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**KENYA WATER FOR HEALTH ORGANIZATION
(KWAHO)**

THEME 111

***TO EVALUATE THE IMPACT OF WOMEN'S PROMOTION OF
ENVIRONMENTAL SANITATION AND SAFE PRACTICES
AND HOW THIS MAKES A DIFFERENCE
TO BEHAVIORAL CHANGE***

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TO EVALUATE THE IMPACT OF WOMEN'S PROMOTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL
SANITATION AND SAFE PRACTICES AND HOW THIS MAKES A DIFFERENCE TO
BEHAVIORAL CHANGE

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN GENDER DEVELOPMENT
WORKSHOP HELD IN PRETORIA - SOUTH AFRICA
24 -- 26 NOVEMBER 1997

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19th November 1997

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Introduction

Environmental health for mankind can not be guaranteed by provision of safe drinking water, good health practices and sanitation alone, without taking into account other factors. These include the approaches and processes used to penetrate any particular community with customs and norms playing a key role. Participation of women groups, opinion leaders, individual women and elders become crucial linkages as entry points. The Theme for this paper, intends to give views on how **'To evaluate the impact of women's promotion of environmental sanitation and safe practices and this makes a difference to behavioral changes**

Emerging roles and tasks

Many evaluations have pointed at divergent views on the roles based on gender to improve impact in the projects undertaken, given the roles played by women and men. The question is, **what is it that will be done to promote gender roles without exploiting the contributions made by women**, as stakeholders maintain maximum benefits from both gender. In general, communities when driven by felt needs can be seen in many perspectives. They collect themselves as they form working committees, listing of tasks as they see them, they then go ahead to prioritize the tasks, identifying the leaders for those undertakings, including choosing the groups to work under those leaders; sorting out the available resources and procedures to be followed when the projects begin, including technology. Consequently, women assume the leading role when technology is simple and easy. Whereas when the technology is complicated and expensive then women's participation begin to decline, and loss of interest is then evident. More active involvement in the area of practical hygiene and health such as the habit of washing hands after visiting toilets, before eating and after working and washing soiled hands, cleaning children's teeth, sweeping homesteads and water points, would usually be done by women without anyone instructing them. Every one seems comfortable with safe drinking water, good health and sanitation, without taking into account other crucial issues that lead to several processes of sustainability to be achieved and maintained.

Studies go further to show that, for these projects to be sustainable as they accrue the required impact, women must be involved in all stages. On the other hand there is evidence to show that when men participate in the development of any project in the sector, once committed they **sustain interest** longer, particularly when the project is running well, while **some of them shy way** leaving the projects, because majority of the women own the project. Culturally also, it is rather unusual for African men to be seen working with the women, when the men are few in numbers. They need a great deal of encouragement to phase out such unsustainable values.

Promotion of women's involvement in gender

To strengthen the promotion of women's involvement in gender in the WSS, there is great need to empower the women through training, leadership and management seminars and workshops to improve on their skills. Training must be participatory, so as to ensure maximum involvement for result oriented outcome.

For greater impact, the project is more successful when the training is carried out to both gender group and society. This approach does not only clear the different roles played by male and female, but does promote confidence and reduce mistrust especially on ownership of finances for the project, and other resourceful items, including exchanging of ideas.

Women can argue their cases openly and maintain their positions with ease. Opportunities are thereby created and improved not only at the projects, but at their homes and society level, throughout the entire partnership within the project. In some areas, they take turns to look after their water standing points and environmental programs as a whole, as they produce duty rosters without external assistance. These roles come out better when they emerge among themselves, as they also last longer.

Male counterparts make excellent water attendant associations, or cooperative society groups. Women automatically play the role of treasurers as they guard the money, and are more accountable. The male counterparts do well in keeping records, minutes and issues that deal with more technical reporting, keeping books for accounting purposes, become necessary in order to record all financial transactions reassuring the communities that whenever they are required, is of extreme importance, and make a useful tool for good management on the ground as they sustain trust.

For good practice, and best results, the committees must be composed of both gender, and must be given different but interrelated roles and training so as to allow effective gender balance and occupational roles. In most cases women seem to take active roles in providing leadership, while at the end of it all, both gender benefit. However in very isolated cases such as a man would be above normal morals and respectability at his village level. In such cases, this should be promoted by women on the ground as we claim gender balance.

There is evidence in the sector that not only addresses the women as stakeholders, women are seen as controlling daily management in most of these programs, and more **importantly, building confidence and trust, have culturally been denied them.** e.g. dealing with the local chiefs or district officers or political leaders. There is a confirmed knowledge that women have been taken for granted and for far too long. It is from such premises that they work as they struggle to erase this picture.

Such perceptions include the women being seen as:

- Key players in all domestic cores
(homesteads - village - location - district levels).
- Power brokers at community level
(dealing with local civil or political leadership).
- Role models for motherhood
(children, youth, other ages/communities).
- Barefoot engineers/technicians
- (women repairing their own water points/projects).

- Gate to sustainability
(women make sure the projects do not fail).
- Symbols of hope/ and continuation
(other members of communities lay their hopes on the women).
- Communities goal-keepers
they are entrusted with village treasures.
- Good hygiene/health promotions
(they develop good materials for Health and Hygiene)
- Recipients for change
(introducing and hygiene).

Some of the **case studies** give statistics that can be quantified and proved. But in all these perceptions, women's roles continue to be seen as vehicles for change that cannot be minimized.

The right choice of technologies that are manageable by both gender have priorities that provide successful working relations with stakeholders. Therefore reliability and responsibility that guarantee sustainability is ensured.

The concern that community driven projects could be hijacked, becomes a matter of the past, because the community have the knowledge and control in their court. Further to this, dissemination of ideas, issues, policies and practices become part and parcel of the program. It is at this stage that documentation of this project could be done best.

What impact do we then see?

This trend continues to gain prominence, as the sector continues to gain popularity. Of particular interest, it may be useful to assess why, greater impacts have been found in the medium size projects at community level, and particularly when women seem to have played larger roles, during implementation.

Programs that are of low cost but affordable such as shallow wells and hand pumps, spring protection, rain harvesting, garbage collection and sanitation (improved toilets programs) eradication of guinea worm, diarrhea, dysentery, small scale irrigation schemes manageable gravity fed water systems, and more important how the environmental health status has been maintained, are gaining popularity's because those being served are in control. Both gender easily show big sizeable impact as well e.g.

- i. Kwale Handpump Project - O & M, health and hygiene, sanitation.
- ii. Kibera Sanitation Project - Urban sanitation involving men/women/exhauster Van Co-op.
- iii. Taita Taveta - Maji Safi - Rain Harvesting Project - rain harvesting technology, rural sanitation, environment and nutrition development projects.

Behavioral Changes

As regards, behavioral change we see clearly that, women look clean and presentable. They acknowledge their new perceptions to issues, monitor and evaluate the change and manage that change, they got from the program. They also appreciate time and opportunities they have encountered, particularly, where sanitation has been marred by customs and taboos e.g. (toilet program in western Kenya).

Towards their families, in the schools environment and other institutions, the influence and impact of change become remarkable phenomenon.

School children have also influenced health behaviors to their parents, such as the toilet program, school's rain harvesting program for collecting water for children to drink and related programs. What is of crucial importance is that the behavioral change stems from mind, general presentation and outlook.

Now that the scarcity of water will be continuing, more focus must be given towards empowering both gender in order to improve the management skills for adequately assisting in the management of the resources involved, such as human material and financing including **fund raising as a technology**. This will equip the communities to begin to look inwardly for their local resources, as they stretch their hands to managing the resources of external supporters in order to make themselves more sustainable.

New techniques must also be developed to fully capture men's interest in the sector. This way, projects will be sustainable for many years to come. More efforts must be made to assist both gender to strategize the core business in the sector and conforming to changes that are responsive to modern practices. Qualifications of good grades to become better managers of these resources, should be pursued for better results. What are the techniques then that need to be developed? Good practices such as sectoral masonry, pipes laying and joinery, building both sub - surface tanks, furrows, sinking shallow and deep wells, building and maintaining intakes, community-based water quality analysis projects, etc. Further exploration in preparing this paper, indicate that the more the situation facing women in the sector is discussed in isolation, the impact will forever be negative, because it ends up portraying women as carrying bigger shares of responsibility and thus giving men lesser roles in the sector, which should not be the case. Equity therefore becomes a subject of great importance in the sector if it is to be realizable.

The women groups can be used to facilitate the approaches and processes that must be encountered in carrying out the sector program. Particularly, where the groups are beginning to become literate, who could master the processes with ease. All efforts must be pursued to participatorily make the gender literacy successful as we avoid failure.

Methodologies that have worked in the sector?

Participatory methodologies that have worked, and given positive results should be pursued for wide applications. They include processes where the communities are fully involved in their prioritization planning, implementation, monitoring, assessing and replicating their programs. Greater emphasis when given to health and hygiene within the sector, especially at grassroots level, the normal trend we see is tangible results. Such obtainable result could be a provision of safe drinking water or good sanitation projects. We also see with participatory methodology and involvement of men in the sector programs, new need is being born for practitioners to gain new skills that would meet the multiple gender driven demands to satisfy both groups. We are somehow in a crisis now, under normal circumstances, men have from time immemorial not been bothered with the cores of duties that women carry out in the villages, such as water fetching, planting guards/calabashes and thatching toilets. Water provision at certain level become interesting because of the technology followed to realize it, while developing skills and techniques that match it. But improving a low cost toilet is not interesting, so less men participate in my experience. What challenge does this give us then in order to sustain the male gender interest, commitment, devotion and sustainability? Some techniques have been developed through participatory approaches to maintain the required interest, and commitment throughout the project life. More ideas are being hatched in this direction but may be what is minimizing the way the grassroots level can adequately benefit from the way these participatory methodologies are to be effectively afforded. The inclusion of how classifications of different levels of technologies to suit, culture, abilities and gender, must not be minimized.

Information

When some projects are visited, one finds that women have more information in most aspects affecting them in their daily lives, families, neighbours, surrounding them occasionally up to location and district level. The men tend to discuss abstract things such as schools, churches, mosques or markets involving their environs, efforts should be made, to bring them closer in their homesteads, at planning and implementing level, while we completely include them in their programs, that is more affordable, durable and sustainable. In case of a seminar that will bring change and impart knowledge at village level. A voice from the male, could say "oh send the women to such seminars, the men have nothing to learn there, it is all woman talk!" This can be minimized by involving both men and women in drawing up the issues of interest for training, as we reduce the widening gaps between both gender. Training in gender must be made the corner stone, for the promotion of gender development throughout all existing programs. In doing so we can help integrate the technologies, and any interrelated presentation and outlook to make up for provision for male participation, that may end up attracting them to become fully participants. The sectors have many opportunities of bringing about gender balance, if all undertakings are carefully planned, articulated and executed along the processes agreed with them, there should be minimal difficulties in executing these new policies, that I call gender literacy programs.

The male gender in this context seem to have captured an opportunity to display their abilities, which in my view is giving them an upper role on this particular circumstance, while they have actually surrendered their male chauvinism, without much notice.

So it is not correct to say that, they do not have the information, in most cases they consider it as one subject that is actually important to discuss at that level. When levels change to national levels or international levels, the perception by male gender begin to change, and is no longer the case as before, and if not watched, women could easily loose focus and get compromised as they allow men to become active, in grabbing these opportunities. The option is to encourage both gender as we attain balance at our stakeholders level.

Gender Roles

Simultaneously, you will also see men emerging as experts in the discussions at village level, but they would not carry water for their families, neither fetch firewood.

Women all over Africa, will always do the physical work particularly the unskilled labour and occasionally, when outsiders visit, the men come out to earn the credit for the jobs well done by women, a very interesting phenomenon, e.g. a successful water or sanitation programs have fallen victims for this scenario.

Further to this when the work include intermediate or higher skills, then you will see, women being carefully pushed aside, because they can not carry out such tough tasks, its too difficult and women may not understand the technicalities involved

Some research activities reveal that they do not wish to hurt the women, but think that those are masculine roles. This is the hypocritical cooperation that seem good on the ground but actually negative, because it perpetuates the male gender's well conceived views of the know it all, than that of the female gender. The women are actually not expected to compete with men for tasks that are traditionally not theirs. In order to assist both gender overcome some of these obstacles, a need to integrate tasks for plural solution, as we promote gender participatory roles in the sector which must be enforced. In critical analysis with them as stakeholders efforts should be made to assist them appreciate their undertakings as they identify their corresponding roles while concluding them as inseparable.

As regards decision making, several studies seem mixed up in the way they look at this particular agenda. This varies from homestead to homestead, project to project, tribe to tribe and at national and regional levels as well.

In some cases where women are a majority, then the women seem to be in control and men have little space overcoming this situation.

As regards some tribes or religious settings even if women are in charge they do not and may also not be allowed to make decisions. With some other tribes in Kenya (Western Region) women are listed to, and can make decisions across the board affecting their lives.

On the whole you will find that, programs to do with water, interest is always generated so much by both gender, and I believe with more skills and management training, the issue of concern for gender development will be done and soon become a matter of

past history. Partners that fund the sector, are busy encouraging the practitioners to promote gender balance, at all costs if they wish to make an impact.

At this stage of affairs, the question of who benefits in terms of water, training, jobs at whatever level, does raise a number of issues, which must be addressed. In Kwaho the experience, we have many experiences but I can only point out a few points, i.e.

* When we undertake to assist the communities with any project within the sector, the people to benefit are the communities who actually plan the steps to follow in their the operations, as they give their plan of action, for the length they choose to carry out that project.

* It does not matter whether it is the water provision, field staff training or communities or whatever comes through project undertaking, men and women have benefited on equal footing, in most cases.

* KWAHO for some reason has always had more male employees than female, so in this case more men have benefited in all aspects than their women colleagues.

* At the grassroots level, it is different, more women have benefited because they form the bulk of our employees, as extension workers, popularly known as WAHAS - Water for Health Assistants.

* There are divergent views on who controls the benefits the communities derive from services, income, training or other relevant benefits from the projects undertaken. In most cases women seem to gain than men.

* Where there is a water need, you find more women coming together to do something about it, this is because in most cases women suffer most when struggling to bring water home, as such an automatic response on working towards a water provision is supported by women first then men who would usually be said to be gender sensitive.

* Again without any formed opinion, they seem to work together, to protect their social and cultural activity of meeting discussing issues and enjoying each others company, they normally get when going to draw water from either a well or river. They would in this case work very hard until they achieve their goals. Services for training communities, committees or office bearers/committees or institutions. In this case the agencies would benefit, as that income would usually go to the agency commissioning such service.

* In the case of a "Water Association", then the "water attendant collects the money on behalf of the society and passes it to the committee, saving and to benefit community. The same goes for whatever type of income accrued from any of the project within the sector belonging to the community.

* *Training is of crucial importance, it is of greater need for this program on gender. Training of trainers should be held in high priority and commitment whose impact must go beyond extension workers and the entire community.*

* I wish to compare three projects, highlighting the impact and behavioral change seen at different levels. These examples are drawn from KWAHO, PALNET and SHEWAS. All of these projects include gender bias in all their undertakings. While both gender seem to have blended in well in most activities, they seem to clearly point out at certain issues, that if not taken into account, less or no impact at all can be realized i.e.

KWAHO Experience

* The projects if not community driven have little chance of success, especially those dealing with health and hygiene.

* The composition of main actors become crucial, as well as alienation of roles for both gender which must be well researched, tested and accepted for implementation, by both gender.

* For better impact, both roles must be demand driven.

* Both gender must be ready to learn from each other, as they accept each other's roles.

* Inferiority for any of the gender must be reduced, particularly when dealing with sensitive areas of health and hygiene e.g reproductive health.

* Environmental health, sanitation must be measurable in terms of impact assessment at any one given stage, who should be used to promote gender.

* If replicability is possible then some measure of success can be hopefully realized.

* "Maji Safi projects are ran by women. Suddenly men have joined the projects where they exist. This is rain harvesting project (domestic water supply) and credit should be given to women.

PALNET

Participatory Learning Network is a national network of 16 NGOs in the sector. In PALNET, needs are demand driven, to a level where agencies forget their rivalries, work together as they exchange notes in the sector, not only have the health issues enlarged, and serving more people but they share approaches and processes from each member. NGO's have improved their methodologies of dealing with their programs.

* All perspectives as perceived by difference agencies have promoted **teamwork**, **mobilization** of resource and **networking** to serve the communities with adequacy.

* Need for more **relevant** training to address gender input is created, for manning the sector in a more efficient manner.

* The NGOs envisage sharing resources in future especially in the area of training for staff development.

* An example of how PALNET shares **sanitation** experiences; which should be used to introduce gender promotion include their programs being:

- Seen at a broader look beyond refuse disposal or excreta disposal.
- Sanitation seen beyond VIP Construction etc..
- Involving issues beyond hygiene, education, WSS.
- Promoting applied research easily undertaken and replicated by the affected communities.
- Learning from each other how to reduce waterborne diseases e.g. malaria.
- Developing methods on how to influence schools.

PALNET collaborating with its partners supporting community participatory methodologies such as **PROWESS**, **SARRAR** and now **PHAST** and **HUMASA** a new methodology being hatched by **KWAHO** but has not received funding or expertise. **SHEWAS** is a project of CARE Kenya in Siaya District within Nyanza Province. In brief I shall only highlight this project, as a very interesting case study that has been quite successful in this region. According to a senior officers from SHEWAS when interviewed, he had this to say as he contributed to PALNET's work, to add into this paper.

* Since the inception of this project, great involvement and interest through participation has been noticed. More important, is that their involvement is voluntarily as they give their different contributions in the project.

* Practices like washing hands before eating meals, after visiting toilets, as well as in between tasks seem to soil the hands, are on the increase.

* Cases of diarrhea and dysentery seem to decline and particularly diseases that kill children under five years of age.

* The old ideas that children faeces were safe and could be thrown anywhere are no longer there.

* The older generation who would not under normal practice share toilets with in-laws or other relatives have begun to ignore such customs.

*In certain areas, women would not eat eggs or chicken, but have now begun to eat, after discovering the nutritional value and that this custom was dying after learning which they received through health education.

* SHEWAS project has used communities they serve to teach their fellow villagers.

* CARE-KENYA has been a facilitation to the process as they train them to manage the change.

* The project has also influenced their farming habits, they now grow vegetables instead of depending on fish alone.

They have developed a participatory methodology, that seem to have accelerated their great impact on the community as a whole.

* Presentation of this project to the PALNET meetings has created a positive interest and commitment for the members, who wish to learn more as they improve their approaches to health, hygiene and sanitation practices.

Conclusion

The role of gender development in the sector, past, present or future program must be addressed with clearly set out goals, and objectives, aimed at creating a new society whose roles will draw great linkages and impact. The ideas of promoting this action must begin from homes and schools in particular. **POLITICAL WILL** must be enhanced at all levels, as we change the general outlook in the sector development. The need for Gender Development must be community-based and demand driven. Integration of services, by men and women should be promoted to address this need that will make our programs sustainable. Development of tools that will promote the understanding of this project much easier, where possible in the vernacular should be undertaken across the board. **TRAINING** for all agencies is crucial within the ongoing programs, documentation of all these processes must form a big part of making this program to ensure success and sustainability.