



PRIMARY
INTERNATIONAL REFERENCE CENTRE
FOR COMMUNITY WATER SUPPLY AND
SANITATION (IRC)

**THE NATIONAL
RURAL WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION PROGRAMME
WORKING GROUP ON GENDER PARTICIPATION
ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF IRWSS PROJECTS ON GENDER
PARTICIPATION
MAY, 1991**

*Nice example
of a
participatory
assessment*

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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE REPORT

1. **AGRITEX** Agricultural Technical and Extension Services
2. **DCCO** District Community and Cooperative Officer
3. **DDF** District Development Fund
4. **DEHO** District Environmental Health Officer
5. **DERUDE** Department of Rural Development
6. **DWSSC** District Water and Sanitation Sub-committee
7. **EHT** Environmental Health Technician
8. **IRWSS** Integrated Rural Water Supply and Sanitation
9. **MCCD** Ministry of Community and Cooperative Development
10. **NAC** National Action Committee
11. **PWSSC** Provincial Water and Sanitation Sub-committee
12. **VCW** Village Community Worker
13. **WCC** Ward Community Coordinator

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

Members of the Working Group on Gender Participation in IRWSS projects carried out an evaluation to determine the impact of the projects on the beneficiaries - especially women. The Evaluation Team consisted of nine (9) people, representing sector ministries and departments who are members of the NAC. (See Page 1 for abbreviations and Annex 1 below for names of members of the Evaluation Team). The exercise was carried out on 6 - 8 March, 1991 in Mudzi, Zvishavane and Nkayi districts.

The organization of the research, the data collection methodology, the findings, comments and recommendations are described below.

2.1 The Working Group on Gender Participation

The Working Group on Gender Participation is an ad hoc group set up by the NAC to study the impact of Integrated Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Projects on the beneficiaries - especially women, and to provide the NAC with data that can become the basis of policy formulations to improve women's participation.

2.2 Purpose of the Evaluation Exercise

The evaluation exercise was carried out to:

- collect data that the NAC could use in designing guidelines on gender participation in IRWSS projects.
- to help the DWSSC and PWSSC take greater cognizance of gender issues when planning and implementing projects, and,
- to satisfy donor interests in the impact the programme was having on the beneficiaries - especially women.

2.3.0 Objectives of the Evaluation

2.3.1 Overall Objective

- * To assess the impact of IRWSS projects on gender participation.

2.3.2 Specific Objectives

- verify findings from the Evaluation of the Mt Darwin and Makoni IRWSS projects
- establish percentages of women to men among extension workers
- to assess attitudes of (i) Extension workers (ii) councillors and beneficiaries on gender participation
- to assess knowledge among women of benefits that can be derived from participating in the IRWSS projects.

2.4 Data collected

During the evaluation, the Working Group collected the following data:

1. Factual data on gender participation
2. Information on attitudes and,
3. Information on knowledge of possible benefits.

3.0 DATA COLLECTION METHODOLOGY

For purposes of this evaluation a combination of the Minimum Evaluation Procedures and the Rapid Assessment Procedures methods was adopted for data collection. This methodology was preferred because of its flexibility which combines a number of data collection techniques such as interviews, group discussions, informal and formal discussions, and observations. At the core of the adopted methodology is a desire to obtain results in the shortest time possible, at the lowest cost possible and to use the findings as basis for policy decisions.

3.1 Procedures adopted

To get the most out of the target group, discussion groups were preferred to interviewing individuals. To this end, participants from the districts were divided into three groups: the first group consisting of what was loosely termed *extension workers* (see Operational Definitions below). This group was further split into two by separating the males from the females. In each district, the two groups of Extension workers gathered at the District Administrator's office. The third group consisted of beneficiaries (males and females together). These gathered at their respective water points in the wards.

To facilitate discussions among the three groups, members of the Evaluation Team also divided themselves into three groups of three people each. In rotation each group from the Evaluation team was tasked to facilitate discussions in one or the other of the participant groups. (see Annex 2)

3.2 Operational Definitions

For the purposes of the evaluation exercise, the following definitions were adopted:

a) Extension Workers include

- 1 Village Community Workers;
- 2 Ward Community Coordinators;
- 3 Environmental Health Workers;
- 4 AGRITEX Extension Workers;
- 5 Pump minders;
- 6 Well sinkers;
- 7 Latrine Builders.

b) **Beneficiaries** are all the community members who use the facilities provided by the Project.

2.3 The Questionnaire

A questionnaire was designed for the evaluation exercise. The topics on the questionnaire (which were in Shona and Ndebele) generated some lively discussions. As stated above, the Evaluation Team intended to have group discussions, not individual interviews. (See Annex 3 below for an English translation of the discussion topics.

3.0 FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Presented in this part of the report, are the Evaluation Team's findings and some comments. Each finding is discussed in relation to the objectives.

Findings Related to the First Objective: *To verify findings from the evaluation of Mt Darwin and Makoni IRWSS projects.*

Evaluation findings from Mudzi, Zvishavane and Nkayi do, in many respects agree with those from the evaluations of Mt Darwin and Makoni. In view of these findings, the Evaluation Team suggests that the general position be that:

To date, women's participation in Integrated Rural Water and Sanitation Projects is mostly limited to low positions entailing very little decision making and from which no financial rewards are derived.

Findings related to the second objective: *To establish percentage of males to females among extension workers.*

Accurate figures on the percentage of females to males among extension workers could not be obtained from the interviewees as they had not been forewarned that these would be required. It was however established that a greater percentage among the VCWs and WCCs were female. In Zvishavane, for instance, the DCCO *thought* that out of a total of one hundred and thirteen (113) VCWs, only *about* fifteen (15) were males, while the DEHO said he had six EHTs of whom only one was female. In fact the female one was a student on attachment to the district.

AGRITEX Extension workers are predominantly male. It was not possible to obtain accurate information as to how the initial recruitment of the VCWs and the WCCs was done as none of MCCD's district staff had witnessed the process. For AGRITEX Extension workers, and the Ministry of Health's EHTs, districts do not have a say in the recruitment.

Latrine Builders, Well Sinkers and Pump Minders are still predominantly male. It is however, in the ranks of the latrine builders

and well sinkers that the districts are now taking the initiative to introduce women.

Findings related to the third objective: To assess attitudes of Extension Workers, Councillors and the Beneficiaries on gender participation.

a) *Stereo-types*

All three, (ie Extension Workers, Councillors and the Beneficiaries) seemed to hold the same views on the issue of women's participation in water and sanitation projects. Stereo types such as " Women cannot.... Women should not... According to our custom....." were proffered as reasons for women having remained in low positions. It must be emphasized that women too seemed to have internalized these stereo-type beliefs.

b) *Basis of Distribution of Work*

Allocation of tasks between men and women in rural areas is based on three criteria: *depth, height and strength*. All work that requires one to go very deep, or very high or need great strength to accomplish, is for men. For instance, traditionally it is women who fetch water and bring in firewood for household use. However, when a family is brewing beer, and there is need to bring in more than the usual amounts of water and firewood, these then become men's tasks.

c) *Gender/traditional Biases*

Men prefer to work with other men in well sinking, alleging that the work is too strenuous for women. This is rejected by some women who maintain that given the chance, they could do a better job in some of the tasks presently done by men. In turn, they alleged that men have a habit of leaving work unfinished as they rush to take up other contracts. These women maintain that the tasks allocated to them of ferrying water, pebbles and bricks to the construction sites are strenuous enough but had been allocated to them - possibly because no financial benefits accrued to those who performed them.

d) *Exceptions [to (b) above]*

Progress is being made in some districts (eg Nkayi). The evaluation team learnt that women are taking over many of the tasks traditionally reserved for men. The reason for this was given as "there are very few men left in the area." Most men are either employed or seeking employment in towns.

e) *Tradition's Pull*

While it is true that women are now responsible for such tasks as molding bricks, cutting down big logs and ferrying them to the site, for burning bricks, and that they now dig the first three metres together with the men still in the area, the Evaluation Team learnt that this situation only obtained for as long as the men were not around. Once the men were back, all their tasks reverted to them.

f) *Men's attitude towards working wives*

Marriage seems to mark the end of a woman's work as a well sinker. Once a female well sinker married, husbands (in most cases) refused them permission to go on working. Men maintain that they prefer their wives to look after the home.

g) *Field Staff's Concerns*

In some districts, (Mudzi and Nkayi), *unmarried* women have been trained as well sinkers and latrine builders. Complaints are that problems sometimes arise where some "relationships" develop between the women and the men in the teams. This almost without fail, breeds petty jealousies which interfere with the smooth execution of the task at hand. This could be a possible explanation for some of the reluctance of the Field Officers to recruiting and increasing the number of women well sinkers.

The problem of "relationships" developing is seen as inherent in teams consisting of men and women. To avoid a recurrence of such problems, it is suggested that all-women well-sinking teams be formed in the districts.

Findings related to the fourth objective: *To assess knowledge among women of benefits that can be derived from participating in the IRWSS projects.*

Some women are aware of the availability of water and easy access to it as a benefit, but do not consider the position of pump minder and the financial benefits it entails worth vying for. Some took it for granted that paid positions were reserved for men and men only, while others seemed completely unaware that they could still seek re-employment as well sinkers and latrine builders after marriage or after giving birth if they so wished.

For those women who are aware of the possible benefits they can derive from taking up paid positions in water and sanitation projects, there are a number of factors working against them.

a) *Work Load*

Rural women have a multiplicity of household chores. They are responsible for the general welfare of the family, the fields and livestock. Their lot is worse where the husband spends the greater part of the year away from home. Because of these responsibilities, though willing, rural women find it difficult to participate fully in water and sanitation related activities. This is especially so for those activities in which, involvement would entail being away from home for sometime.

Some women pointed out that in order to take up employment outside the home, their urban counter parts had had to hire labour to do their household chores. Without this additional help the rural women's participation can only be minimal.

b) *Lack of Formal Education*

Because of cultural biases where men are given more and sometimes better educational opportunities in preference to women, the majority of rural women have been disadvantaged. As a result not many of them can take such jobs as pump minders which demand a certain level of literacy and numeracy for record keeping purposes.

c) *Lack of Training*

Not enough training opportunities are offered to women in the water and sanitation projects. Their situation is made worse by the discriminatory practices of their culture which, right at the beginning gave opportunities in abundance to its sons and less to its daughters. Women feel that given the requisite training they can take on more responsibilities in the water and sanitation projects

While some communities may be willing to choose women to train as latrine builders, and the women themselves are quite eager to train, advice from EHTs is that only those with some knowledge of bricklaying, should be chosen, a prerequisite which automatically disqualifies the majority of women.

A suggestion from the EHTs is that, if it ever became policy that women be involved in latrine construction, funds for training them should be made available.

d) *Lack of awareness on the part of Government Employees*

It is apparent to the Evaluation Team that some Government employees are unaware of any Government or donor interests in gender participation in the IRWSS projects. This has contributed to the situation where women remain in unrewarding positions.

e) *IRWSS Projects reinforcing custom*

The requirement that beneficiaries should feed well sinkers (who presently are predominantly male) is seen as one example of the water and sanitation projects reinforcing cultural beliefs. Women complain bitterly against this practice. In addition women find the provision of food to well sinkers too burdensome, especially in times of drought. They appeal to Government to pay the well sinkers enough money to buy their own food.

f) *Social Stigma*

Women are concerned about how their behaviour would be construed by members of their communities. This seems to explain their reluctance to come forward and take up rewarding positions, some of which require that they put on protective clothing such as overalls, wellingtons and helmets. What would people say if they saw Mrs-So-and-So in trousers and freely mingling with men? And yet this is what she would have to do if she became Pump Minder, Well Sinker or Latrine Builder!

Further, while women in some districts (eg Zvishavane) do have a say in determining those in their communities to undergo training as latrine builders, petty jealousies among them have meant that they, almost always, choose men instead of other women.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations given below are based on findings from the Evaluation of Mt Darwin and Makoni, and the assessment of gender participation carried out in Mudzi, Zvishavane and Nkayi projects. In defining these recommendations, the Evaluation Team was aware of the fact that some of the problems could not be solved over night.

*Shows it
is
from
outside*

a) In view of the fact that some Government employees were unaware of Government or donor interests in gender participation in the IRWSS projects, the Evaluation Team recommends that efforts to enhance the status of women in the IRWSS begin with the conscientization of the DWSSC and the PWSSC. The DWSSC will in turn be tasked conscientize extension workers and the beneficiaries. For this, the NAC should direct all sector ministries/departments to include discussions of gender issues in their staff workshops, with effect from FY 91/92.

b) There is need for clear guidelines spelling out what the NAC considers to be the best way women can participate in water and sanitation projects. *Statement of p. 4 should form basis of guidelines*

The Evaluation Team recommends that all new project proposals should aim at having at least a quarter ($\frac{1}{4}$) of their trainees (ie pump minders, well-sinkers and latrine builders) being women. [see (j) below] Ongoing projects should also aim at achieving this ratio.

c) General training of women must be built into the mobilization strategies currently in use, while specialized training of women in skills such as latrine construction, blasting and pump maintenance should be built into each District's Plan of Operation.

d) All-women teams should be formed in the districts. In addition, the NAC should make funds available for the training of women.

e) The evaluation Team recommends that the practice where communities (women) are required to feed well sinkers be abandoned.

*What did
happen?*

f) Lastly, the Evaluation Team recommends that the NAC declare the financial year 91/92 to be "The year of Women's Progress in Water and Sanitation."

only feasible with active part.

ANNEX 1

THE EVALUATION TEAM

Ministry of:	Representative	Group
1. Local Government, Rural and Urban Development	S. Chipunza	1
	B.T. Majaya	3
2. Health	D. Proudfoot	3
3. AGRITEX	M Chimbira/Kahwa	2
4. DERUDE	C. Mafusire	2
5. Political Affairs	S. Sakupwanya	1
	S. Choto	2
6. Community and Cooperative Development	M. Jeranyama	3
7. DDF	T. Fred	1

ANNEX 2

THE DISCUSSION GROUPS

Members of the Working Group divided themselves into three groups. The participants from the districts also divided into three groups each to be facilitated by at least three members of the Working Group on Gender Participation. The table below shows how the groups were organized.

STATION	GROUP	TASK
Mudzi (6.3.91)	1	Assess project impact on beneficiaries in given Wards, interview women and men, observe surroundings and clues to interpretation of behaviour
	2	Interview female extension staff working on the project
	3	Interview male extension staff working on the project .
Zvishavane (7.3.91)	1	Interview female extension staff working on the project
	2	interview male extension staff working on the project .
	3	Assess project impact on beneficiaries in given Wards, interview women and men, observe surroundings and clues to interpretation of behaviour
Nkayi 8.3.91	1	interview male extension staff working on the project .
	2	Assess project impact on beneficiaries in given Wards, interview women and men, observe surroundings and clues to interpretation of behaviour
	3	Interview female extension staff working on the project

ANNEX 3

DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. Identify the functions that you know which are performed in the water and sanitation projects:
 - at construction stage of water point,
 - at construction stage of household latrine
 - at maintenance stage of water point,
 - at maintenance stage of household latrine
2. Who performs these tasks?
 - men
 - women

Second Discussion Topics

1. What, in your view, is the justification for this division of functions between men and women?
2. Are there any problems you have encountered arising from the division of these tasks between men and women?

Third Discussion Topics

1. Of the problems enumerated in the first discussion, which ones do you think you can solve on your own...ie without outside assistance?
2. How would you propose to solve them?

Fourth Discussion Topics

1. Of those problems which you think you would need outside assistance to solve, please identify persons or institutions where assistance might be got.
2. What type of assistance would you be seeking from them?