

Gender Mainstreaming Information Sheet: The Ethiopian Experience

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Overview

The Federal Constitution (1995) guarantees equality between women and men and the Family Law (2000) is appreciably gender sensitive, it raised the minimum age of marriage to 18 and provided for the fulfillment of essential conditions of marriage including consent of both spouses. The National Policy on Ethiopian Women (1993), the National Population policy (1993), Education and Training Policy (1994) and the Health Policy (1993), HIV/Aids (1998) policies all provide good examples of gender mainstreaming.

Government's commitment to gender equality is evidenced through the establishment of the Ministry of Women's Affairs (1993 and 2006) with Department's in all Ministries and Bureau's in all regions, responsible to initiate, coordinate and monitor gender responsive development. Despite improvement, women are still under-represented in political decision-making at all levels.



Women at water site in Yilmana Densa, Amhara, Ethiopia

The National Gender Action Plan of the Growth and Transformational plan (GTP 2011 - 2015) provides a framework to advance commitments to gender equality within poverty reduction and to implement gender mainstreaming as set out in the Beijing Platform for Action (1995).

Achievements so far:

- The school enrollment rate of girls increased from 40.7% in 99/00 to 92.4% in 2012/3.
- The number of Health Extension Workers (98% of which are women) has increased dramatically.
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) decreased from 80% in 2000 to 23% in 2011.
- Early marriage decreased from 33.1% in 1997 to 8% in 2012/3.
- Women Land Certificate Holders increased from 19.4% (99/00) to 60% in 2011.
- Women in Parliament increased from 2.83% in 1995 to 27.9% in 2010.

Gender in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

The Government of Ethiopia has endorsed the International Drinking Water Decade (1990); the Dublin statement (1992); Principle 20 of the Rio Declaration (1992); the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) and the Millennium Summit (2000), and has confirmed concrete actions to measure gender mainstreaming in WASH.

The Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) commits to 98% rural water coverage and 100% urban water coverage by the year 2015, within 0.5 km's of urban households and 1.5 km's of rural households. Improved water and sanitation within closer reach of households has direct and immediate benefits for women and children, reducing the economic burden for fetching and carrying water and the financial burden of diarrheal related illnesses. Government of Ethiopia has established strategies and modalities to ensure the participation of women, and gender is clearly mainstreamed in the Sector Wide Approach (known as One WASH).

Constructing and using pit latrines in rural Ethiopia has become more common since the deployment of more than 38,000 female Health Extension Workers (HEWs) in over 15,095 health posts at kebele (village cluster) level and below. HEWs are

trained to work with 16 different preventative health packages, of which 7 are WASH related. HEWs provide improved hygiene education focusing on water quality, proper handling and storage of water, hand washing, latrine use and disposal of feces and solid waste as well as environmental cleanliness at kebele and community levels.

The Women's Development Army (WDA) has been mobilized in Ethiopia to assist the HEWs in their challenging work in behavioral change. HEWs train women identified as role-models to assist them in implementing their 16 package program. Each trained woman connects and trains 5 other women from nearby households and these 1+5 households form the core link in WDA. Model women make regular rounds to check on neighbors and encourage practices such as latrine building and setting-up separate cooking spaces. They are from "model families" and serve as living examples that the health extension workers' messages are being heard.

The provision of safe water and separate sanitation facilities for girls and boys combined with hygiene education contributes to improving school enrolment and attendance. Educating girls is the single most effective tool for strengthening economic productivity.

The Ethiopian Water Resources Management Policy (1999) clearly vests the Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Energy (MoWIE) with the power to enable women to participate in water resources planning, implementation, operation and maintenance.

The Gender mainstreaming implementation guideline for the water and energy sectors (2012) and the gender mainstreaming field manual for water supply and sanitation sub-sector (2005) have been developed, emphasizing the need to strengthen democracy and good governance through the participation of women in decision making at all levels. It proposes a bottom-up approach, starting at the community level, for advocate, train and support community-based WASH planning and management. Women artisans and care takers are trained to build and maintain water schemes.

There is a 50% quota of women on rural WASH committees, and although this enables attitude change and strengthens women's skills and economic and political power, technical and senior positions are still largely held by men. When women hold positions of financial responsibility and power in these committees, payment of water bills increases, but specific research is needed to quantify and foreground this widely accepted anecdotal truth. The Dalocha water scheme which is found in Southern Nation and Nationalities Peoples Region (SNNPR) is successfully and sustainably managed by women.

Challenges

Data: Although policies show strong commitment to promote gender equality, quantitative data for gender-related indicators is not readily available and so the evidence base with respect to gender roles, access to and control over resources as well as time use is not well developed and appropriate actions to strengthen economic and social policies are not sufficiently well-informed. National data from household surveys are potentially useful sources for gender statistics but the outcomes of these surveys are not always properly analyzed or used to feed into improved policy and practice.

Social norms: Even with improvement in the societal attitudes towards gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE), the historical legacy of inequality and discrimination is still a challenge in terms of overcoming existing inequalities and promoting gender equality. In order to remedy this legacy the government has taken steps to ensure the implementation of favorable policy and legal frameworks, but the efficacy of these depend partly on the extent to which policy makers, implementers and society at large is receptive to the need for change.

Capacity: The promotion of gender equality is enshrined in the legal and policy framework but limited capacity in terms of educated and skilled personnel hinders its impact. The ability to implement, monitor and evaluate the activities of the different divisions and departments from a gender perspective have been shown to be limited. Capacity related problems are observed within mainstream policy implementing bodies together with the skills and knowledge required to deliver as expected. Although gender mainstreaming guidelines are in place within the various sectoral ministries both at federal and regional levels, there are challenges in practice and limited gender related performance indicators. There is a need to fully institutionalize gender mainstreaming across sectors and performance management systems at all levels.