

CARIWIN course: Gender Issues in Water Management

September 28, 2007



Outline: The Importance of Addressing Gender in Water Resources Management

- Tasks as gender segregated:
 - Private/reproductive/domestic sphere;
 - Public/productive sphere;
 - Women and irrigation as example;
- Recognizing women and water internationally: Dublin principles and other conferences;
- The need to recognize women and water together in projects.



The Perception: Private/Reproductive Roles

- Reproductive roles, which translate into upkeep of the family and the household, are generally the responsibility of women (and sometimes children as well):
 - Household responsibilities include: cooking, cleaning, laundry, bathing children, subsistence gardening, caring for sick family members, etc.



When water does not come from a tap...

- Water collection:
 - Trucks;
 - Community pipes;
- Water transfer and storage;
- Boiling water;
- Keeping emergency storage.

- The person who performs these tasks is generally a woman, or a child.



A lack of round-the-clock access to water creates hardships...

- The extra energy, time, and money spent on water and water-related activities when it is not easily available prevents:
 - Women from generating an income and becoming self-sufficient;
 - Children attending school.



In opposition, having water improves the quality of life...

- “Improving water supply and quality for poor [urban neighbourhoods] benefits women most directly. Such projects free women and children’s time and energy so that they can more actively and successfully engage in school and/or work. Family income can rise as a result. Better household water supply often results in improved family health, and good health is the primary asset of the poor”

(Margreet Zwarteveen and Vivienne Bennett, *The Connection between Gender and Water Management. Opposing currents-The Politics of Water and Gender in Latin America.* Eds. Vivienne Bennett, Sonia Davila-Poblete, and Maria Nieves Rico. University of Pittsburg Press: 2005 .

Example: Women in Irrigation

- Recognition of the right to potable water, but not to water for irrigation (although both are required to sustain life);
- Rights to irrigation water tied with land rights;
- Out-migration of men and the position of women;
- “Both formal rights to water and decision-making about irrigation water distribution and other irrigation matters are largely concentrated in the hands of men”.

(Margreet Zwarteveen and Vivienne Bennett, *The Connection between Gender and Water Management. Opposing currents-The Politics of Water and Gender in Latin America*. Eds. Vivienne Bennett, Sonia Davila-Poblete, and Maria Nieves Rico. University of Pittsburg Press: 2005



The Perception: Public/Productive Roles

- The perception for men has been that they occupy a public or productive role, in which they have been must be the breadwinners of the household.
 - Question this notion?
- Men are also the managers of water – they have had control of the resource, and IWRM needs to challenge this notion.



The Dublin principles and Others

- Dublin, 1992: Creation of the Universal Water Principles;
 - Principle #1: Fresh water is a finite and vulnerable resource, essential to sustain life, development and the environment;
 - Principle #2: Water development and management should be based on a participatory approach, involving users, planners and policy-makers at all levels;
 - **Principle #3: Women are central to the provision and management of water;**
 - Principle #4: Water has an economic value in all its competing uses and should be recognized as an economic good
- Other conferences have recognized the importance of women in water management:
 - UN declared 1975-1985 the Decade for Women (adopted at the UN Conference on Women in Mexico in 1975).



The Need to Recognize Women in Water Projects

- Need to include both women and men in water resource management since:
 - Women and men perceive and use water in different ways, and the various views need to be incorporated (generally when both men's and women's voices are heard, projects are more effective in their implementation and sustainability);
 - To make and assume clearly gender-delineated water uses and roles “obstructs rather than helps a good understanding of the many connections between men and women and between the varied uses and users of water”.

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