

- Make sure that research is participatory, involving all stakeholders, including women, from the onset and recognizing that local men and women are also experts with relevant knowledge.
- Respect women's difficulties in participating in meetings by taking into account the time and place most suitable to them.
- Ensure that researchers' knowledge does not remain in isolation, but is shared with local people and policy-makers (tailored for their needs).
- Work in multidisciplinary teams, including social scientists and gender experts, and share knowledge and expertise among researchers of different disciplines and with practitioners.

To be able to do this they need:

- Guidance on a minimum set of specific and gender-disaggregated data for different scientific fields.
- To assess lessons learned from existing "gender projects" in their discipline to identify gaps.

5 Gender experts

Gender experts should at a minimum:

- Focus on revising methodologies and tools for different audiences, and as per context and community needs.
- Always attempt to view the water management situation from the perspective of the water technician for better communication, avoiding the use of gender jargon.
- Contribute to improved integration of gender in disciplines in the formal and informal sectors by:

- ▶ updating conventional social sciences with latest gender studies approaches;
- ▶ updating existing curricula to include more social and gender issues especially in technical training courses.
- Raise awareness and create sensitization on what difference an effective gender approach can make in water management and agricultural growth, as well as the inherent dangers of not mainstreaming gender in policies and decisions on water management and agriculture.
- Communicate information, cases, experiences, and research, using gender study centers.
- Provide tailored training/capacity building according to specific needs of projects, institutions.
- Suggest pathways to involve stakeholders on the ground and at different levels from the design to the implementation and evaluation phase of projects.
- Lobby at all levels to get the appropriate environment for social transformation.

To be able to do this they need:

- To get regular feedback from non-specialists on tools, approaches and methodologies.
- To revisit existing tools to make them accessible to non specialists by tailoring and contextualizing them to specific local needs, users and uses (changing the language and guidelines with multi-disciplinary and multi-cultural teams).

CA - The Comprehensive Assessment of Water Management in Agriculture (CA) is a five-year initiative to analyze the benefits, costs, and impacts of the past 50 years of water development and management in agriculture, to identify present and future challenges, and to evaluate possible solutions. The main Assessment report *Water for Food, Water for Life: A Comprehensive Assessment of Water Management in Agriculture* (forthcoming) is being published by Earthscan. More on the CA donors, co-sponsors (CBD, CGIAR, FAO, Ramsar), process and publications can be found at: www.iwmi.cgiar.org/assessment

GWA - Gender and Water Alliance, is a global network with about 600 members, individuals and organisations in 90 countries who are interested in gender mainstreaming in water management. The main activities of GWA consist of capacity building, raising awareness, advocacy, sharing and producing relevant material helping governments to engender their IWRM plans. www.genderandwater.org

Both ENDS - a Dutch based Non Governmental Organization (NGO) active in strengthening civil society organisations who are striving for social justice and sustainable livelihoods. Recent publications, including *River Basin Management: A Negotiated Approach*, which promotes a new approach to river basin management based on local practices and initiatives, can be found at: www.bothends.org

References

In a collaborative effort to understand the issues, concerns and resistance to gender mainstreaming in water management for agriculture, the Comprehensive Assessment of Water Management in Agriculture (CA), Both ENDS (BE) and the Gender and Water Alliance (GWA), have engaged in a series of interactions with professionals, academics and policy makers involved in water management in 2005 and 2006 and jointly developed this minimum agenda. The project was financed by Oxfam-Novib. The results of this project will soon be available on-line on the websites of BE, CA and GWA.

water for food, water for life issuebrief#3

Making a difference in water management:

A minimum agenda on gender mainstreaming for researchers, practitioners and gender experts

In theory the importance of gender mainstreaming in water management has been recognized for well over a decade; in practice most water management and agriculture initiatives still fail to effectively address gender relations in their design and implementation, and most policy discussions and scientific analyses continue to approach gender and general equity challenges as a separate dimension. The Comprehensive Assessment, with partners Both ENDS and the Gender and Water Alliance, has put together a minimum agenda to address some of the causes of slow progress and to jumpstart action on gender mainstreaming.

The Dublin Principles for Water in 1992 adopted gender mainstreaming as a requisite for sustainable water management. This first step in recognizing the link between social equity and sustainable water management highlighted the different needs and skills of men and women as users and managers, and helped to draw attention to the low levels of female participation in decision-making in water management.

Box 1. What is gender mainstreaming?

Gender mainstreaming in water management recognizes existing divisions of labor and inequities in rights, resources and power and the need to adjust interventions to reflect and address these. Effective mainstreaming can be defined as the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women, as well as men, an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequalities are not perpetuated.

The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality, but adequately recognizing and addressing gender divisions, roles and identities also contributes to the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of water management. It takes into account social diversities, including ethnic, religious and cultural diversities which add another dimension to consider in decision-making on water and sustainable development.

