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Summary of the Cases¹

Gender in Court

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The 3rd World Water Forum
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Gender and Water Alliance

¹ The complete case studies (30/40 pages each) are available. Requests to fonseca@irc.nl

Case 1 - The beneficiaries: men and women

This will consist of a group of women and men from communities who will explain how the incorporation of gender perspectives in projects and programmes has made a difference to their lives.

Community El Hormiguero

Colombia Instituto de Investigación y Desarrollo en Agua Potable, Saneamiento Básico y Conservación del Recurso Hídrico (CINARA), Universidad del Vall

Women Managing the Public Interest – A participative experience on gender and water in El Hormiguero, Colombia

The participative dynamics of construction and defence of the common interest which are being developed in water supply projects are deeply influenced by gender relations. It is showed on the case of El Hormiguero where was developed a participatory project with gender approach in order to improve their water supply system.

EL Hormiguero is located in the rural area of the Municipality of Santiago de Cali², Colombia. Its total population is at 6930 inhabitants, and is mainly of Afro-Colombian descent. Despite geographical proximity to the city of Cali, the culture conserves traces of the traditions and customs of the Pacific Coast region³. The men mainly work in sand extraction from the River Cauca and as wage labourers on agricultural holdings in order to earn a living, while the women work in harvesting chili peppers, irrigating sugar cane, domestic services in Cali, and as street vendors. Sixty people, men and women, have been working as labourers for the Paper Fabric Cauca SA, since the year 2001.

CONSTRUCTION OF COMMON INTEREST FROM DAILY ROUTINE

In Colombia, as in the majority of the countries, there is a tradition of domination of public space by men. In most of its localities, public posts are held by men. Men have accessed easily the public spaces administered by the state because institutional consultations directed at project execution are mainly aimed at men. The case of El Hormiguero demonstrates that when men have dominated formal spaces of representation like the Community Action Board⁴ (Junta de Acción Comunal) and the Local Administration Board⁵ (Junta Administradora Local) they have used their powers without great results, but with a marked interest in the executive posts and control over decision making.

While, the large majority of men concentrate on their work and their private lives, without willing to have to do anything with what is related to the common interest. Women have carried out an admirable job in favour of the common interest by transforming the tasks which dominate their daily lives in meeting and organisation spaces. Work for the common interest began in El Hormiguero when several women decided to unite to sweep the locality's streets and improve the appearance of the surroundings. In this way, around fifty women began to meet up in the afternoons or at night to carry out this task and decided to create a Women's Committee. *"The aim was to be able to help ourselves, to be able to share"* said a woman.

² The second largest city of Colombia (2000000 inhabitants)

³ The Colombian Pacific coast is an area mainly inhabited by an Afro-Colombian population, descendants of slaves brought to America from the west coast of Africa to work in the mines and plantations.

⁴ A formalized community organization at *vereda* level.

⁵ A formalizer community organization at *corregimiento* level.

The Women's Committee decided to encourage the community needs and to present projects. In this way got the support of Plan Internacional⁶ to build a classroom in their school. And they managed to get public transport for the community. The women later decided to join the formal organisations like the Community Action Board⁷ and proposed Nelly Guapacha as a candidate, and she began as the secretary of the Board. She was president for several terms and currently is also the president of the Local Administration Board⁸.

But women's joining the Community Action Board marked the beginning of a different management style. Women prioritised community needs instead of personal interest. At the present moment, for education of children and adolescents, El Hormiguero has 2 nursery schools, 1 school of agricultural primary education, and 3 schools which have primary and secondary education⁹. There are 2 health centres, both which are attended by nurses who are young people from the community that received training in this field. Currently, with the support of an NGO, an adult education program has been put set-up, which has also had four years of high school graduates. In addition, they have a local television channel which they got as compensation when the gas pipeline was built running through the community.

IMPROVEMENT OF WATER SUPPLY

In 1990, there was a cholera outbreak in El Hormiguero (70 cases and one death were reported). The development of the water supply project began in 1993. It had a large influence on the perception of common interest in the community, not only for the women, but also for the men.

According to community leaders: *“With the emergency created by the occurrence of cholera, the municipal administration began to notice that El Hormiguero exists, and then it became possible to include the community in several institutional programmes, amongst these, the Team Learning Project with EMCALI¹⁰ and Cinara¹¹ from the Universidad del Valle.*

After having had several visits to other wells, to the water treatment plant of the city of Cali, and interviewing other communities, the community decided internally that the best option was to treat the water from the River Cauca like they did in Cali. This dream didn't last long because when the people from Cinara explained the costs that this would mean for the users, it was obvious that this was a very expensive option. We opted to bore another well because of this.

During the construction and making the changes in the distribution network, the women, children and men went out with spades and pickaxes to open up ditches, to lay tubes. It was the first time that the people participated with pleasure, and were committed to the community. It didn't matter if it was the weekend, if it was raining, everyone was working. But the greatest event for the people was at the end of 1996, when the distribution network change was completed and people could get water in all homes.

⁶ Plan Internacional is a non-governmental organization which is supported by contributions from different countries.

⁷ Of the current 12 members of the Community Action Board in the administrative centre, 10 are women. The presidents of the neighbourhood boards are also women: Cascajal (Gloria Velasco), La Pailita (Adiela Becerra), Cauca Viejo (Fabiola Olaya).

⁸ Nelly was the only woman in the first Local Administration Board in the *corregimiento*. It now has 9 members, 5 of which are women and 4 are men.

⁹ Primary education in Colombia has 5 grades and High School has 6, making a total of 11 grades. All of El Hormiguero's educational establishments are run by women.

¹⁰ Water utility of Cali

¹¹ Research and Development Institute on water supply and sanitation based at Universidad del Valle in Cali, Colombia

The participatory process with gender approach developed during the project execution allowed to clarify that community work is not exclusively an activity for women, but in contrast, that it has better results if both men and women get involved. Women who, in general, had little knowledge about technology had the opportunity to acquire criteria to judge technological options. When the project ended, there were men who wanted to take on the responsibility of being part of the Executive Board of the Water Users Association. Isabelino Olmos, who took on the presidency of the Board, commented that: *“I’m not going to lie to you, it was sometimes difficult for me to stop working for a day and dedicate that day to the community. Now I realize that if I stop work for a day, that day is won for the community”*.

A mixed Executive Board (men and women) was elected and it got:

- Setting up differential tariffs in accordance with the socio-economic conditions of the users.
- Good functioning of the water supply system, the level of payment of the water tariffs increased to 90%.
- The construction of a hut for the diesel generator which was given to them by Plan Internacional with the aim that they could have water provided during power cuts.

SEVEN YEARS LATER

With the work carried out in the water supply project, men were convinced to accept responsibilities in the Executive Board of the Water Users Association, but have been mainly interested in the main posts: President and Vice-president, leaving for women the functions that they have traditionally held in Latin American water committees (secretary¹² and treasurer). The patriarchal management style is manifested in a preoccupation with punishing instead of educating. In addition, when men leave their posts, they have little solidarity with and support for those who take over.

Technically, the system still works, although there are problems with water quality and formation of a bio-film in the distribution network. Administratively, weaknesses are beginning to form, such as a decreasing community participation at the assemblies. The man who currently holds the post of president has named himself as the caretaker, as he considers that no-one else is able to occupy this post in the locality. As they only pay him a small bonus, not a salary, he does not pay for the water service. The community has become unmotivated and the arrears which had been reduced to 10% have increased to 50%, putting the sustainability of the system at risk.

Now that the current Executive Board’s term is up, and that leaders of the community (men and women) have been invited to decide on who will take up the posts, a discussion has arisen amongst the men, which questions their limited participation in El Hormiguero’s community work.

Miguel comments that: *“Men have had a lack of commitment to the community; some of them like basketball, some of them like gambling, some like drinking and so they never make time to come to community meetings. A leader is not simply someone who gives orders, but they also have to establish themselves according to the norms of the community. Women cannot be the only ones involved, men should also be involved. Here in El Hormiguero everyone must participate together”*.

¹² Since the new water supply system began to function, the post of secretary has always been held by a woman. Ermila was first, then Amparo, Amalfi, and Rosa is the current secretary. They have all been key figures for the functioning of the system. They are the people who charge the tariffs and invite the community, etc.

Men have also discussed the fact that not only men have an authoritarian management style, but women too, as they employ a leadership which is just as authoritarian as that of men in the private sphere. Although some women commented that “*women give orders with their hearts*”, Astrid argued that the problem lies in the fact: “*Women have been dominated for many years, and when they have the chance to get out of that situation, they know that they have to show qualities which are greater than those of men. We don’t mean to behave in the same way as they do in the home, but rather show the ability that we have*”.

The issue of gender has come back onto the scene in El Hormiguero’s community life. It is obvious that good community work needs the joint efforts of men and women and that achieving transformations in the field of relations between men and women goes further than the period of a project. This new stage in which the community is already aware of these differences creates an exceptional space for work, especially with young men, on the reconstruction of male identities and reinforcement of female empowerment, through training of women in areas like finances, legislation, social marketing, etc. They recognize that they have weak points in these areas, which prevent them from taking greater advantage of their gifts as good administrators.

The Team Learning Project strategy which gave such good results when carrying out the project, has failed to structure the follow-up of its achievements. After the project was completed, each institution has remained in sporadic contact with the community, but there is no joint support strategy. The establishment of a follow-up programme would allow for better consultancy for the communities to face the difficulties which arise with the passing of time.

CONCLUSIONS

The El Hormiguero case study allows for reflection on the following aspects

- The recovery of evidence on the importance of women’s work in construction of common interest can help to more easily develop processes of self-affirmation and self-esteem which allow women to consciously proclaim themselves constructors of the public. The acceptance of this fact by men equally allows for men to value women and identify aspects which must be contemplated in any creative reconstruction work on male identities.
- The carrying out of water projects generally includes the participation of more than one institution. It is important that a strategy similar to that, which was conceived by “team learning projects”, should exist, in which community participation with a gender approach is a cross-cutting element in the process’s development. However, it is equally important that joint institutional work should not end with the completion of the project, but that follow-up programmes should be developed to support the sustainability of the results.
- The degree of difficulty for working with gender approach is closely linked to the history of each community, but the achievements of this approach to construct ways of exchange and solidarity between men and women are easily witnessed in day-to-day community life. As Nelly Guapacha says, “*if we do the work between both of us, the benefits can be greater as we both have responsibility.*”

Care Cambodia

The Impact of Water Disasters in Cambodia

This case study will show how water disasters have a direct impact on poverty and gender equality. Flooding, especially that experienced annually in many parts of Asia (including Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Philippines, PRC, and Viet Nam), has both beneficial and harmful impacts. Floods rejuvenate wetlands forming the natural breeding grounds of diverse aquatic plants, fish and animals that are the fundamental sources of income and food for the poorest of the poor floodplain residents; and bring natural sediments and nutrients that are beneficial to agriculture. Floods also replenish surface reservoirs and groundwater basins, providing a reserve against dry season water shortages and drought. Such socio-economic benefits favorably impact on the poor, and women in particular.

On the other hand, flash flooding, excessively deep flooding, and floods of long duration, can cause widespread suffering and severe household shocks, such as death by drowning of children and illness of income-producing adults. Such flooding exacerbates poverty and impacts women most seriously by limiting access to income-earning activities, disrupting vital social services, and wiping out investments in agriculture, aquaculture, and personal property. These adverse impacts affect the poorest households and women most severely.

Specific recommendations for achieving effective water disaster management that most positively impact the poor and women are described in case studies presented by women from Cambodia, where workshops were held on the subject of Water Disasters, Poverty Reduction, and Gender Equality.

Case 2 - The implementers at community level: CBOs and NGOs

Presented by CBOs and NGOs which show how its work with the community has made a difference. In this case study community leaders and NGO and CBO representatives will come forward and explain how gender was mainstreamed and what difference it has made.

***MUDE - Mujeres en Desarrollo Dominicana, Dominican Republic**
Incorporating a gender perspective in rural water and sanitation projects – experiences of MUDE*

This case study addresses the issue of integrating a gender perspective in water and sanitation projects carried out in rural areas of the Dominican Republic.

In communities that lack access to piped drinking water supply, it is normally the women who ensure that their families have water, dedicating hours a day to fetching and storing water, often with the help of their children. As primary users of water, women organised in Associations have played an important role in mobilising at community level and have demanded technical and financial support from MUDE to develop water and sanitation projects. MUDE has been working with rural women's Associations for the last 24 years and in response to their demands started carrying out water and sanitation projects 9 years ago, with a focus on gender equality, community participation and sustainability, in line with the NGO's mission. Generally the projects are carried out in small (35 – 200 households), isolated and poor rural communities and solutions are sought together with the community; using appropriate technology.

One of the keys to assuring the successful operation and sustainability of a water system is to involve the users, men and women of different ages, incomes and social standing, in all stages of its design, construction and maintenance, but the inclusion of women doesn't automatically mean that gender is considered. To work with a gender perspective implies confronting the inequalities between men and women, recognising them and looking to change them, while meeting different needs. Gender divisions within society determine who has control and priority for use of water - water for agriculture, domestic water supply and waste disposal, energy, and ecosystem maintenance. In working towards greater equality in control and decision-making, MUDE uses a participatory methodology which includes the following actions:

- ❖ **INFORMATION GATHERING AND COMMUNITY APPRAISAL.** It is necessary to carry out a mini analysis of gender, with segregated data that discusses differences in women and men's roles with reference to fetching, storing and using water, decision making and define inequalities that need to change. It also analyses the relationships not only between men and women, but also between young and old, wealthy and poor to build a picture of the community and the constraints the project may face.
- ❖ **TAPPING LOCAL KNOWLEDGE.** Local people have particular (historical) knowledge and experience of the environmental conditions that need to be taken into account by water engineers and technical "experts". Particular account needs to be taken of women's accumulated practical knowledge in managing and protecting water sources and watersheds and for this knowledge to be incorporated in the design, execution and management of water and sanitation projects.
- ❖ **FIXING PRIORITIES.** MUDE ensures the participation of women in the decision-making, selection of the water source, priorities for the use of water, election of the

management committee, the type of system, location of latrines and setting the water tariff.

- ❖ **ASSURING SPACE FOR THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN.** Meetings and training sessions are held at convenient times for women that have been previously established with the community, ensuring that they have space to speak and promoting their participation.
- ❖ **FORMATION OF A WATER MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE.** The formation and composition of the water management committee is critical for the sustainability of the project. Half or more members should be women (minimum a third women), elected by the community and holding key positions. All committee members are trained in democratic decision-making, community participation and gender analysis, as well as receiving technical training.
- ❖ **TECHNICAL TRAINING FOR MEN AND WOMEN.** Technical and administrative training is given to Women as well as men. It is important to recognise that the women need equal access to information about managing and repairing the system as men and is essential to train both women and men in routine maintenance, plumbing and repairs. This ensures that the women are not dependant upon the men for minor repairs and have more control over the management of the system.
- ❖ **CONSTRUCTION OF THE AQUEDUCT.** The physical construction of the aqueduct and latrines provides a framework for the community organisation and capacity building events. The community carries much of the work out on a voluntary basis, and care is taken to discuss the equal value of work done by women and to recognise this together with the traditional construction work as part of the local contribution to the project.
- ❖ **PROMOTING HEALTH AND SANITATION.** All water projects include awareness raising activities to promote health and sanitation. A group of health volunteers are selected from the most motivated villagers and receive basic training, which they then multiply among the community with support from MUDE's outreach worker. Education in hygiene needs to be directed at men as well as women and involve both as agents of change.
- ❖ **CONSTRUCTING LATRINES.** The water projects try to include the construction of latrines within the financial constraints of the project in order to increase the potential of the positive impact on the health of the community.

GENERAL IMPACT OF THE ACTIONS.

The most obvious result of the project is the provision of piped clean drinking water to a community previously without this basic facility. Initiatives led by community based women's groups have succeeded in mobilising community action on the question of water, the health of the community improves with the provision of clean water and sanitation, and the workload of fetching and storing water previously born by women has been reduced.

Impact of Gender Strategy on the Sustainability of the Project

In addition, the strategy to include a gender dimension to the project has a particular impact on its results and sustainability through the following:

- ❖ **COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION.** Inclusion of all sectors of the population, not only male-female, but young and elderly, poor and better off, helps define the most appropriate solution and the appropriation of the system by the community, thus assuring efficiency and sustainability in its operation and management for the future.

- ❖ **REDUCING THE BURDEN.** The positive impact of clean drinking water on the health of the family reduces the demand on women's time for healthcare, which together with

the release from the task of fetching and storing water, allows her time for other opportunities, further education or productive activities, growing vegetables, keeping livestock or opening small businesses to provide an income.

❖ **THE WATER MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE.** The organisation and training of the Water Management Committee for community-based operation and maintenance system is critical for the sustainability of the project. By including a gender perspective it has been possible to form committees where women are equally represented and hold positions of power usually dominated by men: president, vice president and treasurer. At the same time the Water committee creates a public forum where women participate on equal terms to ensure the representation of women's interests in the decision-making processes and management of the system.

❖ **MANAGEMENT OF THE MAINTENANCE FUND.** Receiving the payments for water and managing the maintenance fund is one of the basic functions of the Water committee, and is usually carried out by women members whose organisational and management skills have been recognised and proved during the project. One committee, in El Café, is now managing an accumulated fund of 60,000 pesos (about US\$3,000), more than 25 times the average monthly income. The existence of a well-managed maintenance fund helps ensure the long-term functioning of the system.

❖ **TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING.** An increase in women's capacities and technical skills through equal access to training events also has a positive impact on their confidence and ability to participate on an equal basis in areas that have traditionally been dominated by men, reducing the dependence on male participation in operating and maintaining the system and consequently making it more sustainable

❖ **EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN.** All these elements contribute to the empowerment of the women participating in the project on different levels; gaining the confidence to speak in public, to express her particular needs with a partner, negotiating time to assist in training courses or participating in local politics, which in turn creates opportunities for women to redress gender imbalances. *"We, the women, feel more confident in our ability to change things, and the men, well, now they have more respect for us because of what we have achieved"*. Chair of the Water Association, Arroyo Prieto

KEY MESSAGES OF THE CASE STUDY.

It is important that projects in water and sanitation consider women's strategic necessities, such as participating in decision-making, equal access to and control of resources, means of economic production, confidence and capacity building, as well as resolving practical necessities - supplying water and constructing latrines.

Carrying out water and sanitation projects with a gender focus and community participation not only increases the success and sustainability of the project, but also creates a basis for co-operation between women and men, and at the same time a framework for exploring and confronting inequalities.

To mainstream gender in a project does not necessarily imply introducing costly additional training events, but rather changing the focus of planned activities to include different needs of women and men, of varying ages, income and social groups.

Including a gender dimension in water policy and programmes helps to optimise social and economic development, reduce competition and conflicts over water and redress the inequalities of distribution.

Remember gender, recognise different needs of women and men, confront inequalities and make voices heard to improve overall effectiveness and efficiency of water programme management.

Helvetas, Mali

Programme Solidarité Eau - PS-Eau, France

Integrating gender into the management of four hydraulic infrastructure installations by the Programme for institutional support for the water sector (PAI-Eau) in the Sikasso region of Mali.

This experience addresses the issue of integrating gender into the management of hydraulic infrastructure in the Sikasso region of Mali. These consist in installations intended to supply village populations with drinking water (Water for People). The programme has been implemented in several stages, the last of which began in 2002 and aims to re-energise the management system, using an approach in which gender issues are central.

The key to the management of hydraulic installations lies in organising both male and female users around the water collection point to ensure that the installations are appropriated by them and to facilitate the hand-over of their care and maintenance. Thus in village hydraulics projects, there is now a major focus on the information and awareness-raising component amongst users, male and female, and on implementing back-up measures to help the local population to be well organised. Strengthening monitoring and administrative skills at commune level to ensure overall management of the resource necessarily requires the active participation of all stakeholders, including women. In addition, Helvetas' decision to adopt an action principle of sustainable development and of greater male-female equality demands that women play a full part in order to defend their needs and interests.

The implementation of the programme has been long and passed through different phases. Although gender was always a guiding principle, it was not easy to implement it on the ground. Helvetas has now some valuable lessons to share.

This case will be presented in French.

Case 3 - The institutions

This case will outline that some of the major challenge that exists are at the institutional level where existing attitudes of decision-makers and implementers and institutional structures present a major obstacle. Capacities on what does it imply for the organization, for the programmes and projects being implemented and what type of tools there are that allow them to actually mainstream gender.

Japan International Cooperation Agency, JICA
National Centre for Environmental Health and Water Supply (Nam Saat),
Laos
A Case Study of the Project of Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Improvement
in the Mountainous Area (North-West Region, Lao PDR)

The project was conducted from February 1999 to March 2001 by Lao people in Bokeo and Luang Namtha Provinces and National Centre for Environmental Health and Water Supply (Nam Saat) under the Ministry of Health, Government of Lao PDR, assisted by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). In the dry season, the water shortage and water borne disease occur frequently because of the hygienically inappropriate environment.

In accordance with Sector Strategy in Rural Water Supply in Lao PDR, the project gave high priority to the pro-poor areas, the minorities and the remoteness, and put value on sustainable water supply with the gender balanced participation. Before the baseline survey, gender lecture was held for the counterpart staff and Community Based Organisations, and at the stage of planning, women and men participated in the community dialogue workshop for planning. It was observed that more than 40% of the participants at all the process such as planning and construction were women.

As a result, the pilot project succeeded in reducing water fetching time for 90% of the villagers, mostly women. Especially, the minorities living on the hill gained large benefits through the project. Quality water was significantly improved. Frequently of washing and bathing increased, and children's diarrhea was reduced. The burden of children for fetching water was also reduced. Community ownership of each facility through the experiences of involvement was significantly increased. Nam Saat had also strong sense of ownership of the project.

Lessons learned from gender perspective are gender mainstreaming approach should be notified and agreed by all stakeholders before and throughout the project. In order to do that, gender lecture was very effective to make all stakeholders aware of gender issues at the initial stage.

In conclusion, women and men's participation throughout the project was the first step for the gender mainstreaming and promoted more active participation.

Planning Commission Gov. of Pakistan

Pakistan Water Partnership

Mainstreaming gender for water from centre to grassroots (through gender training and strategic gender actions working in tandem) in Pakistan

The case begins with gender orientation and training in a national government apex planning body, where a gender needs assessment and gender workshops by gender trainers convinced senior government servants (both men and women) of the efficacy of this kind of initiative. Some senior govt people then took steps in their own work to institute gender focal points, and some other gender-supportive initiatives. One of these senior government officers, in his capacity as a director of another non-profit national apex body (Pakistan Water Partnership) was further exposed to the strategic actions of the Women and Water Network (WWN) programme.

The WWN South Asia Programme is a strategic Programme of action, which has a few well defined aims – including the move towards 50 percent representation of women in all decision-making bodies, steering committees and boards of the Global Water Partnership family of institutions in the short run; and all other water related institutions in each country of South Asia, in the long run. The originator and South Asia coordinator of the WWN programme was also a board member of PWP, and was working on mainstreaming gender throughout the work of PWP and on developing linkages of gender training across government and civil society institutions.

The gender-trained government officer and the strategic gender planner then worked together to push through several gender- proactive measures that have a direct impact at the grassroots – i.e. at the level of the Area Water Partnerships, which are local stakeholder fora on water.

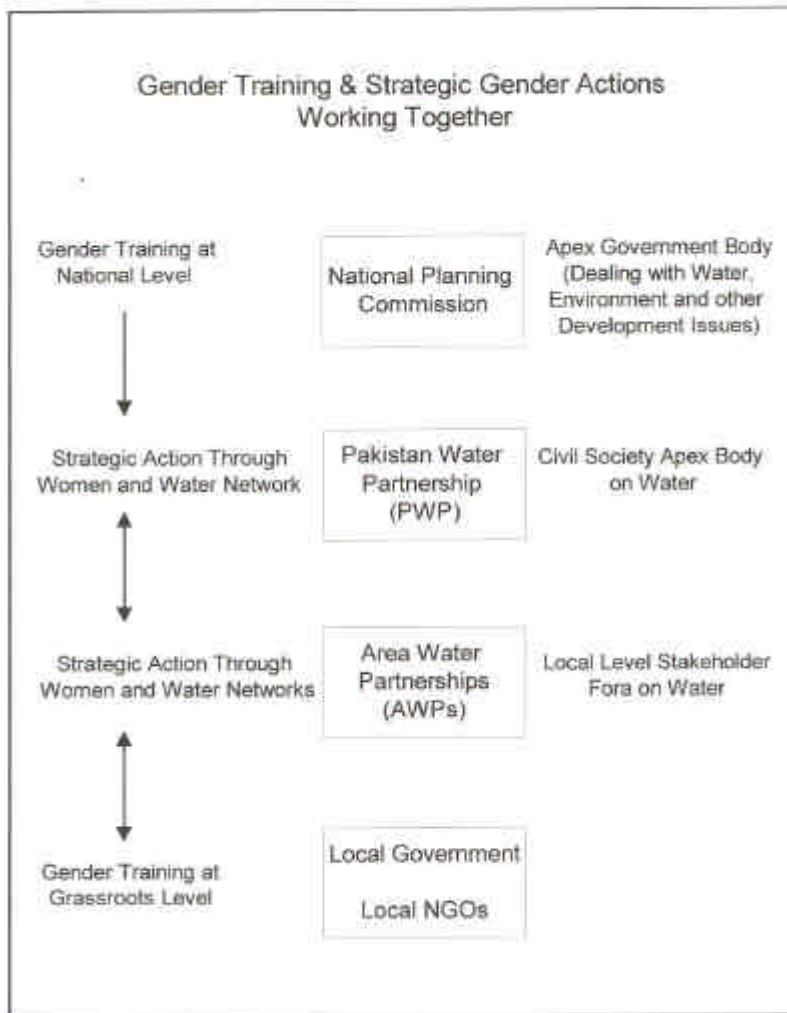
This case shows the synergy between training and strategic action. The now gender sensitive senior government person, in his capacity as coordinator of the Area Water Partnership Programme, took on the recommendations and strategic objectives of the WWN and allocates 50 percent of the AWP budget to gender mainstreaming, as well as becoming one of the major advocates of women's participation at all levels. As part of the process, spearheaded by WWN, many more women were inducted into the decision-making bodies of PWP and brought into the governing body. A local gender activist who is also a member of PWP, and the Pakistan WWN took up the challenge of gender mainstreaming in one Area Water Partnership.

Together, these strategic actions (at levels from national, provincial to grassroots) and gender orientation/training have led to a model initiative of gender mainstreaming at the grassroots. The net result of the gender training and gender strategizing is a local woman's organization (Women Welfare Association) heading an Area Water Partnership covering a million people.

There are numerous women involved in its work and there are now eight local Women and Water Networks, supporting one AWP.

Gender training at local level had helped prepare these women to participate in all matters to do with water, irrigation, drainage, drinking water, domestic water etc and also take part in the farmer organizations coming up in the area. In addition to the actual work in the AWP forum, women are now involved in the various water sectors, and the raised profile of women is phenomenal. Women are now consulted by provincial organizations that have to do with

water and environment and sit on farmer committees, as well as initiating and implementing initiatives that support the integrated water resources management (IWRM).



Case 4 - The policy

This case will focus on how lack of policy constraints the effectiveness and efficiency in the water sector. It will provide some good practices of what is being done at this level as well as the real impact of policies and legislation concerning gender and the water sector.

South African Government, Department of Water Affairs and Forestry

The Water Services Act of 1997 and especially the National Water Act of 1998 specify the need for equitable representation. The Services Act states in Article 3 (1) that for nominations of new Board Members, the selection panel that advises the Minister must “*have regard to race and gender*”. The National Water Act specifies that the Minister who appoints the Board members of the Catchment Management Agencies “*must do so with the object of achieving a balance among interests of water users, potential water users, local and provincial governments and environmental interest groups*”. According to clauses 10b and 10e, the Minister may also appoint additional members “*in order to achieve sufficient gender representation*” and “*achieve representation of disadvantaged persons or communities which have been prejudiced by past racial and gender discrimination in relation to access to water*” (Article 81 (1), emphasis added).

While stressing that there is no one gender policy, and no one blueprint for all cases, Barbara Schreiner, the Chief Director, Water Use and Conservation in the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, has recently listed a number of questions for testing whether a water policy truly combines equity on gender with equity for poor women and men. The list provides an excellent base to monitor whether gender and social equity are incorporated in the application of the new policies, provided it is coupled with verification mechanisms and institutional power for corrective action.

The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry in South Africa has furthermore initiated a mainstreaming gender project, which includes training programmes on gender for water professionals and practitioners run by the National Community Water and Sanitation Training Institute (NCWSTI).