admin/admin_biblioteca/documentos/biodiversidad.pdf
(Spanish)

http://www.generoyambiente.org/admin/admin_biblioteca/documentos/BIODIVERSITY.pdf (English)

Berrón Sañudo, Linda, ed. 2005. *Everything Counts! Valuing Environmental Initiatives with a Gender Equity Perspective in Latin America*.

Compilation of a selection of thirty experiences from Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Peru and two international experiences about the outcomes in making the linkages between gender and environment, as people working in social sciences include ecological considerations, and the inclusion of the gender equity approach in all technical processes of conservation and management of the resources.

Disponible en:

http://www.generoyambiente.org/admin/admin_biblioteca/documentos/EVERYTHING%20COUNTS.pdf (English)

UICN. 2004. *Everything Counts! Valuing environmental initiatives with a gender equity perspective in Latin America*

El objetivo de este documento es reconocer los esfuerzos que se realizan desde diversos lugares de mundo por mejorar las condiciones de vida de mujeres y hombres, y en especial, de las relaciones que establecen entre ellos, en el uso y beneficio que proporcionan los recursos naturales del medio en que viven. Muestra, este conjunto de 30 experiencias, el avance en la vinculación entre ambiente y género, tanto por la apropiación de la dimensión ecológica por parte de las personas que trabajan en los temas sociales, como también por la redimensión de los procesos técnicos de conservación y uso de los recursos

Disponible en:

http://www.generoyambiente.org/admin/admin_biblioteca/documentos/Todo-cuenta.pdf
(Spanish)

R.Meinzen-Dick, M. Zwartveen. 1997. *Gendered participation in water management: issues and illustrations from water users' associations in South Asia*.

Este documento se preparó para el Taller Sobre Agua y Mujer, del Instituto Internacional del Manejo de la Irrigación 15-19 Septiembre 1997, Sri Lanka

Disponible en:

http://www.generoyambiente.org/admin/admin_biblioteca/documentos/agua_agua_1.pdf (English)

Kunst, Sabine, Tanja Kruse, 2001. *Integrating gender perspectives : realizing new options for improved water management. Cross-cutting thematic background paper.*

El llamado a un enfoque holístico y sensible al género para el manejo hídrico debe ser reiterado como punto inicial del desarrollo sostenible. Los esfuerzos deben buscar objetivos paralelos: el mejoramiento de la vida diaria y de las condiciones de vida, y el planeamiento a largo plazo para un futuro ambientalmente sostenible. La transversalidad de género en relación con el agua es definida por la Visión Mundial del Agua (World Water Vision).

Disponible en:

http://www.generoyambiente.org/admin/admin_biblioteca/documentos/gender3.pdf (English)

Green, C. and S. Baden. 1994. *Water Resources Management: A Macro-level Analysis from a Gender Perspective.*

Este reporte argumenta que la nueva política requiere urgentemente asegurar que los aspectos relacionados con el género no se sobreestimen en el manejo del agua.

Disponible en:

http://www.generoyambiente.org/admin/admin_biblioteca/documentos/water_resources_management.pdf (English)

Ruijgh-van der Ploeg, Martinez. 2000. *Water and conflict : the role of women and men. Presentation of good practices two perspectives on the importance of decision-making and (gender) equity for sustainable water management.*

Las mujeres y los hombres pueden trabajar juntos hacia la equidad de género en la toma de decisiones sobre el manejo sostenible del recurso hídrico. Esto requiere cambios en las reglas del juego de los procesos de toma de decisiones, cambios en la forma en que se selecciona, presenta y distribuye la información sobre el manejo del agua. Si tenemos un conocimiento más amplio acerca de las contribuciones que las mujeres hacen y pueden hacer en el manejo del agua, será mucho más sencillo efectuar los cambios que se sugieren y evaluar su efectividad.

Disponible en:

http://www.generoyambiente.org/admin/admin_biblioteca/documentos/309_7_18_18_cope.pdf (English)

Case studies

The complete case studies are found in the annex of this resource guide

- Africa: Water for African Cities: A Partnership between United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) and the Gender and Water Alliance (GWA)
- Bangladesh: Women, Men and Water-Pumps
- Cameroon: “One Hand Does not Tie a Bundle”: Women’s Participation Transform Water Management -Nkouondja

- Global: Inputs to Thematic Paper on water and sanitation: Case studies from the Interagency Gender and Water Task Force
- Indonesia: Separate Women's Meetings a Key to Participation in Water Management Java
- Pakistan: From Purdah to Participation
- Uganda: Mainstreaming Gender into Policy: Examining Uganda's Gender Water Strategy