

# NO CAPACITY TO WASTE



## Training Module Gender and Waste



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Coverpicture: Bunda, Tanzania: Women's groups clean the town.

Courtesy: Joke Muylwijk, GWA



## **i. Foreword**

### **Why this module?**

In context of the ISSUE Programme (2007-2010), funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs<sup>1</sup>, WASTE has developed a number of training modules to train practitioners in the field of waste management and sanitation. This training module focuses on Gender and Waste and is a joint venture of the Gender and Water Alliance (GWA) and WASTE.

It belongs to the series of modules on waste management.

The **objectives of WASTE and GWA for making this module** are:

- To provide basic knowledge on gender issues
- To provide basic knowledge on gender and empowerment
- To train skills in analysing current practices on gender
- To provide some ideas on how to mainstream gender in waste management
- To provide basic exercises on gender

The **target audience** of the module are:

Trainers of practitioners, i.e. staff of non-governmental organisations, local government staff, consultants, university staff, and others that are involved in the field of sustainable solid waste management.

### **Why gender and Waste?**

Gender and in particular women are crucial for an effective and efficient waste management system. Including a gender perspective is the best possible way to solve operational problems of the waste collection services. More over in many countries the collection and recycling of waste is an important source of income for men and in particular for women. Including a gender perspective will enhance equality in access to, control over and benefits from (waste) resources and reduce poverty of the vulnerable groups (and notably the women) in society.

This training material addresses issues on gender and waste management by analysing the different relations women and men have in their societies and on the relations towards waste management processes.

Most of the information used to develop this module is derived from recent research and project experience described in the references at the end of the document.

### **Structure of the module**

The presentation of the module is by sections, it includes exercises to enhance active participation and interaction between the participants for sharing and learning from each other's experiences, as well as to internalise the theory by the adaptation of the sessions' contents into practical situations.

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<sup>1</sup> The ISSUE Programme, Integrated Support for a Sustainable Urban Environment, focuses on providing an enabling environment for sustainable waste management and sanitation



It is recommended to review and adapt the material before a training. It can be shortened or enlarged, and local examples can be added. The module can be adapted in other ways depending on the objective of the training and the background of the participants.

The module contains of 5 sections:

1. Gender Concept, Gender Ideology and Empowerment
2. Waste
3. Gender, Empowerment and Waste
4. Mainstreaming Gender in Waste Management
5. Exercises on gender issues

Below follows a more detailed description of each section

### 1. Gender Concept, Gender Ideology and Empowerment

This section deals with understanding the gender concept, the gender ideology and the interrelation with empowerment as a process of change towards equality in access to and control over resources.

Learning aims:

After the sessions the participants are able to:

- explain the difference between biological- and gender characteristics of women and men.
- identify gender issues in their own situation as well as in different societies
- explain why gender does not mean 'women' only, but does pay a lot of attention to women
- give details on how gender affects the level of empowerment and the amount of access to and control over resources

### 2. Waste

This section provides a classification of waste, the rationale of waste management, the interaction between the waste management services and the society and the main problems of local governments with Waste management

Learning Aims:

After the sessions the participants are able to:

- Describe the 'ambiguous' nature of waste, the main reason for managing waste and mention the different steps in waste management and the stakeholders involved.
- Mention and elaborate on the major problems faced by the local government in providing an effective and efficient waste management service.

### 3. Gender, Empowerment and Waste

This session presents theory combined with practical examples and exercises on gender and empowerment issues direct related to waste management at different levels: household, community and local government level.

Learning aims:

After the sessions the participants:

- Have discussed and identified various tasks and 'stakes' related to waste management of different household members.
- Can explain influence of gender on payment of waste management services.



- Have discussed and can mention examples on impact of waste management services on different groups in the community.
- Are able to describe how gender and empowerment issues affect the efficiency of the overall waste management operations.

#### 4. Integration of Gender in Waste Management

This section provides the participants with tools and techniques to analyse and integrate gender issues at the various levels of waste management and sharing their own ideas and experiences with these matters.

Learning aims:

After the sessions the participants are able to:

- Mention various methods of data collection, at different stages in the waste collection
- explain why gender disaggregated data are needed for integration of gender issues into the various stages of the waste collection.
- Mention methods for production and dissemination of information and education materials and explain why these materials have to be gender sensitive.
- Describe various positive and negative ways (do and do not) of involving women in waste management services.

#### 5. Exercises

This section provides a number of exercises, which can be used during the training workshop. They will work best when they are adapted to the local situation and conditions.

#### 6. References and addresses

#### 7. Annexes

**The authors hope that this module can serve as a basic starting point for the analysis of waste management issues with a gender perspective. We would appreciate very much your comments, recommendation and information from your own experience. (see chapter 6 References, for addresses)**

## NO CAPACITY TO WASTE

### Training Module Gender and Waste

## 1. Gender, Gender Ideology and Empowerment

### 1.1 Gender Concept and Gender Ideology<sup>2</sup>

Gender deals with the characteristics of men and women which are socially decided in contrast to those characteristics which are defined by biology.

It involves men and women, and recognizes the existing positions in often asymmetric power relations based on socio economic differences and variable factors like race, age, religion, socio-economic class, urban/rural location, ability/disability and indigenous status.

Gender is a dynamic concept, it has different forms in different cultures and changes over time.

Gender' is not synonymous with 'women'.

It has to do with women and men and their interdependent relations, with asymmetric power differences and hierarchy, and with differences in access and participation in decision-making and resources. It refers to the different rights, knowledge and responsibilities of women and men, and the way their qualities, actions and identities are determined by the process of socialisation. The different positions of women and men in a certain society are influenced by historical, religious, economic and cultural realities.

GWA uses a broad interpretation of the term 'gender'. It recognises the existing diversity that includes power relations based on socio-economic differences and variable factors like age, race, religion, socio-economic class, ethnicity, urban or rural location, ability/disability and indigenous status.



Women and men are not just two homogeneous groups and for example, age differences greatly influence the position of a person. In many cultures, older women and mothers in law, will have a large say in what younger women of the household should do or not. Boys and girls are brought up differently. Relations between them and those between them and elders are also considered gender relations. Further, men and women have different positions and responsibilities at home but also in the village or community. Thus age but also social class, ethnicity, disability and religion with their ensuing interdependent relationships and power structures are part of the concepts of gender, and these days being referred to as gender-plus.

Gender roles made up by the society have a strong influence on the daily life of women and men, e.g. in working life. Although both men and women have their tasks in production of goods, services and public life, the work ensuring the basic needs and health and wellbeing at family and household level falls almost entirely on women's shoulders. One of the results is that all over the world women have longer working hours than men. Often this work is not recognised as real work and it is not expressed in money, let alone remunerated.

At home it is mostly the women who clean, cook, educate children, look after the livestock and work in agriculture.

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<sup>2</sup> Information drawn from various papers from Joke Muylwijk (GWA)



When men perform the same tasks but outside the household, these tasks are recognised as specific professions and become formalised with payment attached to it; like being a cook in a restaurant, housekeeper in a hotel, teacher at a school, or manager of a waste collection services etc.

Men's agricultural work is often cultivating cash crops (and thus bringing in money), women's food production for the family is not paid and taken for granted.



In the public sphere it is the men who hold the high status positions and have decision making power, while women are mostly expected to provide the support and the organisation for the men to function. Men's work is highly rewarded, women's work is often under-valued.

Men's work is most of the time modernized and mechanized, while women tend to work with their hands or with simple and often inadequate hand tools.



In the photo men have the wheelbarrows for transporting waste for a municipal recycling project in wheelbarrows, while women carry bags on their head.

(photo courtesy: Beatrice Mukasine, SNV, Kigali, Ruanda)

In relation to sharing the world's resources and benefits gender inequality is very obvious:

According to UN statistics:

- *Women perform 2/3 of the world's work*
- *Women earn 1/10 of the world's income*
- *Women are 2/3 of the world's illiterates*
- *Women own less than 1/100 of the world's property*

Gender has a different form in different cultures and places. The social positions and responsibilities of men and women and the relationships between them change over time and

respond to the introduction of new technologies, development interventions, emergency situations like wars and/or natural disasters, etc. E.g since the collapse of the government in Somalia, which made many men unemployed, women started with informal income generation activities and with becoming the breadwinners of the family gained much more power and influence at household and community level than before. Like culture, gender is dynamic: if people want to change their own culture, it will change. And so, the key word for gender in relation to development is change. As perceptions and societies change along with people's values, gender relations can change as well. A gender-sensitive approach should, therefore, contradict the notion that situations of inequality are culturally determined and cannot change.



In every society, culture and context, ideas exist on how men and women should behave.

People are born female or male, but they are taught while growing up what is the appropriate and expected behaviour, feelings, and responsibilities for being a woman or a man and how they should relate to each other, according to their position, age, class, etc. This is called 'gender ideology' Gender roles for women and men differ a lot from one culture to another, but also from one social group to another within the same culture. What is women's work in one society, might be men's exclusive task in another society

Gender ideology is an internalised attitude, often seen as natural and prescribed by religion, and differs per culture. We are hardly aware of it. It is a set of usually unwritten rules we stick to, even if we try to change. In development efforts, gender ideology does not only play a big role with the beneficiaries, it is also part of the thinking of the professionals in charge of projects and programmes in waste management, sanitation, domestic water supply, irrigation, etc.

To change gender ideology per se is difficult but not impossible. We can see many examples of how it can work. Rules, however strongly tied or imbedded in a certain culture or context, may always break, change or get overruled.

To change gender ideology regarding taboos, however, will prove very hard. Issues like menstruation, pregnancy and urinating are taboo subjects in most cultures and the many pertinent rules, written or unwritten, will be hard to change.

## 1.2 Empowerment

Empowerment is a process of change enabling people to make choices and transform these into desired actions and results. In doing so, people, not just women, are taking control of their own lives, improving their own position, setting their own agenda, gaining skills, developing confidence in themselves, solving problems and developing self-sufficiency.

Nobody can empower another person. One can only empower oneself to make decisions or express views. But people can be helped by convincing them and giving them tools for change. This may be done among others through advocacy and capacity building such as education and training which increases their opportunities. Better laws and regulations also support this process.

Empowerment leads to genuine participation of all actors. This in turn leads to more equal practices in which tasks, benefits and responsibilities are shared between women and men. Empowerment ultimately means to be proud of one's own identity.



Empowerment has four interacting aspects - social, economic, political and physical. They should not be seen separately although they do not operate equally strong in all cases.

1. *Socio-cultural Empowerment* addresses the self-image of people as also how they are seen by their family members, the community, and the society at large. It leads to the right to one's own independent identity and a sense of self-respect. Changing the fact that society no longer sees women as second-class citizens is an example of social empowerment.



In waste management and sanitation, usually people at lower levels of hierarchy – the poor, women – are responsible for work most looked down on. This may include among others cleaning of toilets, waste removal and caring for the sick. If such activities were to be considered most important for family and community health instead of just dirty work, their position and social status would rise. If this work were done at all levels instead of only the lowest categories, it would also have a great empowering effect.

(photo courtesy: Joke Muylwijk, GWA)

2. *Economic Empowerment* deals with work and income and the decisions related to work. Can one decide oneself what kind of work to do and how to spend the income and other benefits? Economic empowerment leads to equal access to and control of means of production and ultimately, to economic independence. When women earn an income and they are enabled to decide about its spending one may call this empowerment.

In solid waste management economic empowerment would mean equal pay for women doing the same work as men and not being used as volunteers. With sorting and recycling of waste, it is known that men take control over waste items with a higher recycle value and leave the less value items for women.

3. *Political Empowerment* relates to the right to organise oneself, to participate in democratic processes, and to influence wider development efforts e.g. through having a voice in decision making bodies like a village sanitation and water committee. It leads to a political say and the creation of a power base in a self-determined direction.

In general it can be said the more hierarchical a society the lower the position of women. The political aspects of empowerment are important for women because it means they will have a say in decision making and do not just take part in the most unsafe and often the dirtiest work in waste management. If they are enabled to influence improvements within the management of the waste stream through e.g. being part of formal or informal organisations they will feel empowered.

4. *Physical Aspects of Empowerment* refer to the right to decide about one's own body, sexuality, the number of children and the spacing between births. They also refer to the right to proper health care and clean water. They deal with the ability to resist violence and with physical

dignity related to sanitation facilities specifically available to women. This includes the right to safety and security - for example not to be harassed or, worse, raped during nightly sanitary visits or to be abused with waste collection, sorting and recycling activities at dumping sites.



(photo courtesy: Charles Dieme, GWA)

It is important to realise that these four aspects of empowerment should not be seen as empowering in isolation. For example, what good does an income do to a woman if she cannot decide what to spend it on because she has to hand it over to her husband or mother-in-law? If she would not give it, she may be beaten. Her husband may decide to buy alcohol with that money and more violence results. So, economic empowerment is not enough if in isolation. Only if a woman's self-confidence is positive and she can avoid violence, if she can influence development efforts or can take part in decision-making, she may feel empowered.

These are but a few examples of how the four aspects interact.



## 2. Waste<sup>3</sup>

### 2.1 What is waste?

In the context of Integrated Solid Waste Management (ISWM), waste is regarded both as a negative and as a useful material providing a potential source of income. It can in fact be the only free resource available to poor people, or urban dwellers, who cannot cut wood or use other common property resources available in the country. This real value of waste in many low-and middle-income countries in the South is confirmed by the huge informal sector that lives from waste collection and recovery. There are also formal sector examples, such as sugar cane factories that sell their fibres and cane waste to paper factories in order to produce paper. Unfortunately not all wastes can be regarded as resource. Many hazardous, toxic and pathological materials cannot be safely recycled or reused.

### 2.2 Waste management

Waste management includes many stakeholders or actors: local authorities, formal private sector, informal private sector, NGO's and CBO's, donor agencies, and others.

Waste affects all of us and has to be managed to avoid health and environmental risks etc.

Waste management involves many actors from its production, to storing, collection, transporting, disposal and re-use and recycling.

1. At household level
2. Community level
3. Local government level
4. Private enterprise level (small/large scale)

Improper waste management has negative effects on public health, the environment and natural resources and deserves increased attention from the local government.

### 2.3 Problems faced by local government with waste management

Municipal managers – especially those in the South -- face a number of common problems with regard to waste management. **System failures** include a lack of a comprehensive policy framework for waste management and a shortage of tools to analyse and improve efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability. A failure in systems means that there is nowhere – including in the North – where a municipal manager can look and say “That system functions well and I could copy it.”

There is tendency (in waste management, but also in other municipal functions) to move directly from problems to solutions, without an analysis of what is actually causing the problem. The most obvious answers are more money or more equipment, even when money and equipment are not the essence of the problem. As a result, money and equipment are used incorrectly, and at large expense, for the many problems that they cannot solve. ISWM seeks to avoid this.

Frequently quoted **practical problems** include equipment which is inadequate, poorly maintained or out of date; or too little equipment or spare parts; or equipment that is inappropriate for local conditions, all of which are exacerbated by the increases in population and of volume of waste per household. Other obstacles for waste management are connected to

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<sup>3</sup> Information drawn from the concept note on Gender and Waste from Lilliana Abarca. (WASTE)

under-functioning staff that is not motivated or difficult to find because of low status, low salaries and difficult working circumstances.

**Financial problems** regularly mentioned by municipal managers in the South include imbalances between income and expenditure because of rising costs and inadequate revenues. Adding to the financial difficulties are inefficient (and sometimes overpriced) waste processing facilities and increasing costs of transportation and disposal due to regionalisation of disposal, the growing distance to disposal sites and increasing land values close to the city centre.

Most municipalities do not find it easy to **cooperate or communicate** with their own **citizens**, who appear not be cooperating with the municipality; behaviour such as illegal dumping of waste; misuse or non-use of containers; damaging and stealing communal storage containers; and resistance to service charges lead authorities to believe that the citizens are part of the problem, rather than an ingredient of the solution.



(photo courtesy: Charles Dieme, GWA)

Municipal managers are also likely to have problems with **private enterprises**, mainly in the solid waste sector, both formal and informal. Local businesses may be dumping waste on roadsides and outside of official disposal sites. As service providers, they may compete with the municipality and be envied for their ability to raise fees for services. When businesses are involved in providing a service, they are hard negotiators and may require or pay bribes. Many municipalities are also unprepared to undertake the task of coordinating and monitoring their activities. The micro informal waste collection and recycling sector is usually considered a nuisance and not seen as businesses at all.

### 3. Gender, Empowerment and Waste:

#### 3.1 At Household level:

In many societies women are held responsible for cleanliness of the house and the hygiene practices and overall health status of the family. Most men will not handle garbage (e.g. bringing it to the container) as this will affect their status. As many cultures ascribe a lower status to women than men, it is seen as ‘natural’ for women to handle garbage. (typical gender issue) If a house and its immediate surroundings are dirty, if family members are getting ill, it’s the women who are getting the blame and not the men. Although every household member generates waste, it’s the women and the girls who are supposed to do the cleaning up. This also means that they are more exposed to the health risks involved with handling waste, especially if they have to deal with improper and bad facilities for storage and disposal. Moreover women are extra vulnerable for infections etc. during and after pregnancy.



- *Participants can be asked here who deals with the waste management at their own household (or society) and which tasks are involved with it. Already at this point it might be that female participants will mention more tasks than the male participants, as men are often not aware about all the details and work involved and often consider hygiene at the house an easy task.*

Waste management at the household involves the generation of waste, the collection and sorting/separation of it and its disposal and although women are being the waste handlers, the decisions on what is considered as waste and what not, what to re-use, how to dispose and where to dispose is often not hers alone, but depending on other household members and the interplay of power relationships. Conflicts of interest can easily arise.

- *There might be items which can be sold for recycling, but who will get the money? Items which can be re-used for different purposes like e.g. dung; women might want to make dung cakes as fuel and/or sell or barter them, while men want use the dung for manuring the crops. The same conflicts might arise for crop residues, food leftovers, ash, bones.*



(photo courtesy: Angela IKA)

- *Also among the women of the household there might be differences in selecting products, e.g. younger women might want to select more ready made food products, which involves less work in preparation and generates few leftovers (e.g. to feed the animals) The mother in law on the other hand might want the young woman to do all the labour intensive food preparations and the grandmother counts on having food leftovers to feed the animals.*
- *In middle-class and upper-class households there might be (women) servants in charge of the waste management in the household who can obtain an extra income from such waste.*

When buying products for the household men and women will have different views and practices concerning the wrapping/packaging of the items or its second use and additional value besides its original or main purpose.

- *In some societies men do the shopping, and might not (be willing to) consider the type or amount of waste is generates. Women might be more conscious about choosing products that generates less waste (and less work) or have an additional value for them. Women are more environmentally conscious, more conscious about prices and family budget and more sustainable in use of items.*

Women and men have often different ideas on waste collection at home.

Waste is collected inside the house and from the yard and can be stored in different ways before its disposal outside the house. Proper storage facilities and disposal locations are very important for the health of the family, especially the women and the children.

- *Men might not see the need and willing to spend money on proper waste containers or polyurethane bags, practical for women to handle or to clean. With change in waste items and improved waste collection system, women might be required to sort the waste in separate containers before it is being picked up by the waste collection service. Often men complain on storage of garbage in the house, forcing the women to make many trips to the waste collection points or dispose of the garbage in other labour intensive and/or hazardous ways. In those cases waste might be disposed at empty spaces nearby, e.g. between houses or it is burned or buried in the yard.*



(photo courtesy: Lilliana Abarca, WASTE)

Often there is hardly any information and/or educational materials being made available for the women and men at the household on how to handle waste in a proper and safe way.

- *When health and hygiene education is provided very often this is exclusively directed at women and girls. Without awareness and understanding on the why and how of hygienic practices, there is little chance that e.g. men will change their behaviour and attitude towards cleanliness and e.g. would make money available for women to modernize and improve the equipment and materials for proper waste handling and cleaning of sanitary facilities!*

### Payment for Services

A critical gender financial issue is related to the obligation to pay the bills for public services differently according to the culture. In European cultures, it tends to be assigned to men or to men and women jointly. In many other countries women held responsible for and in charge of the waste disposal from the house, are also expected to pay for the waste management services. With women having no or little cash-income or female headed households, this is often not easy.

- *A participant from Pakistan observed that since women do not have their own income to pay for the service they rely on the men to give them extra money to pay the children [that removes the waste] or they save from the already meagre household budget available to them if at all [to pay for the service]. For this reason, men are in control of what services the family can have access to. (Gohar)*

The fact that men tend to be more vocal and active in choosing service levels and development goals creates problems in situations where women find themselves responsible for paying for a service level they consider inappropriate.

Equipment and services are mostly designed by men and institutions (municipalities) which have other priorities and concerns than women, beside the fact that they are not used to (and often not aware of) women's perceptions, specific needs and concerns with handling and disposal of solid waste.

In general the willingness to pay for good functioning services is higher among women than among men, as women are more conscious about family and environmental health.

It is well known that women manage money differently than men. This is one of the principal ideas of the micro-lending programmes on the model of Mohammed Younas's Grameen Bank. While men consider money to belong to them personally, women tend to see money as belonging to the family. There is considerable evidence that women manage money more responsibly, especially in societies where the level of drinking, gambling and the like are high.

- *Women manage to pay more bills even when they have less money. This is related to ability to pay, as well as to willingness to pay. Second, women may have a higher willingness to pay for services which relate to family health. In several Honduras barrio planning sessions, it became clear that when there was a choice between investing in roads and investing in waste systems, the women opted for the waste systems and the men for the roads so that they could operate cars with less damage.*

### 3.2 At Community level:

Waste management at community level involves activities at informal (illegal) dump sites, waste collection points, cleanliness of public/communal spaces in neighbourhoods like small markets, schools, etc. These activities are often organised through small scale private and/or community based enterprises in many cases linked to more formal enterprises and local authorities. Tasks and responsibilities of women extend beyond their household, when they bring the waste to collection points or dumps, when they are expected to voluntarily keep areas clean in their neighbourhood or when they are involved in more ways of waste management like collecting, sorting and transporting of waste items for commercial recycling. With the small community based organisations one might find women who volunteer as leaders where they are in a position to exercise co-ordination and control. With more formal and commercial enterprises dealing with collection and recycling in most cases men will have the autonomy and control. In case when the voluntary work done by the women is being institutionalised (and generating money) it is in many instances taken over by men. Often the work becomes mechanized and modernized at the same time.

- *No one considers it strange or unfair that women do not get paid for waste management activities, even when these activities extend beyond the home to community cleaning. Men, on the other hand, tend only to handle waste when they are paid for it, or when it is specific to their activities.*



*It has been reported that women tend not to be permitted access to higher-value materials like metals or paper, but to focus on textiles, plastics and the like. In some societies the materials themselves appear to be gendered: in Honduras, metals were reserved for boys and men, while women worked on lower-value glass, plastic and textiles. In general, materials relating to vehicles – automobiles, motorcycles, bicycles, animal carts – appear to be more likely to be recovered by men.*

(photo Joke Muylwijk, GWA)

### 3.3 At local government level:

With the design and operation of the waste management systems, social and gender issues are often not recognised and taken into account by the largely male engineers and local government leaders. Although women are the largest group of waste systems clients, the waste collection services are seldom sensitive to their needs, responsibilities and knowledge.

- *For example, formal collectors or managers may complain because the waste is not set out properly, not taking into account that the women cannot really leave their homes to put it in its proper place (and not having consulted the women in the first place, when deciding where the point of set-out should be). Or the times for waste collection may not have been set with any attention to the schedules and responsibilities of the women who will bring the waste to be collected. Or the containers, which are appropriate for storage in the home, may not be acceptable to the collectors, etc.*
- *In Pakistan, the city workers persistently complained that the waste was not properly set out. It turned out that in order to put the waste in its 'proper' place, the women would have had to violate traditional constraints on appearing outside of their household compound. Many solved this by burying the waste within their household compounds, or throwing it out the door, or sneaking out with it at night. The project solved the dilemma by hiring children already involved in waste to pick up the waste and take it to the designated point of set-out. (Gohar)*





Women can be involved in waste activities e.g. as paid workers with the municipality or with commercial enterprises, but their payment is more than often far less than that of men doing the same tasks. To add insult to injury women are the ones to work under the most dirty and dangerous conditions, without provisions for social and health insurances. Often their children work with them in the same situation. Men might be consulted in employers meetings, men might be members of a union coming up for their rights, special equipment might be bought for the men to help or protect them with the work. This equipment is often designed for men and not be women friendly or appropriate for women to use. There might be washing areas for the garbage workers, but no separate sanitation facilities for women employees.

Women are trapped in a vicious circle. Dirty work means very low status, low status means under valued and under paid. Being under paid they are considered less capable and less valued as men. This also has a devastating effect on women's self-esteem and self-confidence.

At higher levels the staff is not gender conscious and there will be few women in leadership positions.

- *It has been observed that women in positions of authority in the community or city government may often exhibit different references for waste management strategies than their male counterparts. Women city managers, mayors, or council-persons are often more interested in recycling and separation at source and understand better what its consequences are, whereas men in these positions tend to imagine that it would involve their wives actually shuffling through the garbage.*

There is also a big divide (socially, status) between the garbage handlers and the administrative and management staff of the Waste management services. Often these groups don't mix and are often not very aware about each other's labour conditions and circumstances.

## 4. Integration of Gender in Waste Management

--It is expected that with the small group work, participants will bring up suggestions and experiences which can be used in this section.--

### 4.1 At household level:

1. Collecting of gender disaggregated data on waste management practices, needs and demands at the household level on issues like:
  - Selection, re-use, control and ownership
  - Practices and division of tasks with collection, storing and disposal
  - Practices, needs and demands concerning formal and informal/illegal waste disposal and collection points
  - Perceptions, knowledge and information needs on health and hygiene related to waste handling, health and safety risks
  - Willingness and affordability to pay

Using participatory methods like: household visits, participatory observation, semi-structured interviews with different members of the household including servants, transect walks and mapping of disposal and collection points, verifying data analysis with respondents.

- Ask women and men of different social classes to do a 'waste walk-through' of their houses, identifying different types of wastes and their sources. Check whether they really do have specialised knowledge and also whether this knowledge entitles them to manage waste as they choose.
  - Investigate new packaging strategies for domestic or imported goods; ask women and men about the things they are buying and how the packaging is changing and how this affects the waste they generate and handle. Use participatory tools like time-lines, to explore what materials were to be found in the waste stream 10-20 years previously and today.
  - Credit-worthiness and ability to pay may need to be assessed differently depending on the composition of the household. A woman-headed household at a significantly lower income level may nevertheless be a more reliable system client. Assessments and analysis should in all cases record the household structure and composition, in addition to its income level.
2. Design and production of information and education materials together with the various target groups.
    - With information and use of media, messages should be made appealing to the different target group and should be gender sensitive and not sustaining or promoting specific/traditional gender roles and divisions.
  3. Design and production of low-cost, hygienic and women friendly waste storage and disposal equipment and materials.
    - Possibilities should be explored if materials can be produced as income generating activities for women
  4. Set-up of low threshold communication lines with the waste collection services esp. for women to provide suggestions or to be consulted on the functioning and improvement of the system.

### 4.2 At community level:

1. Collecting of gender disaggregated data on waste management practices at community level:

- Management structure and power relations in community based formal and informal organizations.
- Division of tasks with collection, disposal and recycling
- Practices, needs and demands concerning formal and informal/illegal waste disposal and collection points
- Perceptions, knowledge and information needs on health and hygiene related to waste handling, health and safety risks
- Labour conditions in waste management organizations.

Through participatory methods (by various groups of stakeholders from the community, which would include women and other vulnerable groups); focus group discussions, transect walks, mapping etc.

2. Formation of stakeholder groups, where women will have access to meetings and can take part in decision making.
  - Public gatherings and committee meetings are often the means of consulting the community about the people's wishes. To get a full-range picture of the demands and preferences of the community, arrange for a series of discussions on all community levels and ensure that the interests of women and social minorities are voiced on each level. Arrange that their preferences are given a place in the overall waste management plan.
  - Women's generalised 'gender' responsibility for community cleanliness means that they need to be consulted - probably in women-only groups - at all levels when improvement schemes are proposed or planned and both their insights and their status need to be protected.
3. Training sessions for men and women stakeholders on waste management and environmental issues as well as gender sensitization.
4. Set-up of low threshold communication lines with community leaders, esp. for women.
  - In the baseline analysis, work with women researchers to quantify and value women's uncompensated work in community maintenance, hygiene and public cleansing. Identify individual women and groups who are active in this area and invite them (repeatedly if necessary) to participate as stakeholders in the formal planning process. In women-only planning sessions, invite the women to envision for themselves a continuing role in the waste management system, including the possibility of earning their livelihood that way. Then in mixed planning sessions or meetings, raise the issues of women's participation and highlight their status as the most experienced stakeholders.
5. Provision of opportunities for women to get paid employment in community based waste management services.
  - Women may take responsibility for community cleanliness as long as the work is voluntary, but when it becomes paid and legitimised, it frequently, if not always goes to men. The implications of this include the need to deliberately preserve women's access to cleaning activities during modernisation, formalisation, or other processes that involve changing its status and upgrading its visibility.
    - *The Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA), an NGO in Ahmedabad, India, has helped in organising women engaged in paper/rag picking and safeguarding their interests from the clutches of the paper contractors and middlemen. SEWA has helped these women in setting up their own 'godown' from where the collected waste paper is sold to the mills directly. SEWA's efforts have not only safeguarded these women from the drudgery and dangers of work but also have increased their income by eliminating*

*the middleman. This has also improved the status of women by making them organised workers who sell paper/rag directly to the mills through its own cooperative.”*  
(Raghupathi)

- *In another area in the South, the NGO had approached the community through a women's club, whose members turned up in large numbers in the initial mobilisation phase ..... This was a business locality and although people were rich enough, there was resistance to pay the meagre amount of Rs10 per household per month to a waste collector. Here, men controlled money and as they perceived door to door collection as women's initiative, they did not take it seriously".*

*Based on the above experiences we decided to mobilise both men and women in any neighbourhood solid waste management scheme as a policy matter.. "In another area where the person has mobilised both men and women, the core group is the most vibrant and innovative one." (Shah)*

6. Involvement of schools, through gender sensitized education and information on health and hygiene related to waste management.
  - When organizing cleaning campaigns and lessons on health and hygiene, care should be taken to involve boys and not only girls.



### 4.3 At local government and private enterprise level

1. Collection of gender disaggregated data in waste management services at local government level.
  - Management structure and hierarchy
  - Payment conditions
  - Health and safety risks, labour conditions
  - Communication flows within the departments
  - Communication and information exchange with citizens
  - Social and gender awareness/consciousness of staff



Through participatory methods, focus group discussions, semi structured interviews; participatory observations and mapping with labour force and waste collection and disposal routing etc. etc.

2. Training of staff on gender issues in waste management, participatory and gender disaggregated data collection and communication and information strategies.
3. Setting up of formal structures with involvement/representation of women on management and labour conditions.
4. Setting up of department for direct communications and information with citizens, with special attention to female stakeholders.
  - The unexplored policy implications of women's role as household managers include the need to consult women when service levels are established or altered; the need to explicitly include both women and men in participatory and consultative processes and the usefulness of consulting women when surveying waste quantities or seeking to identify materials for source separation and recovery.

- Have women and men do separate mapping exercises to identify waste dumps (legal or illegal) in their communities. This exercise is also useful in planning where to place intermediate or secondary collection points.
- *One neighbourhood chief in Bamako, Mali invited men and women to a public meeting and a map was made showing the location of temporary waste disposal points, water taps and storm water drains and roads and paths. When a few weeks later the Chief decided to call a meeting of women only to make the same map, some differences emerged. One temporary waste disposal point was purposely ignored by the women, who did not wish to be associated with it and blamed it on the market vendors who kept throwing garbage there, against the wishes of the leaders. The women also knew more roads and paths, including the ones to the school and the clinic. (Muller)*
- *In Cote d'Ivoire, the idea of mapping was presented to a mixed group of men and women. Then, women went off in smaller groups to make their map and men did the same.*



*By bringing the small groups back together to compare maps and having a semi-structured forum where folks could discuss differences and similarities, the exercise helped to better situate intermediate trash depots. (Burland)*

- Before making a determination of how a

collection system will operate and where to assign the point of set-out, perform a community transept which explores the limits of women's mobility and their access and control of the public or community spaces which will be important in the waste management system.

- A persistent failure of the public to comply with the requests or requirements of the waste collection system in terms of place of set-out and time of set out, may well indicate a gender problem with the requirements themselves. It is useful to step back at this point and ask the women of the house what precisely is going on and what kinds of problems they have complying with the official collection scheme. If problems can be identified, these should be immediately communicated to the waste management operations unit, whether formal or informal, governmental or private, with a request to redesign the approach to collection to accommodate the constraints placed on women as well as their preferences.
  - In feasibility studies, analyse carefully the separate roles and status of women and men, as clients or as micro-entrepreneurs. Build into programmes a component to support women and to help them to preserve and/or strengthen their access to and control of resources, including especially credit, labour and materials.
  -
5. Training possibilities for female staff to upgrade their positions within the organization.
  6. Representation of women into labour organizations and unions.



## 5. Exercises

### Exercise 1: Analysis of the present or contextual situation 24 hour clock

#### Objectives:

- To have a first insight to the community in which the intervention will take place.
- To determine and visualise all the activities women and men do during a normal working day

#### Expected learning results:

- Gender is a key aspect to take into account when developing interventions
- Awakening to gender issues sensitivities

**Group size:** The assignment is developed in groups of women and men separately.

#### Materials needed:

Paper and pen,  
Flipover paper and flipover board or,  
Marker board and colour markers or,  
Overhead projector and overheads or,  
Computer and video beam.

#### Procedure:

- Each member mentions the duties done either by them in their own country, or their mothers or fathers, from the beginning of the morning until they go to sleep. The household work should be explicitly written
- They write it down with some kind of time allocation for each duty
- Reproduce the information on a flip chart
- Present it and discuss it with the whole group; differences, similarities etc.



## **Exercise : Analysis of the present or contextual situation Bag Analysis**

### **Objectives:**

- To develop a diagnosis in which the priority needs, according to gender, are identified and prioritised.

### **Expected learning results:**

- Democratic prioritisation in which opinions of different actors are analysed
- Needs assessment according to gender

**Group size:** The assignment is developed in groups of women and men separately.

### **Materials needed:**

Coloured paper and pen,  
Tape, envelopes or paper or plastic bags  
Tokens (beans, stones, or other voting materials)

### **Procedure:**

- The group is divided in subgroups by sex and it is requested to draw on a cardboard problems, needs, challenges they feel they have in the community.
- Each group introduces their problem, need or challenge in a plenary session. Once all of the groups' work are presented, the facilitator makes a summary. All the drawings are placed of the wall and underneath a plastic or paper bag is attached
- The group is asked to vote, for one of the drawings, but differentiated tokens are provided (to recognise which are from the men and from the women, e.g. beans for men, little stones for women). Make sure that the voting process is confidential in order not to influence the answer of the others. The facilitator should make this process as fast as possible, and must be prepared to keep the attention and enthusiasm of the participants that are waiting to go and vote.
- At the end, you ask some of the participants to count the votes and once this action is finished, reflect on the results e.g. why this or that problem had fewer votes or most of the votes?, is this sample representative for the whole community?, which are the most important problems and why?, etc.



## **Exercise : Analysis of the present or contextual situation Money and work... always together?**

### **Objectives:**

- To collect information about the work performed by women, men and children

### **Expected learning results:**

1. The fundamental gender inequalities in relation to work, income and other related issues

### **Group size:**

The assignment is developed in groups of women and men separately.

### **Materials needed:**

Coloured paper and coloured markers or pencils

Fake money or photocopies of banknotes of the country where the exercise takes place

### **Procedure:**

1. The sub-groups are asked to write on cards the activities they perform during the day, from the moment they get up till they go to bed (each activity on one card)
2. When they finish, they place the cards on the wall and it is requested to place fake money next to the activities from which they are receiving some income.
3. At the end, an analysis of the differences between men, women and children are discussed and a deeper discussion is advised to have in order to understand the causes for the present situation in which most of the times the tasks performed by women are not paid.





## Exercise : Analysis of the financial resources: control and benefits Investment game

### Objectives:

- To identify the investment priorities of men and women within the family and the community

### Expected learning results:

- The awareness if an intervention can be financially afforded or not

### Group size:

The assignment is developed in groups of women and men separately.

### Materials needed:

Fake money or photocopies of banknotes of the country where the exercise takes place

### Procedure:

7. Fake money is provided to men and women according to the amount they receive a month. (-so participants should draw up a list about various incomes people have and every participants selects who he/she represents). The money should be with low denominations. It is requested that they plan to invest the money at their convenience.
8. The facilitator plays the role of a seller of the goods and services the household needs. The facilitator should plan in advance which good or services to place on the market depending on the objective of the exercise.
9. The results of the exercise are presented in order, and their should be an explanation why they have prioritised the products.
10. If there is an intended intervention on solid waste management or sanitation issues, it is important to include the products or services that are pretended to be paid by the families. It can help to understand who is at the end the one paying for the intervention.

Taken from: Aguilar, L., Ayales, I., Rodriguez, G., 1995. Genero y figura no son hasta la sepultura: Guia para la construccion de equidad en iniciativas de desarrollo sostenible. UICN

Adapted by: Lilliana Abarca, 2009, WASTE, Gouda, The Netherlands



## Exercise : Analysis of the financial resources: control and benefits Pocket game

### Objectives:

- To collect information in relation to family roles and attitudes in relation to the use of money

### Expected learning results:

- Awareness where the money goes to and who decides about the expenses.

**Group size:** The assignment can be done with the whole group.

### Materials needed:

Drawing of a pocket on an apron and another one of a pocket on trousers

### Procedure:

- Ask the group about the income due to the selling of products. Here it is more important to understand not the amount of money collected but more to whose pocket it goes to.
- When this is done, ask the members about the household expenses. Identify the most important household's expenditures and try to find out who decides about them and from whose pocket the money comes out.
- It is intended to have a pocket list, where the products, and the expenses of each are related.
- The facilitator takes note of the debate that took place while developing the exercise and reports it to the rest of the group.

## 6. References and Addresses

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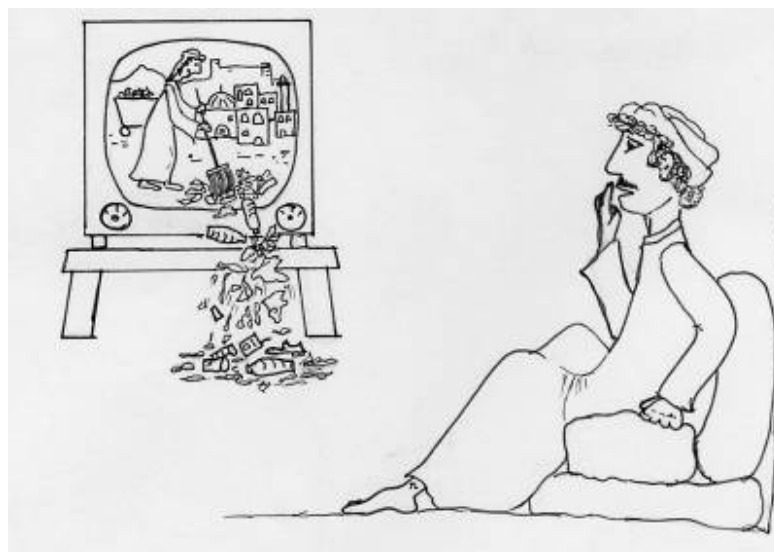
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Comments and Suggestions you can mail to the secretariat of GWA:  
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For more information on WASTE  
[www.waste.nl](http://www.waste.nl)

For more information on the Gender and Water Alliance  
[www.genderandwater.org](http://www.genderandwater.org)

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The Gender and Water Alliance is an informal network of over 1900 organisations and individuals in 120 countries that promote gender mainstreaming in water management. Launched at the 2<sup>nd</sup> World Water Forum in The Hague in 2000, GWA undertakes collaborative activities on a global level in the area of training and capacity building, collection and dissemination of information,

advocacy, pilot projects and policy analysis and development.

GWA believes that equitable access to and control over water is a basic right for all, as well as a critical factor in the struggle against poverty and in promoting sustainability. GWA strives to achieve equity and equality among women and men in sustainable water resources development and management at all levels. The ultimate aim is to improve the water situation of poor men and women worldwide.

[www.genderandwater.org](http://www.genderandwater.org)



WASTE is an adviser for development projects in countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe. WASTE aims at sustainable improvement of the urban environment and amelioration of the living conditions of the low-income population.

WASTE is active in four fields: solid waste management and resource recovery; low-cost sanitation and liquid waste management; community based environmental improvement; and micro and small enterprise development. The focus of activities is on low-income urban areas in order to develop with local residents tools and means for their own development, enabling them to improve their living conditions, the environment and to create employment as a sound economic base for their future.

Another important focal point for WASTE is the role of small-scale entrepreneurs and their (potential) contribution to the provision of urban services and their integration in the municipal services e.g. in resource recovery and the removal of urban waste.

[www.waste.nl](http://www.waste.nl)