

ACTION PIECE



Gender equality and inclusion in water resources management

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About the Global Water Partnership

The Global Water Partnership (GWP) was established in 1996 to support countries in their efforts to implement a more equitable and sustainable management of their water resources. The Network spans 13 regions with more than 3,000 institutional partners in 183 countries.

GWP's [Gender Strategy](#) (Global Water Partnership, 2014), aligned with the GWP 2014–2019 Strategy *Towards 2020: A Water Secure World*, addresses diversity, inclusion, social equality, and women's role in the integrated and sustainable management of water resources. Achieving water security means adopting inclusive and participatory approaches. In treating gender equality as a global priority, GWP has taken a comprehensive approach that addresses the structural drivers as well as the complexity of gender inequalities.

GWP recognises the need for a balanced representation of women and men in processes at all levels, and in the importance of empowerment of women to be part of such processes. GWP aims to promote and facilitate the mainstreaming of gender into water governance as a key aspect of achieving water security. To achieve these aims, GWP encourages and supports women's organisations to actively engage in GWP partnerships and processes at all levels.

GWP is grateful for the support of the UK Department for International Development (DFID) in funding the high-level workshop which brought together 25 global experts in gender equality and water resources management in support of this Action Piece and lending their expert and intellectual support to GWP's Gender Strategy.

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Foreword

Around the world, women and girls are the most likely to be responsible for gathering water and fuel for their households. Women are disproportionately affected by impacts of water scarcity, climate change, and natural disasters. Despite these adverse impacts, there are many examples of women being powerful catalysts for change.

And in spite of their unique experiences and valuable perspectives, gender is often missing from water management policies, and often absent from the decision-making process.

With the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals, world leaders placed inclusiveness at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Founded on the Dublin Principles (1992), GWP has always had diversity, inclusion, and gender equality as core values. It has advocated for water governance frameworks to capture these essential principles.

Water is crucial to development in any sector. While world population tripled in the twentieth century, the use of water resources grew sixfold. Population growth, growing middle classes, and ever-increasing demand for food, energy, and construction are putting a major stress on water resources. It is now more important than ever to break the silos and adopt an integrated, all-of-society approach that ensures that the needs of women and marginalised groups are addressed in the implementation of water policies and interventions.

Achieving water security means adopting inclusive and participatory approaches. As a multi-stakeholder partnership operating at a range of scales, GWP has captured in this Action Piece the views of 40 experts from around the world working in the fields of social inclusion, gender, and water.

Once again, GWP facilitated the framework for discussion to collaboratively explore concrete ways forward for the gender and water nexus. This was translated, with the excellent work of the Institute for Sustainable Futures (Australia), into four tangible action areas and recommendations that will allow decision-makers, organisations, and practitioners to develop inclusive policies and practices.

This Action Piece is an evidence-based call to action to all actors to build more equitable, inclusive, and sustainable societies.

More than ever, GWP is committed to achieving gender equality and inclusion in water resources management. We will continue to advocate for a transformative approach that leaves no one behind. This Action Piece is a practical step forward in that effort.



Dr Oyun Sanjaasuren
Chair of the Global Water Partnership

Recommendations

The findings that emerged from interviews and a High-Level Meeting for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in IWRM (integrated water resources management) can be structured around four action areas to drive gender equality and inclusion. Each action area has a corresponding recommendation.

OVERALL RECOMMENDATION:

Strengthen the evidence and business case for inclusive water resources management

Data demonstrates the benefits of inclusion, but needs to be better utilised and strengthened to improve buy-in for inclusive water resources management.

Action area 1 – Institutional leadership and commitment

Make gender equality and inclusion a core business goal

Inclusive water programmes and policies lead to greater economic, environmental, and social sustainability. To make this a reality, organisations must ensure they have the right processes, systems, leadership, and resources. To institutionalise inclusive practices – and to bridge the gap between policy and practice – leadership is needed at all levels of an organisation. Young female leaders, for example, need to be taken seriously and have important roles in organisations.

Action area 2 – Gender and inclusion analysis that drives change

Conduct gender and inclusion analysis at all levels

Quality analysis is necessary to ensure that equality is maximised. Analysis should include the current gender and equality context (to identify issues of exclusion) as well as the projected impacts of any intervention on members of the community (women and men, boys and girls, transgender peoples, people with disabilities, and marginalised people). The analysis must then influence programme and project design, legal frameworks, etc. It is also important to draw on gender analysis frameworks to guide monitoring, evaluation, and learning choices.

Action area 3 – Meaningful and inclusive participation in decision-making and partnerships

Adopt a ‘nothing about them without them’ approach

To include people who will be affected by a water management decision is about more than just numbers, it is about ‘meaningful’ participation. This includes training, financial support, long-term engagement, and working in partnership with organisations such as women’s, indigenous people’s, and disabled people’s organisations.

Action area 4 – Equal access to and control of resources

Create a level playing field with respect to access to and control of resources

Significant efforts are needed to ensure that access to and control of resources – both land and water – make ownership more inclusive. Legal barriers need to be addressed as well as customary law and cultural practices. Given the sensitivity of these issues, marginalised peoples themselves are best placed to inform strategies around unlocking these barriers to equality.

Gender equality and inclusion in water resources management: why it matters

For decades there has been growing awareness of the need to include all parts of a community in water resources management (WRM) and sectoral water use (including water, sanitation, and hygiene [WASH]) programmes and initiatives, because if segments of the population are excluded, projects are likely to fail. Why? Without taking into account the diverse needs and practices of a community, it is unlikely that results will be sustainable, and deliver the human development and economic outcomes intended. Inclusive water management, on the other hand, has the potential to reduce existing inequalities, enhance cost–benefit ratios, uphold human rights obligations, and improve programme sustainability.

Although Principle 3 of the Dublin Principles (Box 2) acknowledges women’s roles and the need for greater equality in water resources management, 25 years on there are still significant gaps between inclusive policy and practice. Water management projects and programmes can have a significant positive impact on women and marginalised people if well designed, but also have the potential to exacerbate existing inequalities and adversely impact women’s roles and position within the home and community unless specific and well-targeted measures are put in place.

Countless gender and inclusion strategies within the water management sector have been developed across the world by non-governmental organisations, governments, regional bodies, partnership organisations, multilateral development banks, and bilateral aid agencies. And yet, evidence has revealed a clear gap between these policies and practice: gender strategies are seldom funded adequately, gender mainstreaming is not well understood, and on the whole monitoring and evaluation processes are not sophisticated enough to reveal the true gender and inclusion power dynamics occurring within a water resources management context. Furthermore, there is a need to better understand and account for a broader range of factors that can lead to exclusion and marginalisation, such as age, disability, ethnicity, caste, and sexuality, if we are to ensure that no one is left behind.

About this Action Piece

This Action Piece outlines the key ingredients needed to support gender equality and inclusion in water resources management and sectoral water uses (including WASH), and provides recommendations on how to draw on these key ingredients. It is based on a literature review, interviews with 14 global experts, and a high-level workshop with 25 experts in the water management sector. Overall, 39 people were consulted from 25 leading organisations in water governance, water management, gender equality, and inclusion policy and practice. The aim of this Action Piece is to demystify how organisations can take initial and necessary steps towards increasing gender equality. It is also a call to action and confirms the commitment of the Global Water Partnership to promote and champion gender equality in water resources management. This Action Piece is supported by a Scoping Study¹ which details the knowledge and experience drawn from the literature review and expert interview process.

While this Action Piece is largely focused on women and gender, it recognises that gender equality can’t be addressed in isolation – and broader inclusion is necessary to ensure that no one is left behind. As the Deputy Secretary-General of the UN has reported, the underlying moral code of the Sustainable Development Goals is that “People who are hardest to reach should be given priority”. This Action Piece echoes this ethical foundation, with a focus on what the water resources management sector can do to help to achieve it. The Sustainable Development Goals that are particularly relevant are Goals 5, 6, 10, 13, and 17, i.e. Gender Equality, Clean Water and Sanitation, Reduced Inequalities, Climate Action, and Partnerships for the Goals, respectively.

¹ Available at www.gwp.org

According to many experts consulted for this Action Piece, the answer to bridging the gap between policy and practice is not ‘rocket science’.² We already know a lot about how to deliver more equitable outcomes and contribute to greater gender equality in the sector. Developing appropriate governance frameworks and empowering communities to contribute to and make decisions about water management issues that affect them is central to achieving this. A range of evidence-based resources are already available that can be used by policy-makers and practitioners – some of these are identified in this document, and other key resources can be found in the accompanying Scoping Study.

The business case for inclusion

There are significant incentives for governments, organisations, and other stakeholders to take an inclusive approach to water management, including economic benefits, as described in Box 1. Access to water resources and safely managed water and sanitation underpins economic resilience, given that significant losses are incurred through reduced productive time, agricultural production, poor nutrition, healthcare costs, and mortality when safely managed water and sanitation services are not available. Inclusive practice will ensure that the benefits of water management are shared equally among people and has the potential to reduce inequalities, thereby contributing to economic growth and increased social cohesion (Dabla-Norris et al., 2015).

Box 1. Gender equality and inclusion in facts and figures

While **women comprise at least 43 percent** of the **agricultural labour force** globally, their **ownership of and access to land and water resources** is **not equal** to that of men (de Jong et al., 2012).

The McKinsey Global Institute in 2015 calculated that **advancing women's equality** (as defined through 15 indicators applied to 95 countries related to gender equality in work but also physical, social, political, and legal gender equality) can add **US\$12–US\$28 trillion to global growth**

One study found that **closing the gender gap** (through equal access to assets such as land and water, inputs such as seeds and fertiliser, and training) **would increase yields on women-run farms by 20–30 percent** which could **reduce the number of hungry people** in the world by **12–17 percent** (FAO, 2011; World Bank, 2017a).

Research across 15 countries showed that **water supply projects designed and run with the full participation of women** (compared with non- or partial participation) were more sustainable (Gross et al., 2000).

Inclusive practice has the potential to improve women's health outcomes, with flow-on benefits for men, girls, and boys, and may serve to reduce violence against women and girls (Fisher, 2006).

Safely managed water and sanitation provides annual economic gains of **between US\$3 and US\$6 for every dollar invested** (global average) (Hutton, 2015).

Including people with a disability within development programmes is significantly cheaper than the long-term economic impact of exclusion (CBM, 2012).

The Asian Development Bank found that **women are often excluded from water governance realms** as a result of perceived deficiencies in their technical skills and experience, restricted career paths, lack of transparency around promotions and appointments, and informal male networks that exclude female membership (Jalal, 2014).

² Based on interviews conducted for this study with 14 global experts, and a high-level workshop including 25 global experts. Please see acknowledgements for the list of project participants and interviewees.

The private sector is increasingly engaging in water stewardship initiatives, supported by the Water CEO Mandate, UN Global Compact, and others. The stewardship agenda, while currently focused on natural resources issues, is a good entry point for considering broader, water-related social issues such as inclusion. Taking a more holistic approach to water stewardship is likely to increase businesses' 'social licence' through building trust and contributing to the well-being of the communities in which they operate. Efforts are under way to support the hydropower industry to take gender equality into account in planning processes in order to help companies (and government sponsors) to meet their responsibility to protect human rights and minimise harm caused by dam developments (Simon, 2013).

Economic gains are just one of the aspects related to increasing equality in societies, and more specifically in water resources management and sectoral water uses (including WASH). Human rights obligations, value for money (maximising results), and legal elements of the business case are equally if not more important.

Defining gender equality and inclusion

Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men, transgender, intersex people, girls and boys.³
Inclusion means equal rights for all.⁴

equality This Action Piece uses the term equality rather than equity, since 'equality' is a legally binding term in the context of the human right to water and sanitation, and equity is not. Addressing equality requires a focus on all groups experiencing direct or indirect discrimination, and the adoption of affirmative action or special temporary measures where barriers exist and persist, and lead to a denial of rights to individuals and groups.⁵

To support greater gender equality for all, it is critical to understand the power dynamics between genders (including men and women, transgender, and intersex people) as well as 'gender roles', the characteristics and behaviours attributed to the sexes in different contexts (Nobelius, 2004). While gender equality is not just about women, more evidence exists on inequalities experienced by women than other groups in relation to water management. The focus on women is therefore an entry point to the broader inclusion issue.

Women today are often excluded from water governance forums, organisations, decision-making opportunities, and practices, despite global initiatives such as the Dublin Principles (Box 2), which call for the central role that women play in water management to be recognised, utilised, and valued.

It is also important to recognise that women are not a homogeneous group and may face different and additional challenges based on their ethnicity, age, or other characteristics. More broadly, exclusion is not only a result of gender relations and is experienced by a range of people including: cultural minorities, youth, people with disabilities, older people, transgender and intersex people, the poorest of the poor, people considered low-caste, and indigenous peoples. The human right to water and sanitation and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) call for the inclusion of all people, equal rights for women, and the elimination of discrimination between people (de Albuquerque, 2014).

³ UN Women. UN Women – Gender Equality Glossary. <https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org>

⁴ CBM: Inclusion. <http://www.cbm.org/Inclusion-246762.php>

⁵ Report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation to the General Assembly, Integrating non-discrimination and equality into the post-2015 development agenda for water, sanitation and hygiene, August 2012, Para. 29, UN Doc A/67/270.

Box 2. Dublin Principles and gender equality – Principle 3

Women play a central part in the provision, management and safeguarding of water

This pivotal role of women as providers and users of water and guardians of the living environment has seldom been reflected in institutional arrangements for the development and management of water resources.

Acceptance and implementation of this principle requires positive policies to address women's specific needs and to equip and empower women to participate at all levels in water resources programmes, including decision-making and implementation, in ways defined by them.

(Dublin Principles, 1992)⁶

“ *Water is Life and Sanitation is Dignity, the involvement of women in the sector is therefore important in accumulating considerable knowledge about water resources management, including water consumption, conservation, quality and storage methods. However, efforts geared towards improving the management of water as a scarce resource and extending access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation often overshadow the central role of women in water management.* ”

Nomvula Mokonyane, Minister of Water and Sanitation, South Africa

Gender and Water Policies in Africa: Synthesis Report (2015)

⁶ Dublin Principles (1992). <http://www.wmo.int/pages/prog/hwrrp/documents/english/icwedece.html>

Action areas to drive gender equality in water resources management and sectoral water uses (including WASH)

Action area 1. Institutional leadership and commitment

A clear commitment to mainstreaming gender and inclusion objectives is important, but must be backed up by supportive processes, systems, and leadership if it is to be realised. At the governance level, legislative bodies and commissions such as unions of parliamentarians, as well as river basin organisations and political parties can play a key role in mainstreaming gender equality and inclusion in water resources management.

At the organisational level, drivers include establishing a 'social licence' to operate in a particular context and an institution's wish to maximise impact and reduce investment failure. These drivers need to be supported by leadership that highlights the inclusion agenda as being important.

high-level leadership

Yet, a study of water governance programmes found that gender mainstreaming in the design of programmes was "generally weak; lacking relevant high-level goals and adequate integration in the monitoring framework". It also found that the two most critical factors that led to effective implementation of gender strategies were: high-level leadership in support of gender equality; and the involvement of people with gender expertise in project design, implementation, and evaluation (Water Governance Facility, 2014).

involvement of people with gender expertise

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✓ Questions to ask to drive better practice:

- Does our organisation have a clear strategy, to which leadership is committed? How can commitment and leadership be enhanced at all levels?
- What resources have been made available to implement gender strategies and initiatives? Are the strategies adequately resourced (or just good intentions on paper)?
- What skills and capacity do people within the organisation have to understand and implement gender and inclusion strategies? Do they need training/support?
- If the organisation has chosen to appoint gender focal points, are these people supported and resourced?
- How does the organisation develop and include gender and inclusion expertise? For example, are partnerships with women's, disabled persons', or indigenous people's organisations a part of its strategy and ways of working?
- What are the incentives that exist which could be harnessed to drive a more inclusive approach to water resources management? What are the financial, reputational, sustainability, and other incentives operating within and outside of the organisation?
- What accountability mechanisms are in place to ensure that policy and practice are linked, and gender mainstreaming policies are followed through?

Leadership committed to gender equality and inclusion policies and practices helps to incentivise staff and other actors to take inclusive approaches.

Some organisations have demonstrated their commitment to gender equality by employing or appointing ‘gender focal points’ to champion gender equality and connect people within an organisation. While this approach may have benefits, constraints have also been noted. The gender focal points are commonly young women who may not yet have seniority in the organisation. In some cases they are volunteers – without substantial resources to use to execute their mandate. It is important that we don’t disempower these young women but ensure that they are supported and facilitated.

It is also usual to see the focal points carry all the burden of gender mainstreaming within organisations, including the complexity around how to structure the work on gender within an organisation. In order to make the gender focal point strategy successful, it is important that the drivers and champions of gender equality and inclusion also include high-level managers and leaders (women and men) within the organisation, as well as more junior staff.

Leadership can be exercised at different levels, but senior leadership is required for organisational change. Integrating gender equality and inclusion expectations in key performance indicators and work plans is one way of ensuring that staff from across the organisation take steps to mainstream gender and inclusion considerations.

As well as the economic benefits to inclusion (see business case above), there are a range of incentives and drivers currently available for organisations to draw on to make the case within their organisations for inclusive water management, as identified by global experts interviewed for this study. These include:

ASPECT	EXAMPLES OF INCENTIVES AND DRIVERS TO INVEST IN GENDER EQUALITY AND INCLUSION
Organisational drivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Meeting corporate requirements/policies/commitments including corporate social responsibility (CSR) goals ■ Strengthening a ‘social licence’ to operate in a particular community ■ Maximising impact and reducing project failure ■ Enhancing the organisation’s external reputation and profile among stakeholders and target communities ■ Achieving economic efficiencies and cost savings when inclusion is built in from the beginning of an initiative
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Championing/leadership in the sector and within individual organisations by profiling and driving the inclusion agenda ■ Understanding diversity as a strength within organisations ■ Supporting young female leaders and people with disabilities who are often driving change within their organisations
Funding/Donors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Accessing funding from donors that prioritise gender equality and inclusion outcomes ■ Establishing gender budgets within institutions leading to more adequate resourcing of policies
Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Increasing accountability to key stakeholders and target groups, including civil society ■ Increasing public awareness and pressure on leaders to be accountable to issues of gender equality and inclusion in WRM and water sectoral uses (including WASH)
Frameworks and trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals – Goals 5, 6, and 10, and 17 in particular ■ Upholding human rights obligations – to ensure the human rights to water and sanitation for all ■ Increasing discourse around reducing inequalities and increasing gender equality has led to global leaders openly advocating for gender equality ■ Contributing to the achievement of Dublin Principle 3
Resource pressures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Managing pressures on water resources (as a result of climate change, water insecurity, etc.) and the need to engage whole communities in water security initiatives and solutions



Case study: managing Nile Basin resources from a gender perspective – challenges and opportunities

The Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) seeks to develop the river in a cooperative manner, share substantial socio-economic benefits, and promote regional peace and security. The NBI is an intergovernmental partnership of ten Nile Basin countries: Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Republic of the Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda. Eritrea participates as an observer. There have been attempts to integrate gender equality considerations into the NBI; for example, in 2007, the Canadian International Development Agency-funded Gender Equality and African Regional Institution Project carried out an assessment to establish the extent of gender mainstreaming at NBI and its associated institutions. Another study conducted in 2011 found a number of key challenges and opportunities related to mainstreaming gender into the NBI. While some of the challenges identified in the study included the uncoordinated and siloed approach in gender issues; differing policy landscape across the ten countries with little mention of gender issues; inequalities in decision-making; and lack of sex-disaggregated data, the opportunities were found to include:

- **Political commitment:** as demonstrated through the existence of the African Ministers' Council on Water gender mainstreaming policy and the East African Community Gender Policy.
- **Gender policies at the national level:** many countries in the Nile basin have gender policies which promote the mainstreaming of gender considerations. Some countries have appointed gender focal points to oversee the implementation of gender strategies.
- **Civil society engagement:** can assist the identification of inclusion issues and support meaningful action on gender equality.
- **Capacity development:** some countries in the Nile Basin have promoted equal access to resources and participation of women in water governance structures (e.g. Kenya) (Gathira and Waititu, 2011, pp. 13–16).

Source: Case study information drawn from Gathira and Waititu (2011).

Action area 2. Gender and inclusion analysis that drives change

Quality analysis of gender and other social power dynamics and influences is the essential first step of any process to develop inclusive legal frameworks and meet the practical needs of marginalised people, and/or shift or transform gender norms in a water management context. The people who can explain what is going on in any given situation are the communities themselves – including women's groups, disabled people's organisations, and other groups that represent and enhance the voice of the broader community.

The analysis process can take many forms and may include collecting quantitative and qualitative data with and by communities themselves. A range of tools and frameworks which have been developed over the last 30+ years are available to support gender and inclusion analysis. There is not one perfect gender analysis framework, but rather different approaches which are useful to draw on based on the needs of an organisation or practitioner.⁷ Some examples that can be considered include the practical and strategic needs and objectives framework which supports practitioners to consider how a water

⁷ See tools available from SIDA (2015) and also Oxfam's guide to gender analysis (March et al., 1999).

management initiative may support women's practical, day-to-day needs (such as water for farming and economic development), and to what extent it drives strategic objectives (such as increasing voice and influence which serves to also shift gender norms and expectations; Moser, 1989). Another is the Women's Empowerment Framework developed by Sara Longwe in 1991 (March et al., 1999) and the Harvard Analytical Framework.⁸ Please see the Scoping Study for more detail and application of the gender analysis frameworks used for this project.

✓ Questions to ask to drive better practice:

- Has a gender and social impact analysis been conducted at the outset of a project/programme/initiative?
- If so, was it adequate? Were indigenous/local women's organisations and gender experts involved? Were power relations that can lead to exclusion and particular needs of different groups identified?
- What are the context-specific dynamics between men and women, girls and boys (generally, and in relation to water management roles and responsibilities)?
- How has the analysis informed design?
- Are the planned gender equality and inclusion measures based on evidence drawn from the relevant context?
- What monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) strategies and processes have been put in place to capture changes in gender-related dynamics? How does the organisation use this information to adaptively learn and manage its programmes?

A key part of any gender analysis is a gender impact assessment. This supports decision-makers and stakeholders in the development of governance mechanisms, programmes, and projects to understand the current situation and context that will be affected by the intervention, using gender criteria to inform an understanding of predicted and realised impacts. The gender impact assessment will support water management actors to assess risks and opportunities for women and men, and to make changes, commitments, and decisions to avoid harm, and advance gender equality and inclusion (Simon, 2013, p. 23).

gender impact assessment

Once the gender-related impacts are assessed and better understood, a range of measures can be employed to avoid harm and advance gender equality. These measures might be mainstreamed (where gender is considered at each step and integrated into the project and programme management cycle) or targeted (where specific actions are taken to support particular groups or individuals). It is likely that a mixture of both mainstreamed and targeted approaches will be needed in any given context to address complex water management issues.

mainstreamed measures

targeted actions

It is important to draw on gender analysis frameworks to help guide monitoring, evaluation, and learning choices (see case study below). Guides to assist consideration of broader inclusion issues are also available and, while less numerous, are part of a growing area of scholarship and policy-making (see, for example, ADB, 2012; DFID, 2009; Mittal et al., 2016; World Bank, 2017b).

⁸ For a summary of the Harvard Analytical Framework and other relevant gender analysis tools, see the Gender Analysis toolkit developed by UNDP (2001).



Case study: assessing the gender-related impacts of water supply interventions in north-west India

A case in north-west India of providing piped water supplies to families in remote contexts found even with a source of water located closer to home, women still spent the first 2–3 hours a day collecting water from public taps as revealed by time budget analysis and direct observation by researchers. While women no longer needed to negotiate the steep terrain of surrounding mountains to collect water, the volume of water they carried home had increased with the introduction of the public taps. This was found to be as a result of men's expectations that they could now have baths at home, while previously they were conducted at public baths. This case shows that the delivery of a water project did not in and of itself result in changes in gender norms, or a reduction in women's workload despite the introduction of public taps. The case points to the need to look beyond outputs to assess the impacts and outcomes of water supply interventions.

Source: Narain (2014).

Action area 3. Meaningful and inclusive participation in decision-making and partnerships

nothing about them without them

Participation and partnerships are key tenets of the Sustainable Development Goals. By working in partnership for the development of policies, programmes, and projects, a nothing about them without them approach can be employed towards inclusive participatory processes.

in ways defined by women

Principle 3 of the Dublin Principles, as noted above, makes explicit mention of "decision-making and implementation ... in ways defined by women". Therefore, not only do women and marginalised people need to be 'involved', but they need to be meaningfully involved and capable of exercising influence in decision-making processes, in ways that are defined by them, ensuring equal opportunity to contribute their knowledge and express their views.

✓ Questions to ask to drive better practice:

Have we considered the need for participation of intended beneficiaries throughout the planned project/programme/initiative?

Who is marginalised in a given context? Which groups have specific needs that should be accounted for? Is it all women, or women from certain classes and castes? Is it people with disabilities, young or old women?

To what extent are marginalised people represented in consultation and decision-making opportunities? To what extent can they and do they contribute and hold decision-making influence and power? Are changes to decision-making processes needed to enhance participation?

To what extent are marginalised people supported to meaningfully engage in ways that are appropriate to them? Is capacity building and/or support needed?

The role of women in decision-making has received attention as a key theme within gender and water resources management for some time. Marginalised peoples, including women, do not currently occupy equal roles at all levels of water resources management institutions – especially in high profile and influential roles. Involvement of women in mandated agencies, river basin organisations, and continental political bodies is key to work towards women’s inclusion in decision-making processes.

More broadly, inclusive participation processes consider all members of the community – and not just along categorisations of men and women, but other dimensions such as age, ethnicity, disability, religion, etc. Water management decisions affect everybody, and so they should therefore be determined with inclusive and genuinely participatory processes to reflect the diversity of communities.

Meaningful participation processes will enable the knowledge and expertise of all groups to be better harnessed. For example, marginalised peoples, especially those in poverty, are more vulnerable in the face of natural disasters. A study of 141 countries found that more women than men die from climate-related hazards (World Health Organization, 2011, p. 3). At the same time, women have huge potential to support disaster mitigation and climate-resilience planning given their knowledge and expertise related to managing water for the family and community, and yet this knowledge is largely untapped (Grant et al., 2016).



Case study: the Brazilian semi-arid experience of gender inclusion in water management – some lessons learned

In the semi-arid rural regions of Brazil, a civil society programme (which was later adopted by government) was developed targeting female-headed households to install water tanks for their families and manage the health risks associated with the water supply. Female-headed households were prioritised, as were families with children and older people, and families with people with disabilities. Despite households declaring themselves female headed, it was found that in the majority of cases, men attended the training to maintain the water tanks. Given women were managing the water in the household, this resulted in a disconnection between the knowledge holder (men) and the water managers (women) – and in some areas, water-borne diseases were found to increase. This case study demonstrates that targeting women alone as a strategy, and not monitoring effectively and following through with mechanisms to support and enable women to attend training and participate in maintenance workshops, diminished the gender-related (and health) impacts intended by the programme.

Source: Nogueira (2017).

Action area 4. Equal access to and control of resources

While women comprise approximately 43 percent of the agricultural labour force globally, and half or more of the agricultural labour force in many African and Asian countries, their ownership of and access to land and water resources is not equal to that of men (de Jong et al., 2012). National policies, acts, and regulations actively exclude women from benefiting equally from water and land resources (Parker et al., 2016; Salo, 2013). For example, the laws or customs in 102 countries still deny women the same land access rights as men. This figure points to deep inequalities that exist with respect to land ownership and associated water rights/allocations (OECD, 2014, p. 9).

A study in Anglophone Cameroon found that although women were key players in the struggle against poverty and depended solely on the land that they cultivated, they did not have security of tenure over this land. The study advocated for gender mainstreaming in land reforms and gender consciousness among traditional authorities, men, and even among the women as some of the ways of redressing gender discrimination in land ownership rights and poverty, particularly in rural areas (Fonjong et al., 2013).

The understanding of community power dynamics and relations can help to identify which groups may have more access than others to land and water resources, and who may be more likely to be consulted and involved in water management initiatives. Gender dynamics are one part of this picture, and can be used as an example to make a broader point about inclusive policies and practices around control of resources and opportunities to use these resources.

A nuance that needs to be considered with respect to control of resources (such as land and water) is not only the difference between women and men, but also the differences among women – such as age, marital status, caste, remittance flow, and land ownership. These differences can lead to some women being reached more easily by water governance programmes than others (Leder et al., 2017). The differences among women (for example) need to be better understood if the poorest and most disadvantaged members of a community are to benefit from a programme designed to improve equal access and use of land and water resources.

✓ Questions to ask to drive better practice:



To what extent do women have equal access and control of natural resources such as water as well as land and economic resources which can impact water access? Are there inequalities between women – economic, age, caste, status, etc.?



To what extent do women and marginalised people have access to training, tools, resources, and support for land- and water-related activities?



What is the gendered division of labour related to irrigated farming: for example, gender-specific tasks related to irrigated crops, by nature of tasks; gender-differentiated daily time-use of household members involved in irrigated farming work? How are these roles and responsibilities reflected in water management laws and policies?



Are there any women's cooperatives in water-related industries that could be potential partners or sources of information for the gender analysis and co-creation of strategies to increase inclusive water management policies and practice?



Case study: gender and water policies in Africa

An assessment of the extent of gender mainstreaming in the transnational river basin agreements and national water policies and governance was conducted in seven countries in west, north, central, southern, and eastern Africa in 2013 for the African Ministers' Council on Water. The study concluded that a supportive political and institutional environment is needed to facilitate gender mainstreaming policies and progress. For all the countries in the study, women's effective access to water resources for economic purposes was negatively affected at the local level in rural areas as a result of customary law that biases male ownership of natural resources. This was found to be the case even if gender or sex discrimination was legally prohibited.

Source: Salo (2013).

Monitoring, evaluation, and learning: the power of good data

A strong indication of institutional commitment to gender equality and inclusion in water resources management can be found in the monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) processes employed by an organisation. If an organisation is measuring change in gender relations related to its interventions and using this information to inform its own practice, it is a good indication that it is genuinely driving inclusive practice.

Monitoring and evaluation data can also be a powerful tool for starting conversations – for drawing attention to needs and issues. It can help to target programmes where the need is the greatest and help to uncover the underlying causes of problems, which may not be obvious. Without data, it can sometimes be hard to raise the profile of an issue affecting the well-being of people, especially marginalised people. But in a world where you ‘can’t manage what you can’t measure’ and MEL resources are limited, the question is how to prioritise and collect the best kind of data – and then how to use it in a timely fashion.

Choosing the right MEL framework to measure gender equality and inclusion in water resources management is a balance of resources, prioritisation, relevance, the presence of existing MEL frameworks, and pragmatics. Some key points to note as identified by global experts engaged in this study include:

- **Qualitative and quantitative data are equally important:** Numbers alone will not provide a thorough story, and so qualitative data is important. As an example, the number of people participating in a meeting or workshop will not tell you how they participated or how decisions were made. Most significant change stories can be used, as can methods such as open dialogue and interviews.
- Approaches to MEL need to be **embedded in a wider change framework** which has gender equality as a goal and with indicators specifically assigned. This means that women are not only added to existing programmes and policies, but that targeted interventions are needed to shift gender norms in culturally appropriate ways, and in ways defined by women and marginalised people themselves.
- While there are **no blanket indicators or evaluative questions** (indicators need to be chosen to suit each situation), drawing on the indicators for SDG5 (“achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”) and SDG6 (“ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”) is useful and important, as well as existing resources and guidelines – see below.⁹
- When disaggregating data, it is useful to **disaggregate by gender and other relevant characteristics** (e.g. disability, ethnicity, age, HIV status), so that a deeper picture of the contributors to marginalisation can be developed and programmes better targeted as a result.

There are a number of tools available to support organisations to track and respond to gender and inclusion dynamics in the context they are working in, including:

- **Guidelines on how to collect sex-disaggregated water data (UN World Water Assessment Programme):** provides a range of suggested indicators for assessing the extent to which participation in water governance forums is truly inclusive or not (Seager, 2015).
- **Gender in Irrigation Learning and Improvement Tool (CGIAR Research Program on Water, Land and Ecosystems and International Water Management Institute):** tailored advice on gender considerations in irrigation programme contexts (Lefore et al., 2017).
- **Washington Group on Disability Statistics** promotes and coordinates international cooperation in the area of health statistics, focusing on disability data collection tools suitable for censuses and national surveys, and is therefore an important source of guidance and information.¹⁰

For more information and additional resources related to monitoring and evaluation, please see the Scoping Study.

⁹ Sustainable Development Goal indicators can be found at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>

¹⁰ The Washington Group Short Set of Questions on Disability. <http://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/washington-group-question-sets/short-set-of-disability-questions/>

Leading change: the role of the Global Water Partnership

GWP's mission is to advance governance and management of water resources for sustainable and equitable development. It does so by supporting mandated institutions, water user groups, and communities to strengthen water governance through the application of IWRM principles, including gender equality and inclusion.

The GWP Network is therefore ideally placed to facilitate the incorporation of gender and other aspects of inclusion into the formal policy, action planning, and investment processes it influences and contributes to. Examples include:

- ensuring participation of gender equality organisations and interest groups when facilitating multi-stakeholder engagement for development and sectoral planning processes, such as national adaptation plans, local development plans, river basin management plans, etc.
- reviewing planned water resources management investments from a gender and water perspective on behalf of ministries of water, agriculture, economy, etc.
- building capacity and disseminating knowledge among mandated institutions and communities on gender equality and inclusion in association with identified key responsibilities and targeted change processes
- advancing the realisation of SDG5 on gender equality through the broader adoption of IWRM (SDG6.5), leveraging its multi-stakeholder partnership as a means of implementation (SDG17).

In addition to GWP's potential to directly influence water governance through its support to key stakeholders, the organisation is also capable of playing a leading role in advocating for gender equality and inclusion at the global, regional, national, and local levels, as well as driving the generation and dissemination of knowledge surrounding the topic. For example:

- fostering the vertical transfer of gender information and knowledge from the global to the local level and vice versa, thanks to GWP's established presence across all levels (Global Secretariat and Technical Committee, Regional Water Partnerships, Country Water Partnerships, Area Water Partnerships, partners at the local and community levels)
- providing a knowledge and communications hub (e.g. community of practice) around the topic of gender equality and inclusion in water resources management through its outreach to more than 3,000 diverse partners
- commissioning research on areas where gaps in evidence have been found (for example, land and water and gender) through the GWP Technical Committee and knowledge partners
- mobilising key players, influencers, and strategic allies to advocate for gender sensitive policies and continue to drive the debate at global, continental, regional, and national levels.

To achieve the above, GWP is committed to ensuring that gender equality and inclusion aspects are firmly embedded within its own work plans and governance structures. Examples of how GWP aims to practice what it preaches include:

- ensuring all GWP programmes are delivered with gender equality and inclusive design action areas and practices
- funding and supporting GWP gender focal points across the organisation's 13 regions
- supporting young female leaders in the water sector through, for example, the GWP Water, Climate and Development Programme's (WACDEP) young professionals' initiative
- ensuring that the GWP statutes and staffing policies are non-discriminatory and gender balanced, including across the organisation's governance bodies.

In line with the organisational commitments spelled out in its gender strategy and the ongoing efforts to support the achievement of globally agreed ambitions and targets, such as the Dublin Principles and SDGs, GWP continues to strive towards advancing gender equality and inclusion in water resources management. The findings from this Action Piece will therefore be acted upon across the Network with the aim of further realising the potential of the organisation and its partners to achieve meaningful progress across an area that is fundamental to the realisation of GWP's vision of water security.

“ *The way for female leaders to overcome male prejudice is to be true to who you are as a leader: seeing the 'big picture', being resolute in your decisions while taking into account their consequences on people, and empowering others.* ”

Dr Szilvia Szalóki, Vice-president of the Hungarian Energy and Public Utility Regulatory Authority

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High-Level Meeting on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in Water Resources Management, Stockholm, June 2017: Quotes from participants

“ Investing in strategic and practical needs of women, girls and other excluded groups in the water sector is about smart and inclusive planning. Without addressing these needs and the multiple use of water by women and men from vulnerable communities, sustainable results will be hard to achieve. ”

Rajib Ghosal,
Gender and Social Specialist, Green Climate Fund

“ For the water sector to step it up for gender equality, there is a need to emphasize that it's not possible to talk about an integrated water management without mainstreaming gender. Gender is a key driver of a new development perspective. When inequalities are addressed and policies are reshaped, policy makers can recognize women as agents of change and equal partners with men in the quest to promote growth that is inclusive, just, equitable and sustainable. ”

Daniela Nogueira Soares,
Graduate Researcher, University of Brasilia

“ For as long as the Water Sector remains an Exclusive Club preserved for the few so called specialists who speak the jargon, gender inclusion will remain a dream. ”

Leonissah Abwino Munjoma,
Communications Specialist, Zambesi Watercourse Commission (Zamcom)

“ We can all support better prioritization of gender equality and inclusive participation at all levels. Social transformation is needed in order to achieve gender equality – including in the water sector. We must go beyond ‘checking the box’. Instead, we must ‘walk the walk’, and do away with silo approaches in order to see these commitments through. ”

Elizabeth Yaari,
Programme Manager and Gender Equality Focal Point, Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI)

“ The best way to reach gender equality and social inclusion in water resources management is to implement in earnest Rio/Dublin Principle 3 that was agreed 25 years ago and clearly describes the preconditions for gender sensitive and women inclusive water governance. ”
Principle No. 3 – Women play a central part in the provision, management and safeguarding of water

Alice Bouman-Dentener,
Honorary Founding President, Women for Water Partnership

“ Look through a gender lens and go for the extra mile. ”

Annemiek Jenniskens,
Executive Director, Women for Water Partnership

“ We need to see, recognise, listen to and support younger professionals, particularly women, so that they can empower themselves in the day to day work. Furthermore, we need to work with the actual users of water resources and services, so that men and women – especially those living in poverty – can demand rights of access to clean water through participation, accountability, transparency and non-discrimination. To strengthen conditions that allow people to empower themselves are what sustainable development is all about. ”

Esse Nilsson,
Senior Programme Manager, Swedish International Development cooperation Agency (Sida)

“ We need to build a new cultural within the water resource management sector that places gender equality and social inclusion at the heart of our work. The strategies are there, we know what we should be doing, but implementation is often held back by a lack of understanding, leadership and shared commitment to the issues. ”

Rachael Freeth,
Social Development Adviser, Department for International Development (DFID), UK

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