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INVOLVEMENT OF THE LESOTHO WOMEN
ON INSTALLATION OF CLEAN WATER
SUPPLY AND PIT LATRINES DURING THE
INTERNATIONAL DRINKING WATER SUPPLY
AND SANITATION. DECADE - IDWSSD.

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WOMEN'S ACTIVITIES

INTRODUCTION

Basotho women had ever since been integrated into development, be they organised or individually. At home women are food providers and makers. They started to be organised in voluntary women's organisation as far back as in 1934, when the Lesotho Homemakers paved the way for many many others that followed..

OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of womens organisation was to improve the standard of women at the family, village, national and international levels by imparting into their knowledge that would facilitate self reliance and elliminate ignorance, disease and porverty: the major enemies of all developing countries.

ACTIVITIES

There are innumerable activites the organisation are involved in to fulfill their objectives.

(a) Income generation. Through either agro-based projects and handicrafts utilizing indegeonous material like grass, clay, wool and mohair as well soil and water etc.

(b) Preschool education

(c) Vocational training for both women and post primary school drop outs.

(d) Health science andhygiene

(e) Water and sanitation programme

(f) Home improvement.

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NUMBER OF WOMENS VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATION

There are quite a number of this organization found evenly spreads through out the country e.g. the Lesotho Women In Self-Help Organisation, the largest, as it is nation wide. The following are the prominent ones.

<u>Contact Person</u>	<u>Name of Org.</u>	<u>Approx. Member-ship.</u>	<u>Time born</u>	<u>H70</u>
Mrs. B.M. Nchapha P.O. Box 527 Maseru 100	Lesotho Homemakers	20, 000	1934	Maseru
Mrs M. Majoro	Boiteko("effort")	18, 000	1962	Maseru
Mrs 'Mathabiso Mosala Maseru 100	Women's Institute	5, 000	1963	Maseru
Mrs 'Mamakoae Taoana	Bussiness & Professional	600	1970's	Maseru
Ms. 'Masearane Mphuthi	House wives leaque	800	1970's	Maseru
Ms Mahlape Ntsane	Ikaheng("Build yourself")	200	1981	Maseru
'Maseeiso Majara and A.M.Mokokoane P.O. Box 527 Maseru.	The Lesotho Women In Self help.	45,000	1979	Maqhaka Maseru
Mrs 'Majoshuoa Ranthimo	Council of Workers Women's Section	5,000	1981	Maseru

RELATION WITH WATER & SANITATION PROGRAMME

Women are producers and users of food therefore water is food, as there cannot be any food without water.

It is women who initiate water projects in their own areas, organise funding and form committees to process the matter. It is still women found in great numbers to provide labour. Women in self help organisation have spend a substantial amount of time and effort in digging water trenches, constructing roads leading to the respective villages where water was to be installed.

SPRING PROTECTION:

Many many springs that are seen to have been protected is yet another out put by these ever committed women. In every District,, in almost every village where there is no clean water supply women are busy on their feet to organise and solicit funds while they are ever ready with labour. In fact in this unspecified decade for water, through guidance of the technical Ministries like, Health, Minrudev, Agriculture, Women's Bureau etc. Women are still being alerted and cautioned about good health for all in the year 2000 so as to get there through adequate education and training.

BORE HOLES:

A number of families have installed hand water-pumps and bore holes for family consumption. Some sell a few tins of water to the neighbours.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING:

Women get their training from the Self-organised or ministry executed outreach training programmes. e.g. Women's Bureau held ten successful courses in ten Districts where 4000 women were trained in the following areas:-

- (a) Vegetable growing
- (b) Tree planting
- (c) Fuel saving devices
- (d) Food production.
- (e) Water and sanitation
- (f) Dirty water disposal pits

(g) Co-operative education

(h) Boultry keeping etc.

The type and content of these courses are very much comprehensive as they are run by the experts from technical ministries. They serve a number of objectives and help the people who should be adequately trained.

SANITATION:

Most of the women in rural Lesotho have husbands who work in the Republic of South Africa. These men send their pay money back home for their wives to perform daily domestic duties.

Some of these women are really sanitation orientated. With their money they buy ready-made pit latrines from local manufactures and install them in their homes. A number of this corrugated iron sheeting pit latrines are mushrooming in many places in rural Lesotho as a result.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MORE WATER INSTALLATION PROGRAMMES AND SANITATION SYSTEMS:

1. Since women are well motivated and ready with everything, technicians from the executing ministries should be increased either by training trainers who would implement the training programme. At the moment there are an innumerable quens of lists awaiting implementation. Trainers should be women as these are the people who feel the pinch even more.

2. Both Students and Scholars should be motivated to take up voluntary work on clean water supply programmes. These should be taught at schools, and during the holidays they should join the community and do the practicals.

The gulvenised roofed houses are increasing remarkable, therefore women are to be taught means of how to harness water by installing zink or cemented water tanks. This will be done through courses, and mass media in Radio Lesotho Women's Programmes.

3. Pits dug at the back yards to be increased and these must be lined with cemend for hygienic purposes as the water washing of clothes.

4. Team work is to be encouraged e.g. women's organisation can embark on the programme as fast as possible. Also team approach by both Governmental and non Governmental Agencies to the communities must be accelerated to avoid overlapping that creates confusion in many instances.

5. More demonstrations of pit latrines should be done by trainers and relevant ministries to women's organisation.

POTENTIAL FOR WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN RSP1. INTRODUCTION.

These notes are drawn from J.S. Gay's report WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT IN LESOTHO (USAID), Lesotho, 1982. 84 pp), and summarize some of the findings in the document of the changing role of women in Basotho society and their potential role in rural development, as well as a number of constraints which should also be considered in Sanitation Project design.

Women, according to Gay, are "central" to rural development in Lesotho. The peculiarities of the migrant labour situation, combined with other factors, means that they play significant roles at village level, often taking over the full responsibilities of their absent husbands. Although, according to Basotho custom, they are subordinate to men, their de facto power and influence is considerable.

2. WOMEN AS MANAGERS AND DECISION-MAKERS

The prolonged absence from home of a large number of Basotho men has led to the adoption by women of a good number of responsibilities which would otherwise be in the hands of their husbands. As a consequence, says Gay, there has been a considerable increase in self-reliance and initiative amongst them. Women, in addition to running the home, in a large number of cases also manage farms, and the cash budgets based upon the remittances they receive from their husbands and from income they generate for themselves from beer-brewing, craft production, etc. Husbands often send instructions as to how remitted monies are to be spent, but in a day-to-day sense it is women who control expenditure. Many women possess elementary book-keeping skills, and keep meticulous records.

ie. husbands may decide whether money is to be spent on sanitation or not.

An important consequence of the migrant labour system and the monetization of the economy has been the gradual undermining of the traditional extended family as the basis for household formation and the earlier fission of households into nuclear groups. Wives thus move more rapidly away from the control of parents-in-law and become domestic managers in their own right much sooner than in the past. When sufficient bohali has been paid by the husband to secure his rights over the children of the marriage, rights within the household are also secured for the woman with a consequent increase in her managerial capacity.

Traditional house building depends upon co-operative labour within the domestic group, with men creating basic structures and women servicing the labour teams and taking responsibility for finishing (plastering, windows and doors, etc.). These days, particularly in the lowlands, "modern" style houses are often built, employing contracted labour. Here women tend to play the leading role in procuring materials, hiring labour, and overseeing construction.

3. Women a politicians and leader

The primary focus of women's lives is home-centred, but they also participate at broader levels. Women attend pitsos, indeed they are often in the majority, and participate fully in such meetings. In addition, "Women's courts" are also sometimes set up in villages, under a senior wife or widow of a chief, to discuss women's affairs and disputes. Women also involve themselves in a good number of groups and institutions.

These include setokofela rotating credit systems, community garden groups, nutrition and home economics study groups, mohair spinning co-operatives, church groups, anches of national organisations, dance groups, prayer groups, savings associations, food-for-work groups, etc. Women make up 65% of the membership of credit unions in Lesotho. A substantial number of Village Health Workers and water minders are women, and, in 1977, of 655 chiefs receiving regular monthly salaries, 27.3% were women.

4.

Women as educators

As mothers, women play a crucial role in the early socialization and informal education of children. Women tend to be generally better educated and more literate than men. In 1977, females made up 59.1% of students attending primary schools, 59.5% of those at secondary schools, 58% at technical and vocational schools, and 75.9% at the National Teacher's Training College. When they marry, women leave their natal homes for those of their husbands, often in another village. This mobility makes them useful potential agents for the extension of new ideas from their home villages.

5. Women and development

From the above it seems clear that women have an important role to play in development:-

- (i) as decision-makers, given their widespread experience as de facto, if not always de jure household heads, and their involvement in wider political structures. Failure to involve women in the decision-making process may seriously undermine prospects for success.
- (ii) as managers, given their experience at running the home, managing farms and business enterprises, and at supervising the work of others, including building contractors.
- (iii) as educators, given the informal education role they play in the family their general higher level of literacy and formal education, and their mobility.
- (iv) as fund-raisers and budget organisers, given the widespread institutional arrangements geared to these ends in which they appear already to be involved.

CONSTRAINTS

6. Weighed against these positive factors are number of constraints which must also be borne in mind:-

- (i) Basotho custom requires that women adopt a subordinate role to men, and although this has been effectively undermined in many ways this idea still carries considerable weight, among men and women alike. Limits are thus imposed upon the degree of leadership which women may exercise. This however, may be less of a problem in a project concerned with health and sanitation than in others.
- (ii) The developmental cycle by which women move in time through differing statuses also serves as a constraint. A woman's greatest potential to exercise decision making and managerial capacities arises when she is head of her own household. This does not occur until fission of the extended family has taken place or in some cases, until old age or widowhood. The earlier fission of domestic groups increases this potential, but it should be borne in mind that not all women have equal potential at all times.
- (iii) Marital stress is also a constraining factor. According to Gay, and others, the prolonged absence of men from the household has been associated with a relatively high degree of conjugal stress and dispute, concerned with both sexual activity (suspicions of infidelity) and household management. Conflict can result if the husband feels that his position as household head is being threatened.

7. Conclusions

Women have an important role to play in development, and in the areas of health and sanitation in particular,

but one which must be developed with a sensitivity for the problems which may be associated with the development of such a role. Community-wide decision-making is still male centred. The relationship between de jure and de facto village leadership must be noted, as must the continuing importance of the position of men in the former category.

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