

**Global:**  
**Inputs to Thematic Paper on water and sanitation: Case studies from  
the Interagency Gender and Water Task Force  
(Marcia Brewster, Task Manager)**

**A. New Models for Financing Local Water Initiatives**

In Mabule village in *South Africa*, the Mabule Sanitation Project was developed to respond to serious problems of inadequate sanitation facilities and a high prevalence of diseases such as cholera. For many women and girls, visiting the sanitation facilities had become very difficult because of the poor construction and hygiene. The project is a joint initiative of the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) and the community, with funding from Mvula Trust. The DWAF agreed to provide funding for sanitation projects in communities where there was gender-balanced decision-making. The project established a brick-making project for latrine construction and to generate cash, and provided promoted hygiene education for women. Because of these, the community now has safe, hygienic and attractive toilets and improved health and hygiene. There is increased acceptance of women's leadership roles by community members, local government and NGOs, as well as an increased collaboration between women and men. The brick-making project employs up to 10 people, six of whom are women, and the community has access to affordable bricks. [Jabu, M. (forthcoming). *South Africa: Women in Sanitation and Brick Making Project, Mabule Village*. In: Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, *Gender, water and sanitation: case studies on best practices*. New York, United Nations (in press)]

In Banda Golra, a small village in Pakistan, Nasim Bibi, a poor woman, had formed a community-based women's organization (CBO) in 2002 in order to be eligible for credit from the Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP), an NGO which could lend money to community-based groups. CBO members started a saving scheme and, over a two-year period, 21 women received loans from SRSP, all of which have been successfully repaid. During their monthly meetings, the women identified increased access to water as a priority for action and decided to develop a water supply scheme. The scheme involved installing seven new hand pumps in different locations in the village. The community had to contribute 20 per cent of the costs and SRSP 80 per cent. Each participating household had to contribute Rs. 1000 (US\$ 16) and take turns providing food and accommodation for the labourers engaged in hand pump drilling. Each hand pump was financed by a group of seven households. The sanitation and health situation in Banda Golra has been improved, the decision-making power at the household level has increased for the majority of women involved in the water and credit schemes, and the value of participation in public activities is increasingly recognized. [Bokhari, Johdah (forthcoming). *Pakistan: Initiative of One, Relief for All – Women's Leadership in the Banda Golra Water Supply Scheme*. In: Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, *Gender, water and sanitation case studies on best practices*. New York, United Nations (in press)].

The Swayam Shikshan Prayog in *India* has facilitated the formation of over 1,000 women's savings and credit groups that have mobilized their own savings to provide loans for one another. Women started organizing to address development issues such as water supply in their communities. [Swayam Shikshan Prayog Project Website, <http://www.sspindia.org/index.htm>]

The Self-Employed Women's Association in *India* (SEWA) focussed on gaining access to water for productive enterprises, which are often part of the so-called self-employed workers segment. Today more than 93% of all workers in India are considered self-employed workers, more than half of whom are women. SEWA has helped selected areas in India to develop plastic-lined ponds for water conservation, with technical support and training provided by the Foundation for Public Interest (FPI). Local women are now managing their own village ponds, including all book-keeping and accounts. In eight villages of Banaskantha district of Gujarat, women have formed their own water committees. Through these they undertake contour binding, building checkdams, repair of village ponds and other water conservation related construction. [Makiko, W. (2004). *SEWA The Self Employed Women's Association of India: Self Employed Women's Workers*. See: <http://www.gdrc.org/icm/makiko/makiko.html>; and <http://www.sewa.org>]

## **B. Institutional Development and Political Processes**

*Uganda* introduced a Water Sector Gender Strategy in 2003, which includes an affirmative action component. This mandates that all administrative levels from cabinet down to village should include at least 30% women. As a result, women raised their voices and have been trained to locate water sources in the village, to decide on the location of facilities and to repair pumps. The incidence of breakdown has decreased considerably. Women have also participated in businesses: in rural areas, setting up shops to store spare parts for boreholes and in urban areas, managing water systems. In water user associations, women are often responsible for the finances. A school sanitation and hygiene programme was shared between the ministries of water and education, both of which were headed by women. Working together, the ministers are devising affirmative action programmes to encourage girls to get a better technical education and professional background. [H.E. Maria Mutagamba statement to CSD-13, April 2005]

Affirmative action policies in the water sector in South Africa include 'women in water' awards and a bursary for young women to take up careers in the water sector. These have proved to be a successful means of empowering women. Furthermore, the principle of non-sexism was enshrined in South Africa's 1996 constitution, and a quota system for women's participation cuts across all sectors. South African laws are 'gender-biased', i.e., the government can only procure materials and services from companies where at least 30% of the jobs are held by women. Such 'enforced' participation gave women confidence to emancipate themselves. The empowerment of women has proved to be essential for alleviating poverty and delivering basic services in South Africa. [Statement by H.E. Buyelwa Sonjica to CSD-13]

In *Ukraine*, the cleaning of railway oil tanks combined with an inadequate sewerage system caused overflows of sewage into houses and onto the streets. When women approached the local authority, they were denied funds to solve the problem. With the help of an environmental NGO, women met with residents, launched a political campaign and filed a legal suit against the local authority. As a result, the government allocated resources to finish construction of a sewage pump, financed environmental works, and closed the hazardous oil-tank cleaning facility. [Khosla, Prabha (2002). MAMA-86 and the Drinking Water Campaign in the Ukraine, prepared for the Gender and Water Alliance]

Many examples demonstrate that projects are more effective when women play a pivotal role. For instance, women in the town of La Sirena in *Colombia* wanted to improve the quality of water in the Canaveralejo River, which was highly contaminated. In 1995 the women struggled to secure leadership positions on the action board. The board was run by men, and the women had to impose themselves to participate. Once the women proved themselves capable and were in a leadership position, a treatment plant was constructed. Since then there have been many improvements. For example, diarrhoea and other children's skin diseases have been reduced, and the town was spared in a cholera epidemic. [IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre (IRC) (undated). *Community Water Supply Management. Case Studies. La Sirena: women taking leading positions.* <http://www2.irc.nl/manage/manuals/cases/sirena.html> (accessed on 26 March 2004)]

### **C. Capacity-building and Social Learning**

In the Est-Mono region of *Togo*, where only 10% of the population have access to potable water, a project aimed at improving access to water and sanitation facilities did not meet everyone's needs and the facilities fell into disuse. Given these problems, a new project design encouraged the participation of all villagers, boy and girl students, men and women teachers and administrators. Following the diagnosis of the problem in schools, an action plan for hygiene promotion was approved by the schools and the villages. The project provided water and sanitation facilities, as well as educational resources, to each village school. Addressing gender imbalances among students and ensuring the participation of the entire community has led to impacts far beyond the immediate results. Girls have taken a leadership role and increased their self-esteem. Gender-balanced School Health Committees are responsible for the equipment and oversee hygiene. [Alouka, S. (forthcoming). Integrating Gender into the Promotion of Hygiene in Schools. In: Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, *Gender, water and sanitation: case studies on best practices.* New York, United Nations (in press)]

In *Nigeria*, the construction of a tourist resort on the Obudu plateau led to deforestation and exacerbated pre-existing pressures on water resources and the environment, such as overgrazing and unsustainable agricultural practices. The local Becheve women complained about wasted time in collecting water, poor quality and quantity of water and poor family health. Consequently, the Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF) started a Watershed Management Project on the Obudu plateau in 1999, and encouraged women to get involved in the project's decision-making process. Women leaders were elected on

the management committee, a source of pride for women in the community, and became involved in the construction and maintenance of a water reservoir. The time for collecting water was considerably reduced and allowed women to spend more time on income generating activities like farming and marketing. A conflict between the Becheve women and the Fulani tribesmen over access to water was resolved through negotiation, and the women were ensured timely access to water. Moreover the women's healthcare burden was reduced, with a 45% reduction in cases of diarrhoea in 2004. [Majekodunmi, A. A. (forthcoming). Nigeria: Using Gender Mainstreaming Processes to Help Protect Drinking Water Sources of the Obudu Plateau Communities in Northern Cross River State. In: Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, *Gender, water and sanitation: case studies on best practices*. New York, United Nations (in press)]

In eight slums in the Tiruchirapalli district of Tamil Nadu State, *India*, latrines constructed by the municipal corporation had all become unserviceable due to poor maintenance. Poor sanitation and contaminated water affected all families with disease, increasing their medical expenses. Male community leaders did not take any steps to provide improved facilities. Requests to the government for better services from the women were of no avail until the people joined forces with Gramalaya, an NGO working on water and sanitation projects. The project design called for the installation of drinking water facilities and individual toilets, as well as community mobilization with a focus on gender mainstreaming. WaterAid covered the equipment and installation costs, while Gramalaya covered the capacity building and community mobilization components. The government provided the land sites, electricity, water supply, and loans to community members. The community is not only benefiting from improved water and sanitation facilities and better health, but the women have also gained self-confidence. Women who were once treated poorly by officials are now given respect when they visit government offices. [Berna, I. V. (forthcoming). India: From Alienation to an Empowered Community - Applying a Gender Mainstreaming Approach to a Sanitation Project. In: Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, *Gender, water and sanitation case studies on best practices*. New York, United Nations (in press)]

#### **D. Application of Science, Technology and Knowledge**

In the Witjira National Park in *Australia*, pastoralists had caused serious deterioration of the 'mound springs' (referred to as the Tjurkurpa sites) in the Great Artesian Basin. Due to the fencing for livestock and damage to many water sources, Aboriginal people were not able to travel and were denied access to sites that were of high cultural significance. When pastoralists started to move away from the mound springs to seek new water sources for their stock, the Aboriginal people who stayed at the springs were then able to return to their traditional land management practices. Indigenous peoples combined traditional land management skills and western scientific methods to restore the mound springs. They negotiated a cooperative management structure with National Parks; they have a Board of Management with a majority of Irrwanyere people on it, who also hold a 99-year lease over the park. The park remains the property of the South Australian Government but the lease allows the Irrwanyere people to live on, use and manage the

park in accordance with the plan of management. Through the process of cooperative management, some of the sites have been restored. [Dean Ah Chee (1995). *Indigenous People's Connection with Kwatye (Water) in the Great Artesian Basin*. Department of Environment and Natural Resources 1995. Witjira National Park Management Plan DENR. [[http://www.gab.org.au/inforesources/downloads/gabfest/papers/ahchee\\_d.pdf](http://www.gab.org.au/inforesources/downloads/gabfest/papers/ahchee_d.pdf) ]

In the community of São João D'Aliança in central *Brazil*, the local Union of Rural Workers in collaboration with University of Brasília (UnB) designed a community water project to stop pollution of the das Brancas River and to rehabilitate original vegetation along the river banks. In the women-led initiative, called the 'Water Women' project, each group of women adapted environmentally-friendly practices to their every day activities. The Water Women NGO was launched in April 2002 to support social and environmental development of the region, with a focus on improving women's situations, generating new jobs and income, providing education to youth and adults and preserving the existing culture and traditions. Community education taught local people not to dump their sewage into the river, and how to plant native species of trees along the river banks. As a result, there is a visible absence of waste in the river, a considerable growth of new vegetation of native species on the river banks and decreased soil erosion. Women's political participation was strengthened, and public perceptions regarding their leadership capabilities were changed. [Souza, S. M. (forthcoming). *Brazil: Conscious Fostering of Women's Leadership*. In: Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, *Gender, water and sanitation: case studies on best practices*. New York, United Nations (in press)]

The watershed of the El Naranjo River in *Guatemala* used to have clean water, but the upper watershed now has a scarce and polluted water supply. The communities that depend on its water have a variety of different water needs that vary between men and women and urban and rural communities. These various needs have generated conflicts which go beyond local institutional capacity as well as traditional dispute-settling mechanisms. They have raised many questions for local authorities and leaders regarding current legal regulations, and their application to the administration of water. In 2002, the Solar Foundation started a three-year project with the support of NOVIB (the Dutch affiliate of Oxfam) to promote social peace through the construction of a more sustainable resource-community relationship. The project focuses on the rights and obligations of users, service providers and local public authorities, and monitors trends in water use. Through training in social planning and organization processes, local leaders and authorities are learning about sustainable management of resources to meet the communities' needs. [van den Hooven, L. (forthcoming). *Guatemala: Meeting Women's and Men's Water Needs in the "El Naranjo" River Watershed Organization*. In: Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, *Gender, water and sanitation: case studies on best practices*. New York, United Nations (in press)]

### **E. Targeting, Monitoring and Implementation Assessment**

In *Morocco*, the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project of the World Bank aimed at reducing the burden of girls "who were traditionally involved in fetching water" in order

to improve their school attendance. In the six provinces where the project is based, it was found that girls' school attendance increased by 20% in four years, attributed in part to the fact that girls spent less time fetching water. It was also found that convenient access to safe water reduced the time spent fetching water by women and young girls by 50 to 90%. [World Bank (2003). *Implementation Completion Report on a Loan in the Amount of US\$ 10 Million Equivalent to the Kingdom of Morocco for a Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project*, Report No. 25917. See: [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2003/06/17/000090341\\_20030617084733/Rendered/PDF/259171MA1Rural1ly010Sanitation01ICR.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2003/06/17/000090341_20030617084733/Rendered/PDF/259171MA1Rural1ly010Sanitation01ICR.pdf) (accessed on 22 March 2004)]

In *Bangladesh*, a school sanitation project with separate facilities for boys and girls helped boost girls' school attendance 11 % per year, on average, from 1992 to 1999. [United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) (2003). *Sanitation for All*. See: <http://www.unicef.org/wes/sanall.pdf> (accessed on 22 March 2004)]

The School Sanitation and Hygiene Education (SSHE) campaign, a joint project of UNICEF and the IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre, the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) and others, aims to provide water and sanitary facilities in schools to improve health of all pupils and encourage girls to attend school. Research and surveys suggest that separate facilities need to be provided for girls and boys, if girls are not to be discouraged from attending school. The project began in February 2000 in *Burkina Faso, Colombia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Viet Nam and Zambia*. With an emphasis on local participation, SSHE provides low-cost teaching aids, inexpensive, community developed technology and life-skills hygiene education to primary schools [See [http://www.unicef.org/wes/index\\_schools.html](http://www.unicef.org/wes/index_schools.html)].

In the Ejura-Sekyedumasi District of *Ghana*, the Ghana Rural Water Project (GRWP) was initiated by World Vision Ghana (WVG) to address a serious infestation of guinea worm and poor access to potable drinking water. The project has shifted from a strictly technology-driven approach to a community-based, people-oriented, demand-driven focus, including gender mainstreaming, poverty alleviation and the well-being of children. Through the GRWP initiative, WVG supplied the village with two boreholes fitted with hand pumps, two public Ventilated Improved Pit (VIP) latrines and a urinal. The community has since identified this water and sanitation project as having had a high level of community participation and gender integration. It has improved the education of girls, who accounted for 53 per cent of primary school students in 2005, compared to 43 per cent in 1995. The incidence of guinea worm has essentially been eliminated. [Poku Sam, N. A. (forthcoming). *Ghana: Gender Integration in a Rural Water Project in the Samari-Nkwanta Community*. In: Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, *Gender, water and sanitation: case studies on best practices*. New York, United Nations (in press)]

A bottled water plant, opened in 2002 in the Klaten district of Java, *Indonesia*, extracted a huge quantity of spring water just 20 metres away from the area's primary water source. This caused a drastically decreased water supply in the district, and the community's

access to irrigation water has decreased, with wells starting to run dry. Community members came together in 2003 to establish the Klaten People's Coalition for Justice (KRAKED) to advocate on their behalf. KRAKED's main objective was to close down the bottling plant; its short-term objective was to reduce its extraction rate and establish a community monitoring system. Although women have traditionally little decision-making power, they were able to participate in the KRAKED programme, and set up a research project to monitor the impact of the bottling plant on the community's water. The project also targeted local government and members of local parliament, journalists and company personnel. Women's participation in this process facilitated KRAKED reaching a wider audience. Better insight was gained in the way women and men share information and how these differences can be useful in raising awareness. [Ardhianie, N. (forthcoming). Indonesia: the Impact of Women's Participation in the Aqua-Danone Advocacy Programme – A Case Study in Klaten District, Central Java. In: Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, *Gender, water and sanitation case studies on best practices*. New York, United Nations (in press)]