- 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).

Both ENDS Environment and Development Service

GWA GENDER AND WATER ALLIANCE

Comprehensive assessment of water management in agriculture

For more information, email: comp.assessment@cgiar.org **Visit: www.iwmi.cgiar.org/assessment**

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 Oxfarm-Novib. The results of this project will soon be available on-line on the websites of BE, CA and GWA.

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Both ENDS Environment and Development Service

GWA GENDER AND WATER ALLIANCE

Comprehensive assessment of water management in agriculture

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.

Since then, gender issues feature in most international water conferences and donor funding guidelines, but progress on the ground has been slow. To implement gender mainstreaming, action is required at multiple levels to address gender inequities in field projects, research and policy frameworks. Based on analysis of field experiences, research and surveys, it is clear that all actors can make significant contributions to and have much to gain from gender mainstreaming, but they need clear and pragmatic approaches—a minimum agenda to build upon.

Changing the way we do things

Any water or agricultural decision is taken in a socio-political context and therefore influences and is influenced by social diversities. Gender mainstreaming is about changing the normal way of doing things, which requires additional financial and human resources and high-level political will. Mainstreaming is not about adding a 'woman's component' or even a 'gender equality' component into existing activities or projects. It goes beyond increasing women's participation; it means bringing the experiences, knowledge, and interests of women and men to bear on the water development agenda. Gender mainstreaming is not something that can be consigned to 'watchdogs' in one specialized office, but all water professionals and researchers must have knowledge and awareness of the linkages between gender and water, so that they can—as a minimum—identify and recognize where and how gender matters in their areas of work.

Gender mainstreaming is a process that can be roughly divided into three consecutive phases. It starts, in a first phase, with mere awareness of existing gender divisions and with efforts to take these into account when planning water projects and when managing water. A second phase of gender mainstreaming consists of a gradual questioning of these divisions, and may consist of activities to redress existing imbalances and inequities. Increased awareness of gender may, in a third phase of gender mainstreaming, lead to a questioning and transformation of the very objectives and models of water management. Therefore, addressing gender in water is easier when water management and policy are treated as open, non-linear and on-going processes of social dialogue and debate. A flexible, bottom-up and participatory approach is more conducive to recognizing women as water actors, and to identifying gender concerns, than more hierarchic and prescriptive top-down policy models.

A minimum agenda for effective gender mainstreaming in water management in agriculture

1 All actors involved in water development and management

First there is a need to:

- Demonstrate how a gendered approach to water management in agriculture contributes to increased efficiency, visible impact and sustainability.
- Document pathways taken to overcome difficulties and constraints.
- Raise awareness and share experiences and lessons learned.

Box 2. Criteria for success in mainstreaming gender into agricultural water management

Gender mainstreaming requires the recognition of different types of water actors that are, in an ideal world, in dynamic and creative engagement with each other. In particular, a key priority to enhance the success of gender mainstreaming efforts is to bridge the gaps between (1) field level staff (and their experiences) and higher level water professionals and policy-makers; (2) gender experts and other water specialists.

Full gender mainstreaming efforts are likely to be more successful when they recognize:

- ✓ the dynamic inter-linkages between physical water resource systems, farming systems and the larger social, economic and institutional context within which they are managed.
- ✓ the large variety of actors whose individual or collective decisions influence water use patterns and, ultimately, water management needs and options.
- ✓ the centrality of the question of the balance of power to water management, as the balance of power within society is weighted against those most affected by water problems and determines management strategies.
- ✓ the necessity of questioning the division of the costs and benefits of water investments, priorities for water allocation, how these priorities come about, and the legitimacy of water authorities.
- ✓ that water management is intrinsically political and therefore contested, because it deals with the allocation of (public) resources.

> **"Mainstreaming is not about adding a 'woman's component' or even a 'gender equality' component into existing activities or projects. It goes beyond increasing women's participation; it means bringing the experiences, knowledge, and interests of women and men to bear on the water development agenda."**

2 Practitioners in the fields

Water and agriculture practitioners should at a minimum:

- Always carry out a comprehensive social analysis, including:
  - stakeholder analysis: who is involved or impacted: who does what
  - agency analysis: ways and strategies to formally and informally access resources
  - water use analysis: users and uses (not just in agriculture, but also domestic and other uses); the amount of water and how it is accessed; the type and quality of water resources used (surface, ground, saline, wastewater); spheres of influence.
- Collect and make use of gender- and diversity- disaggregated data in design, implementation and monitoring of water and agriculture projects.
- Involve all local stakeholder groups—men and women of different age groups and classes through a facilitated dialogue process from the start.
- Involve social/gender experts in projects and programmes from the design stage.
- Share expertise and knowledge among practitioners and give feedback to academics and policy-makers on gender issues and mainstreaming efforts.
- Lobby at higher political levels to stimulate the right environment for social changes enabling equity.

To be able to do this they need:

- Practical tools for comprehensive social analyses.
- Access to information on rights and responsibility for women and men regarding natural resources.
- Essential social sciences training, including facilitation skills and appropriate methodologies and terminology (tailored to local contexts).
- Documented evidence of gender mainstreaming's impact on efficiency.
- Financial, institutional and legal support from policy-makers to mainstream gender.

3 Policy-makers (and funding agencies)

Policy-makers should at minimum:

- Avoid gender neutral policies, laws and budgets by making the impact and benefits for, and rights and responsibilities of men, women and other socio-economic groups explicit.
- Base their policies on comprehensive social analyses, including gender-disaggregated data and gender impact analysis through a dialogue process, with the ability to take corrective actions.
- Reflect social diversity in policies, laws, financing agreements and institutional arrangements for the development and management of water for agriculture.
- Build upon existing studies and cases and use the expertise at the local level.
- Facilitate equity and gender mainstreaming efforts with financial support.
- Stimulate institutionalized learning and sharing between practitioners, academics and policy-makers on gender issues and mainstreaming efforts.
- Ensure the right to information on rights for women and men regarding natural resources as well as the right to be informed.
- Integrate gender mainstreaming in the formal and non-formal education streams.
- Develop mechanisms to reward positive gender practices with regard to water management for institutions and individual practitioners and build these into performance appraisals.

To be able to do this they need:

- Clear arguments for and cases of gender mainstreaming in water management in agriculture.
- Expertise/case studies tailored for policy/decision-makers.
- Training of staff on key elements of social sciences to allow for gendered policies (skills in collecting gender-disaggregated information, analyzing data sets, and monitoring).

4 Researchers and trainers in water and agriculture

Researches and trainers should at minimum:

- Always include gender specific and disaggregated data in all disciplines and analyses and document findings.
- Enhance the gender content of disciplines by:
  - updating conventional social sciences with state-of-the-art gender studies;
  - updating existing curricula to include social issues especially in technical training courses.