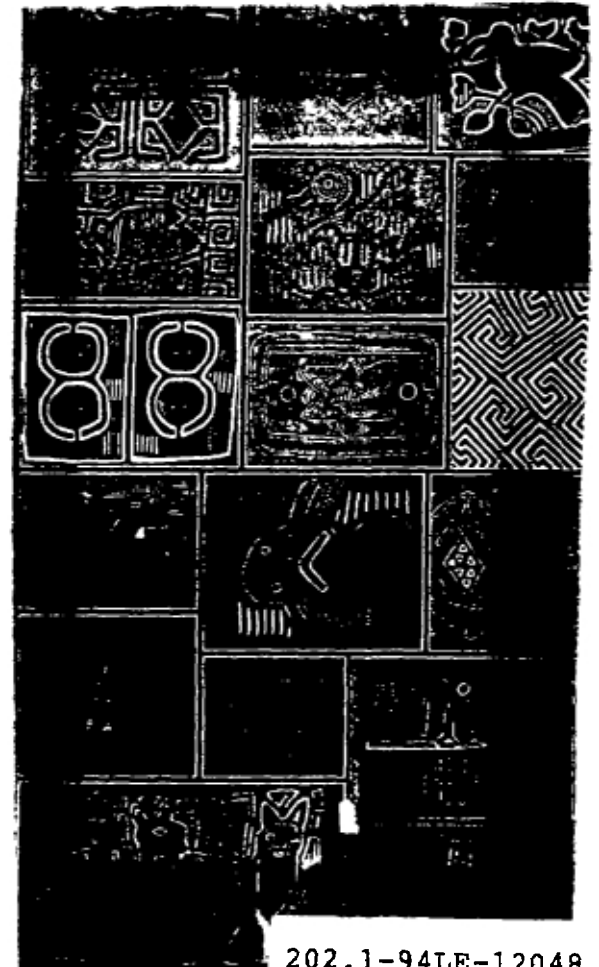


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***Lessons learned on how to implement a workshop on  
gender in water and sanitation projects***



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## Table of Contents

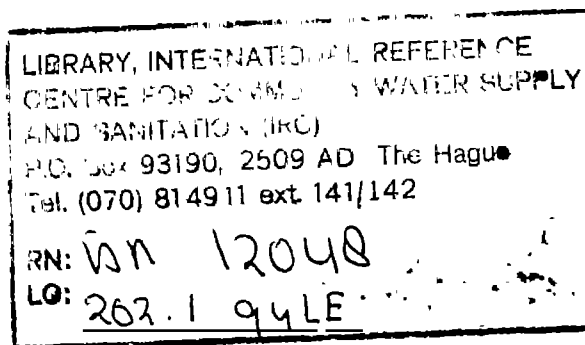
Introduction **A facilitator's perspective**

### Part 1 **Lessons learned**

- 1.1. Preparatory phase of a workshop
- 1.2. Conducting phase of a workshop
- 1.3. Follow-up phase of a workshop

### Part 2 **Techniques used by the facilitators during the workshop**

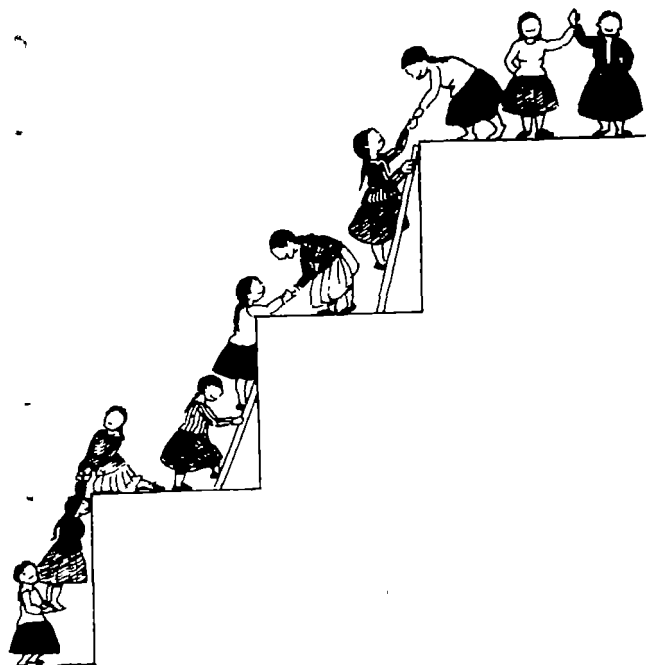
- 2.1. Icebreakers
- 2.2. "Getting to know the group" exercises
- 2.3. "Introduction to the gender concept" exercises





# ***Lessons learned from three workshops on gender in water and sanitation projects***

## ***Introduction***



During 1993 three workshops were held in Cali (Colombia), Colombo (Sri Lanka) and Nairobi (Kenya). The overall objective was to promote learning of women's own experience on how to deal with women's involvement and gender in water and sanitation (WS) projects. The specific objective was to produce regional field manuals on how to balance women's and men's roles in water, sanitation and water resources protection projects. The workshops focused on documenting experiences on how to deal with gender in WS projects.

All the workshops resulted in a working document on gender aspects in water and sanitation projects. These were products of the team work of the participants and the facilitators. Moreover, the workshops stimulated an interest among the participants to create networks to support each others' activities related to gender involvement in WS projects.

The participants of the workshops were mostly NGO and Government staff. The majority of them were women. The backgrounds of the participants differed in many ways and was a source for the discussions throughout the workshop.

This paper presents some lessons learned from the three workshops, which three local facilitators and three IRC staff members facilitated. When all of them were completed the facilitators sat together to draw lessons from their experience, intending to build up capacity for similar workshops in the future. Participants' enthusiasm and persistency in producing the manuals was a great incentive during the workshop. To motivate the participants to openly speak about their own experiences of gender and to consider their own and other participants' ideas as a source to learn from was a big challenge.

## 1. **Lessons learned**

### 1.1 **Preparatory phase of the workshop**

This chapter describes some of the lessons the facilitators learned while preparing the workshop

#### **Letter of invitation**

- ❖ *Indicate in the letter that the participants will share **their** experiences of gender in the WS projects during the workshop!*
- ❖ *Use a language which appeals to the person who is receiving it!*

The letter of invitation should indicate that the participants are expected to openly discuss their experiences of gender aspects in their projects. In that way participants can mentally prepare themselves for the discussions which are going to take place during the workshop. The style of language used in the letter should reflect the kind of workshop to which the person is invited - the invitee should get a feeling of what kind of atmosphere s/he can expect at the workshop.

#### **Preparatory document from the participants**

- ❖ *Send all the participants a list with basic questions in advance !*

The facilitator should promote and support the development a case by the participants on how gender is dealt with in their own water and sanitation project, for example through sending them a list with basic questions related to gender aspects in water projects (see terms of reference of a case study for the Cali workshop and a list of questions for the Colombo workshop in Box 1). With help from these questions the participants can start reflecting on gender issues in their projects beforehand. These questions stimulate the participants to look at the gender aspects of the projects without limiting their perspective. They can still draw links to other areas of the society which they think influence the role of women in the WS projects. The cases do not have to be comprehensive, because they have proven to be useful and practical even when they are very brief. Another positive effect of stimulating the participants to think of a case is that they can exchange their ideas related to gender at a very early stage during the workshop. Depending on whether the participants come from a culture which mostly uses oral or written presentations, the facilitators should choose how the cases can best be presented.

**GUIDELINES FOR THE FOR PREPARATORY DOCUMENT**

**Title:** Methodology (applied by the organization) to involve women in the projects.

**Objective:** The participants (he/she) organize in a synthesized, graphic and accessible way his/her information on the issue, including at least the matters mentioned below.

**Pages:** 3 to 5 (spaced 1 5)

**CONTENTS****I. General**

1. Make a distinction (even if minimal) between men and women of the "beneficiary" group with whom you work during the implementation of the project.
2. Is there any specific strategy already developed for the work with groups of men or women?
3. Is there any specific methodology which you have developed to promote a further involvement of women in their projects?
4. During the preparatory phase of the project and during the evaluations, monitoring and advisory work, do you participate in the promotion of professional women's involvement?

**II. Specific**

1. Taking into account the activities of the suggested cycle of the project, please indicate on which activities women have the most participation.
2. How do you promote and support such participation? Have you developed specific material for that support? Which material?
3. Which benefits are obtained by the "female beneficiaries" from their participation and which are the benefits of the project itself?

**PLANNING THE WORKSHOP: COLLECTING INFORMATION FROM PARTICIPANTS**

The coming workshop will focus on how women can be better involved in water supply, sanitation, hygiene education and water resource protection projects. Nowadays it is argued that such projects also require greater support from men and new ways of cooperation between men and women (gender approach). In preparation of the workshop we would appreciate your views and experiences on this aspect.

1. What do you understand by the word "gender"?
2. "Gender approach" and "women's involvement" are often being used as if they have the same meaning. How would you describe the difference between an approach focusing on "gender" and an approach focusing on "women's involvement/empowerment"?
3. Most projects follow a certain cycle or system:
  1. initiation, formulation and approval of the project
  2. planning and execution of the works or the health education activities
  3. preparation for proper maintenance and management of completed systems or hygiene improvements
  4. monitoring, evaluation and reporting of progress and results of the projects
  5. use of the findings to formulate new projects and/or improve the way of working with the villagers.

Could you describe briefly:

- a) if and how your organization pays attention to men's and women's involvement in each of these phases/activities
- b) what special steps (if any) you take to bring women into each project phase?



### **Background document for the facilitator**

- ◆ *Develop a background document to help you identify the focus of the workshop and to serve as support while facilitating the workshop!*

The background documents helped the facilitators mentally prepare themselves on how to proceed with the workshop. The document also served as a tool during the workshop. Certain texts, for example, were read at certain times to stimulate participants to discuss a specific topic.

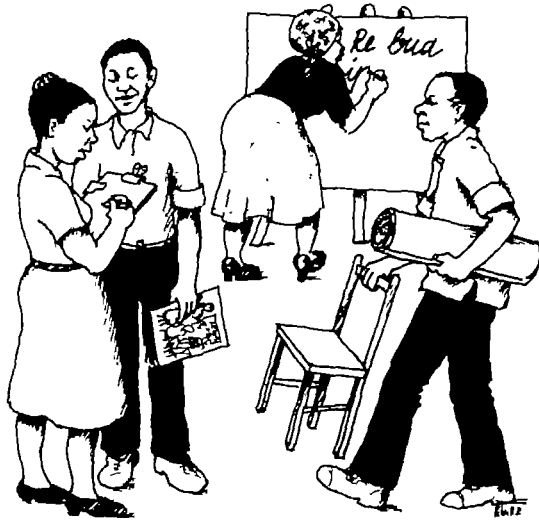
### **Two practical files: one with examples of lay-outs for manuals and one with references of sources for participatory techniques**

- ◆ *Present different examples of outlines for manuals!*

The facilitators brought a file with a number of different kind of one layouts for manuals. These proved helpful in giving participants ideas on how they could present their manual.

Some of the facilitators brought a file with information sources on participatory techniques emphasizing gender. The objective of this file was to provide information to those participants who wanted information additional to what was presented during the workshop. To prepare this file a person and time need to be specially allocated. The facilitators experienced that the support from a resource person and the library was very helpful in orienting and guiding them while initiating the workshop.





### **Size of the group**

- *Ten to twelve participants are sufficient for this kind of workshop!*

Sometimes the very number of participants makes the difference! The facilitators agreed that it was felt that in order to have stimulating discussions and plenaries there should be no more than ten to twelve participants when a workshop becomes a setting for discussing and writing a manual. One workshop had nineteen participants and their discussions in the plenary became too lengthy and tiring.

### **Group constitution**

- *Be aware that varying backgrounds of the participants can be an asset as well as a constraint!*

The backgrounds of the participants varied in geographical, ethnical, cultural, social and professional aspects. These varying backgrounds provided a rich source for the workshops from which a wide range of knowledge and experience could be drawn. The facilitators experienced also that the varying backgrounds could make the discussion more complicated, since interpretations of certain issues could differ to a great degree among the participants. During these situations it was important for the facilitators to be sensitive to the various participants views.

### **Workshop agenda**

- *Develop a flexible workshop agenda beforehand!*

The agendas (Box 3) helped the facilitators to initiate the workshops and to suggest a structure to the participants on how to proceed with the workshop. The facilitators had, however, kept the agenda flexible enough that it could be changed according to the participants' ideas.

**Box 3**
**Main activities of the workshop**

<b>Work-shops</b>	<b>KENYA</b> 10 participants (♀ 10) co-facilitator and Mary Boesveld	<b>CALI</b> 19 participants (♀ 17, ♂ 2) co-facilitator and Norah Espejo	<b>SRI LANKA</b> 16 participants (♀ 15, ♂ 1) co-facilitator and Eveline Bolt
<b>Preparatory activities</b>		The participants were asked to write a short case study about gender problems they had faced in the WSS projects.	Sending a checklist with questions relating to the workshop, to get the participants to think about this issue.
<b>Workshop activities</b>	Short explanation of background, purpose & objectives.	Introduction of participants and organizations, getting to know each other.	Getting to know each other.
	Getting to know each other; participants shared information about their projects.	Discussing needs and concepts on gender & participation.	Discussing objectives, expected output, manual & expectations
	Discussion on framework of manual and "project cycle", which was a difficult concept for the participants to understand.	Discussion of the framework and outline of the document using the project cycle.	Problem analysis of problems related to involvement of women in projects. Through this it became clear how individuals interpret concepts differently.*
	Discussion on basic concepts, like gender, participation & integration.	Divided tasks among groups & started to write immediately. First all groups were writing about all project phases, but time ran out & it was necessary to divide the phases among the groups.	Clarifying concepts on gender, participation, women's involvement & empowerment.
	Making a content list for the manual.	Writing and discussing.	Discussion on manual, who will be targeted, what output is expected. Used results from problem analysis.
	Discussion on for whom the manual is made.		Writing outline of manual, using project cycle.
	Writing of manual, where the participants worked in groups.		Preparation of an outline for write-ups on methods and tools used.
	Case studies, individual writing.		Division of tasks in groups. The intention was to let all groups discuss each project phase, but because of time constraints phases were divided among the groups. The groups discussed the various phases first in small groups and then in plenary.**
	Review of texts.		Discussion about content of introduction and annexes.
	Discussion on lay-out & editing, production of manual.	Revision of first draft by participants.	Wrap-up discussion: lay-outs, what kind of follow-up action, etc. In between the formal workshop activities there was time for presentations by the participants, videos, getting to know each other and some shopping.
Evaluation.	Evaluation.	Evaluation.	

\* a resource for the workshop

\*\* constraints mentioned during this activity

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### **Writing skills among participants**

- ❖ *Make sure that there will be some participants or other resource persons who are going to help the group prepare a clear draft!*

The workshop can be more effectively developed when there are at least a few persons with knowledge on how to develop a draft document in a very short period. Usually participants need to be briefed on how to write a manual and how to write about their experience.

### **Working relationship between the co-facilitator and the facilitator**

- ❖ *Having a co-facilitator is not just assistance but an important source for feedback.*
- ❖ *Inform the co-facilitator from the very beginning about her/his role, tasks, objectives and plans of the workshop!*

The facilitators' experience was that support from the co-facilitator to stimulate the working procedures of the group was very useful.

Facilitator and co-facilitator need to work together. It is crucial for them to set time aside to discuss the division of tasks, roles, expectations, objectives and outputs to be obtained longtime before the workshop starts. Depending on the co-facilitator skills and experience tasks related or group process related responsibilities should be clearly divided.

## 1.2 Conducting Phase of the Workshop



This chapter consists of the lessons the facilitators learned while facilitating the workshop

### The participants - a great resource!

- Take the great enthusiasm and persistence of the participants into consideration in advance and prepare relevant information material you think they might ask for!

During the workshops the participants turned out to be very eager to discuss problems of WS projects to develop a manual together. They were also very interested in getting information from the facilitator. It proved again to be important that the facilitators had good knowledge about the issues being discussed and to have information material available in this situation the background document was a useful tool.

### Problem identification approach

- Make a problem analysis or use some other technique to introduce in the issue of gender in the discussions at the beginning of the workshop, and be prepared to adjust it according to the participants!

One facilitator used a problem analysis to make an inventory of the gender problems and how they are related to WS projects (see further Section 2. Techniques Used). The problem analysis and its related discussions made it clear to everyone in the workshop, that there are indeed certain problems in (the) WS projects which are specifically related to the different priorities of women and men in the society. The facilitator felt that this common notion made way for the following discussions on gender in the workshop.

### Resistance to speak about women's involvement

- Be aware that talking about gender can be a sensitive issue for women as well as for men!

The facilitators felt a clear resistance among the participants to talk about gender issues in the projects. The resistance was particularly strong when they were asked to give examples of gender problems in their own projects. In those cases the use of a problem analysis will help to get a common understanding of gender and make it a more neutral concept related to practical problems.

### **Resistance among participants to learn from each other**

- ❖ *Stimulate and encourage the participants to share their own experiences and to see that their own knowledge is a valuable resource to draw from!*

From the beginning of the workshops the participants relied more upon the knowledge of the facilitators than their own knowledge and that of other participants. This is big challenge facilitators have to face. Several methods are to be used constantly to encourage participants to produce their own knowledge by analysing and using their own experiences. One simple method which could be used at the beginning of the workshop is to make an inventory of their learning needs and capacities through letting the participants asking themselves: "What do the participants need and want to learn?" and, "What are the skills and experience of the participants?". Through answering these questions they may realize how much skills and experience that exist in the group.

### **Sharing and documenting gender- sensitive participatory techniques**

Documenting participants experiences may be facilitated by forms that are filled in by themselves. The participants were asked to present and dramatize participatory techniques which they use to emphasize gender aspects in their projects. A form prepared for one workshop proved useful to register participatory techniques with (Box 4).





### **1.3 Rounding of Phase of the Workshop**

#### **Plenary sessions**

- Use participatory techniques to make plenary sessions more interactive and interesting!

Many times the plenary sessions tended to become lengthy and participants did not really feel involved in the discussions. Asking the participants to give feedback on each other's presentation, or using the panel techniques, may stimulate more interesting and interactive plenaries.

This chapter consists of the lessons the facilitators learned while following up the workshop activities.

#### **Preparation of final version of the manual**

- Bring a clear draft from the workshop!
- Bring illustrations from the workshop!
- Agree with the participants on how the final version is going to be completed!
- Discuss a strategy to spread the information from the workshops!

A clear draft and drafting procedure help the facilitators to finalize the manuals after the workshops. Preparing a final draft requires good illustrations (photos and drawings) as well as written information collected during the workshop.

It would have been useful to discuss and agree with the participants, about how to deal with the draft version and about the responsibilities related to putting in or cutting out information from the draft manual before going back to Holland. It would also have been useful to nominate a group of readers/editors among the participants for the final draft version.

## 2. Techniques Used

### 2.1 Icebreaker



The following techniques were used in the three workshops:

#### a) *Hopes and Fears*

The participants presented experiences from nine countries in Africa. They had the challenge of developing a manual that was expected to be practical, and one that would meet the needs of the communities, particularly the women. They needed a working atmosphere in which they could express themselves freely. The "Hopes and Fears" exercise was used to break the ice.

##### **Objective**

To assist the participants to express their concerns and expectations of the workshop.

##### **Process**

Each participant was asked to take a piece of paper, and on it they were asked to write one fear and one hope for this workshop. They contributed the following responses.

##### **HOPES**

I hope we will accomplish the set goals within the set period of time.

Share knowledge and develop a shared understanding towards the task.

I hope we shall develop at least a framework for implementing the various water issues. Particularly integrating water and sanitation strategies.

I hope the manual will be disseminated to others who are involved in water projects but were unable to attend this workshop.

I hope to get some inspiration for my work.

I hope to have new dimensions to gender outlook which will keep me informed in my day to day work.

##### **FEARS**

We are all women participants, and I am afraid we shall be gender biased.

Is the manual going to facilitate the participatory approach, since we are developing it without the input of the beneficiaries?

Is the manual going to be used, or it will be kept in the archives never to benefit the beneficiaries?

I am uncertain about the complexity of the whole assignment, because we come from different situations, disciplines and have different theories.

Will it be applicable to the different situations in Africa?

Are we able to address the practical needs of the grassroots people in our countries.

Will the document integrate men and women?

Will the document address mechanisms for sustainability of development efforts, in particular with reference to women?





b) ***Personal Photos***

*Objective*

This technique stimulates the participants to speak about themselves in the group and to listen to the other persons' stories.

*Process*

Each participant is asked to show photos, from his/her family and talk about it. Afterwards all photos may form a panel which can be kept during the workshop period.

c) ***Interview and Presentation***

*Objective*

This technique stimulates the participants to engage in discussions with each other and helps them to get to know each other.

*Process*

Flipcharts are placed on a wall, each with the name of one participant. The participants are invited to ask two personal questions to five fellow participants. The answers they get from these five participants should afterwards be written down on their respective flipchart. Afterwards the participants read out what their flipcharts tell and comments on the content.

## 2.2 Getting to know the group

### a) Journey of Life Experience

#### Objective

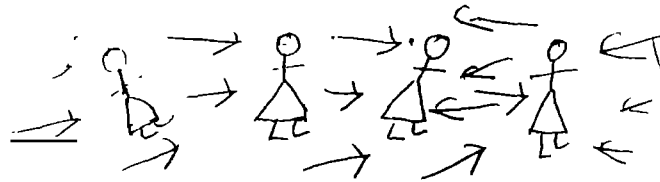
This technique is used to create a friendly working relationship where the participants know each other adequately (i.e. their names, work experiences, work titles and social background).

#### Process

Each participant is asked to describe their journey of life through using an illustration/symbol relating to their involvement in water projects and working with women.

JOYCE - KENYAN DELEGATE

SYMBOL



Said that she is a struggler, has always struggled throughout her life. The illustrations depict forces impinging upon her. She has always fought forces within and without. Struggle through school, working in the male dominated world. I have to struggle to make my voice heard, struggle to make my work seen. "I belong to the District Development Committee (DDC). Men do not take you seriously. I work as a Community Development Officer working with communities in rural areas. Mobilizing communities for water development. I have the experience with projects where the community was not involved in the design of water projects. The projects were too expensive to be sustained. The donors only stayed in that particular Province for a short period (3-5 years). The pumps are broken since community members were not given skills to maintain the water site. No provision was made for training in project management. The water projects have become "white elephants". A new approach has been designed with a strong emphasis on "Community Participation" with a particular emphasis to women involvement. They are involved in the maintenance of the pumps, encouraged to work as a group, water committees formed and trained. There is gender bias so that the committee representation is fifty-fifty. Communities contribute time, labour and material. Technical Assistance is provided by the Lake Basin Authority Organization.

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FATI - GHANA

SYMBOL -  
RIVER -  
LIFE



Fati - Symbolizes her life to a river. River is life, river meanders, provides water, enriches life, but has its source. River has moments when it overflows, it has tributaries, it passes over rocks, trees grow in it, fishes multiply and we depend on it. This is like my life with its ups and downs. It however has its movements of Joy. The river gives life to all creatures of the world and fertilizes the land.

Fati comes from a Muslim background but she is a Christian. She comes from Northern Ghana, where women schooling was not regarded as a priority. Girls are often given out to be house maids to aunts. She was lucky to be taken to school as her father was educated - a product of the trade schools. She had a straight education from primary to university. She became a literate teacher. After some years she changed her carrier from teaching, when she met a Dutch group at a cross-cultural institute where she was a facilitator. She joined them to work on a water project. She was the only female in the whole team. Although she enjoyed her work, she found it difficult to take instructions since she was never allowed to take decisions. She revolted against this kind of treatment. She wanted to be treated as an equal and not as a subordinate. Moreover this Dutch counterpart did not have the cultural context and would not listen to her views.

Fati is involved in social research. She carries out surveys on water and hygiene. Training community members on appropriate water technology and how to maintain and sustain them. For each water point there are community-based water attendants, 2 women and 2 men (gender balancing). The project is also aiming at changing people's habit about water - defecation habits everywhere in the villages.

KEY MESSAGE - COMMUNITY WORK REQUIRES PATIENCE, TIME AND COMMITMENT, TIME FRAMES SET BY DONORS AND DONOR CONDITIONS DO NOT OFTEN CONFORM TO PRACTICAL CULTURAL EXPERIENCES AND NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY.

b) ***PlayingTogether***

*Objective*

Participants get the possibility to play and laugh together in a very informal way.

*Process*

Every day one participant is asked to present a game which they use in their project (it should preferably have something to do with gender). When the game is presented the participants play it. In this way the participants learn a lot of new games which they can use in their own projects.

## **2.3 Introduction to the gender concept**

### **a. Objective Oriented Project Planning**

The technique aims to stimulate all groups involved to have a participatory communication process, to identify and analyze the problems as the participants see them. When the problems have been identified, the cause-effect relationship between the problems is defined. When the problems have been put in a logical order, an attempt is made to define the objectives. Everyone has to come to a consensus and be satisfied with the objectives, before they finally are selected.

#### **The facilitator's role**

The facilitator should influence the outcome of the exercises as little as possible. His/her main task is to stimulate the participants to give their opinions of problems, objectives and plans. One way of stimulating is through posing questions which make the participants think about a situation, which they have not done earlier.

For the facilitator to use this technique successfully, he/she needs to be very confident about the method, and have some knowledge about the participants throughout the process. The technique demands lot of attention from the people involved. The facilitator needs therefore to be alert, in order to stimulate the participants.

### **b) African value and attitude tree**

This session was aimed at assisting the participants to analyze the concept of gender, the gender perceptions and their differences.

#### **Process**

The participants were divided into two groups, one group representing the men and the other the women.

- a) The two groups were asked to answer the question "What is gender". To their help they got a description on what gender is.
- b) When the groups had described the gender concept, they were asked to analyze it and compare it to the parts of a tree (Box 5).
- c) In the end the two groups compared their descriptions and analysis of the gender concept.

