

# Gender Practice in Water Governance Programmes

From Design to Results



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Water Governance Facility Report No 4  
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## About the Water Governance Facility (WGF)

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The UNDP Water Governance Facility at SIWI (WGF) provides strategic water governance support to developing countries to advance socially equitable, environmentally sustainable and economically efficient management of water resources and water and sanitation services to improve the livelihood of poor people.

WGF supports developing countries on a demand basis to strengthen water governance reform implementation through:

1. Policy support and technical advisory services;
2. Developing and disseminating water governance knowledge and strengthening capacities
3. Developing and applying water governance assessments at national and global levels

WGF works with water governance in multiple thematic areas such as, integrated water resources management, transboundary water, water supply and sanitation, climate change adaptation, gender and water integrity. It works in several countries in regions such as Central and South Asia, East and Southern Africa and the Middle East.

WGF is a mechanism that contributes to the implementation of the UNDP Water and Oceans Governance Programme. The financial support from UNDP, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and MDG Achievement Fund (MDG-F) is greatly acknowledged. For more information visit [www.watergovernance.org](http://www.watergovernance.org)

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Dr. Alejandro Jiménez provided great help in the background reading and review of programme documentation. A language edit was performed by Mr. Alex Kirby. Useful comments were given by Ms. Maya Rebermark.

Above all, the way that the MDG-F has consistently supported and shown the way to prioritise gender is an important reason for why this report has been written.

## Acronyms and Abbreviations

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CSO	Civil Society Organisation	RAAS	Autonomous Region of the Southern Atlantic (of Nicaragua)
DEG	Democratic Economic Governance thematic window	Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
DAW	Division for the Advancement of Women (of the Department of Economics and Social Affairs at the United Nations)	SIWI	Stockholm International Water Institute
GBV	Gender Based Violence	UN	United Nations
GWA	Gender and Water Alliance	UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
KM	Knowledge Management	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
MDG	Millennium Development Goal	WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
MDG-F	Millennium Development Goals Achievements Fund	WGF	UNDP Water Governance Facility at SIWI
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation	WOGP	UNDP Water and Oceans Governance Programme
RAAN	Autonomous Region of the Southern Atlantic (of Nicaragua)	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

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## Executive Summary

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Women's important role in water management, both in the household and in small-scale farming, is widely recognised, yet effective implementation of methods and strategies to overcome gender-based barriers to women's equal participation in water and sanitation projects remain elusive. Due to the heavy focus on engineering in most water and sanitation sector interventions; the integration of social concerns is challenging and it is not uncommon that gender issues are seen as irrelevant or marginal. Even for projects that are ostensibly committed to gender mainstreaming, the lack of high-level support and resource allocation, compounded by the lack of experience and accountability mechanisms, make it difficult to turn gender-related knowledge into practice.

This report looks at the gender strategies, results and reporting of the eleven water and sanitation governance programmes that constitute the programmatic area of Democratic Economic Governance (DEG) supported by the Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund (MDG-F). Through extensive reviews of project documentation, personal communication and interviews with programme staff the report provides insights on gender mainstreaming in programming with the aim of helping future water and sanitation projects to achieve more sustainable results and greater effects on gender equality.

In contrast to what might be expected, the report found that ambitious gender mainstreaming in the programme design had a very tenuous link to any greater focus on gender in the programme implementation or results reporting. Rather, what came out as the most important factors for successful implementation on gender-based inequalities was the commitment by programme leadership and to bring gender expertise on board, for example via strategic alliances with women's organisations.

The programmes that were the most effective in reducing gender inequalities in their areas of intervention focused on the (collective) organisation and strengthening of women and women's organisations and on challenging the attitudes on gender equality of men and boys. To combine the gender and intercultural perspectives also came out as important as most programmes in this review operated in areas with a high level of indigenous peoples. This was only addressed systematically by a few of the programmes.

The gaps identified in the strategies of most programmes related to the insertion into the broader cultural, social and economic systems that maintain and reproduce gender in-

equalities, including gender based violence. This is partly a result of the instrumental way that gender work is justified by most of the programmes, i.e. as a means to achieve greater efficiency of the outcomes, rather than to combat inequalities for its own sake. As a consequence, the majority of the programmes tend to focus on individual women's education, employment and political leadership instead of collective action to challenge social structures.

Several of the programmes successfully supported gender mainstreaming in water and sanitation policies and plans at different levels: More than half included operational goals of mainstreaming gender perspectives into sector policies at the level of national government. Yet, the programmes' main contributions to gender equality as included in the progress reporting were to be found at the local level, where women's participation and leadership in water management was promoted. It is uncertain, however, to what extent women's increased participation in local water management or the gender mainstreaming in sector policies and plans have resulted in women influencing priorities, resource allocation and management practices.

The lack of information about the programmes' gender-related effects is in part due to the programmes' limited timeframe of operation, three-four years which is short in the context of governance, and the placing of the final evaluation to immediately after operational closure, making it impossible to capture any effects that need more time to manifest. In addition, the focus on quantitative indicators of the programmes' monitoring frameworks makes it impossible to capture the broad and multi-faceted change processes needed to improve governance and combat gender inequalities.

The report finds that to achieve important advances in gender equality within the governance of water and sanitation, organisations and agencies need to review not only their own structures and practices, but also to develop a better understanding of the underlying power dynamics and structural barriers that reinforce gender inequalities. This would imply strategies with greater focus on women's solidarity and collective action, and the inclusion of men and boys in the work towards changing values, attitudes and gender relations. Whereas a thorough gender analysis and mainstreaming of gender issues into programme design is a good starting point, to ensure a committed leadership and the involvement of gender expertise is essential to institute substantive gender-related focus and activities into the programme.

# Introduction

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“In all the benefitting communities general and ingrained social values related to the social division of work are found. Women take care of the home and children and men provide for the basic needs. In this context, water and sanitation is assigned to the role of women”. (Jambrina, 2013, p. 64).

It is widely recognised that women in most societies are charged with the responsibility for domestic water management, it being an intrinsic part of their daily chores in the home and taking care of the family (DAW, 2005; UNDP, 2006; van Wijk-Sijbesma, 1998). However, to broaden women’s sphere of influence and to promote women’s empowerment and equal right to access, control and use of resources and services has been a goal for the international development community for over two decades (DAW, 2005; ICWE, 1992).

Gender mainstreaming was formally launched as a strategy at the Fourth United Nations Conference on Women in 1995 and incorporated into the resulting Beijing Platform for Action. It means to bring women’s interests and perspectives to the centre of development interventions; to generate broad change processes in the structures, practices and policies of all sectors, with the aim of achieving equality (UN, 1995; UN, 2002). Gender mainstreaming implied a move away from isolated women-targeted projects – dubbed “Women in Development” – towards greater prominence of the relational aspects of gender inequalities – “Gender and Development.” Thus, liaisons with a large spectrum of actors, including men, to redefine gender roles and challenge structural inequalities were seen as crucial (Richey, 2002; UN, 2002).

Whereas gender mainstreaming, has become the key method for reaching gender equality, the implementation and understanding of it have been shown to vary substantially between actors and interventions (see e.g. AfDB, 2012; Kabeer, 1999; Porter & Sweetman, 2005). Two main approaches of gender mainstreaming have been applied by international and national organisations:

The most common approach is the ‘integrationist approach’ (Jahan, 1995), whereby a gender perspective is integrated in all activities, practices and strategies. This approach is criticised for only promoting women as beneficiaries, without an in-depth review of how other goals, policies and practices enable or obstruct the furthering of gender equality (Porter & Sweetman, 2005). The less often applied ‘agenda-setting’ approach is promoted by many gender scholars (introduced by Jahan, 1995) as it encourages actors to engage women in the definition of goals and, transformation of practices, such as choice of partner organisations. Independently of the approach, parallel activities targeting both structural gender-based discrimina-

tion (in for example customs and laws) and the satisfaction of women’s practical needs are necessary to further gender equality through development interventions (Kabeer, 1999; Molyneux, 1985; Moser, 1989).

As the ‘people aspect’ often is less tangible in sectors with a strong engineering tradition, such as water and sanitation, social and gender issues are frequently considered irrelevant or become marginal (SADEV, 2010; UN, 2002). Even if gender mainstreaming has gained acceptance by a majority of the large international actors in the water and sanitation sector interventions in the engineer-oriented sectors tend to suffer from lack of high-level support (partly due to male dominated organisations) and poor resources and accountability mechanisms for gender mainstreaming, especially in comparison to intervention in social sectors. Low awareness about motives and difficulties in transforming knowledge into practice also remain significant barriers to effective implementation and sustainable results to a larger extent in engineering-dominated sectors (OIOS, 2010; SADEV, 2010; Snyder *et al.*, 1996). This does not mean that organisations are not working hard to integrate gender in WASH, just there is still a long way for the sector to go.

Depending on the context and social settings men and women are affected by intersecting disadvantages, discrimination or structural inequalities. These are not only determined by gender in a narrow sense, but more in the way that gender intersects with cultural, social and economic class, as well as age, capabilities, and sexual expression and orientation (Crenshaw, 1989; Kabeer, 2010). Thus, women belonging to socially and economically marginalised groups are generally the most disadvantaged in relation to access to resources, services and political influence as they suffer from multiple and intersecting structural inequalities.

This report looks into how gender mainstreaming has been incorporated, put into practice and reported on in a set of programmes aiming to improve water governance at national and local levels. The programmes have been assessed to establish:

- Project motivation, problem analysis and design choices
- Implementation strategies and organisational settings, and
- Resulting effects on gender relations and the position of women

The analysis is based on systematic reviews of the programmes’ project and evaluation documents and other relevant reports, complemented with interviews and contacts, particularly in relation to a broader Knowledge Management (KM) initiative to document, analyse and disseminate innovative approaches and lessons learned from the implementation of these programmes. This gender review forms part of that KM endeavour.

## Background

The Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund (MDG-F), set up in 2007 through a donation from the Government of Spain to the United Nations system, was from its outset mandated to work for the ‘poorest of the poor’ and most vulnerable groups in society (MDG-F, 2007). The Fund has invested in eight programmatic areas, of which Democratic Economic Governance (DEG) of the Water Supply and Sanitation sector is one. Gender equality is a cornerstone in the Fund’s work, thus ensuring gender mainstreaming in all programmes, along with specific programmes that focus exclusively on reducing gender inequalities. As alluded to above, KM initiatives were launched to accompany each programmatic area. Moreover, to capture knowledge and practices on gender equality throughout the Fund’s work; an additional KM strategy was launched to focus on Gender as a Cross-Cutting Issue (UN Women & MDG-F, 2013).

The programmatic work relating to water supply and sanitation governance included eleven programmes aiming to democratise access to utility services and to improve governance in the water and sanitation sectors (see Table 1). With the overarching goal of accelerating progress worldwide towards achieving the

water and sanitation target of MDG 7, the programmes’ work was divided between national level advocacy and policy work on the one hand and specific interventions directed towards disadvantaged regions and marginalised populations in the respective countries on the other (Kjellén & Segerström, 2011). The eleven country programmes forming part of the Democratic Economic Governance (DEG) theme aimed to:

- Strengthen governments’ capacity to manage water provision and water quality;
- Involve civil society representatives to enhance its role in planning and policies regarding water;
- Support regulatory reforms, decentralisation and capacity development for improved services;
- Establish mechanisms for increasing investments into the water sector.

The programmes started their operations during 2008 and 2009, and closed during 2012 and 2013. The joint budget of the governance programmes added up to nearly USD 60 million (Kjellén & Cortobius, 2013).

**Table 1 – The eleven countries / programmes forming part of the MDG-F - DEG thematic window**

Countries	Programme Titles
Albania	Regulatory Reform Pro-poor Development in Albania
Angola	Governance of Water and Sanitation in Angola’s poor Neighbourhoods (Urban and Peri-urban water and sanitation Joint Programme Management in Angola)
Bosnia & Herzegovina	Securing Access to Water through Institutional Development and Infrastructure in Bosnia and Herzegovina
Ecuador	Governance in the Water and Sanitation Sector in Ecuador within the Framework of the Millennium Development Goals
Guatemala	Capacity-Building amongst the Mam People for Economic Governance of Water and Sanitation
Honduras	Economic Governance of Water and Sanitation
Mexico	Building Effective and Democratic Water and Sanitation Management in Mexico for the achievement of the MDGs
Nicaragua	Democratic and economic governance in the Water and Sanitation sector in the RAAN and RAAS
Panama	Strengthening equity in access in order to reduce gaps in safe water and sanitation services, by empowering citizens of excluded indigenous groups in rural areas
Paraguay	Strengthening the ability to define and apply water and sanitation policies
Philippines	Enhancing Access to and Provision of Water Services with the Active Participation of the Poor

As in most places, women in the programmes' implementation areas carry the main responsibility for domestic water management as part of their traditional role as care givers (WEDO, 2003). In the areas where water was scarce or located far away, for example Angola, Honduras and Mexico, water carting demanded substantial time and labour (interview Aróstico & Martín, 2011-03-23; ILO *et al.*, 2009 ; UNDP *et al.*, 2008). Yet, women generally have lower participation in local water management and decision-making due to prevailing patriarchal attitudes and gender roles that ascribe the public sphere to men. In most programme areas women also have lower levels of education than men. In the Ngäbe Buglé intervention area of the Panama programme more than 50 per cent of the women were illiterate and female students were almost entirely absent from higher education (pers. comm. Vargas, 2012-07-25). These disadvantages limit women's economic opportunities, access to resources and services and possibilities of influencing water management and public decision-making.

Due to historical marginalisation indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities generally have substantially lower levels of access to water and sanitation services than the rest of the population, even in countries like Mexico and Panama that otherwise have reached the MDG 7 water target (CGDEV, 2014-02-04; Mikkelsen, 2013; UNDP, 2006). The geographic remoteness and dispersion of many indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities add to the obstacles of providing sustainable and universal access to water and sanitation services, as the conditions do not easily lend themselves to large-scale infrastructure solutions (Kabeer, 2010).

Consistent with the MDG-F's mandate to focus on socio-economically marginalised and vulnerable groups the majority of the eleven programmes intervened in regions inhabited by ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples. The conditions of poverty and multiple socio-cultural barriers many ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples face further exacerbate the situation of women and girls in these areas. The chores related to women's responsibility for domestic water are also significantly more onerous in conditions of poverty, where reliable and convenient access to water is poor. Thus, the need to develop sustainable and adequate water and sanitation solutions in these areas is even more pressing.

The report is divided into three main sections loosely based on the project cycle: formulation and design, implementation/operationalisation and the achievements and reporting of results. The first of these sections presents the problem formulation on gender inequality by the programmes and the motivation they apply to their gender work. The following section discusses the strategies used to operationalise the programmes' gender approaches, and describes the organisational elements provided to support the implementation of the strategies. The final section reviews the results of the programmes' work to promote gender equity and examines how they have included gender in their monitoring. By looking at the whole cycle the aspiration is to give as comprehensible an understanding as possible of the challenges and key elements of mainstreaming gender in the water and sanitation sector.

## Methods of this review

Several reviews of the eleven DEG programmes have been conducted, and which feed into the present report. Initiated in 2010 by the KM initiative on Gender as a Cross-cutting Issue, UN-WOMEN conducted a gender mainstreaming scan of all MDG-F programmes (see CEPAL *et al.*, 2008; ILO *et al.*, 2009; UNDP *et al.*, 2008; UNDP *et al.*, 2009a; UNDP & UNICEF, 2009a; UNDP & UNICEF, 2009b; UNDP *et al.*, 2009b; UNDP *et al.*, 2009c; UNICEF *et al.*, 2008; WHO *et al.*, 2009; World Bank *et al.*, 2009). This exercise has been a key source of information on the gender mainstreaming in the programmes' design.

Further, an in-depth review of six of the programmes was undertaken in 2011 as part of a master's thesis (see Cortobius, 2011), at a time when most programmes were about half way into their implementation. For this study, programme staff and counterparts were interviewed when gathering for a workshop organised by the DEG-KM initiative in Ecuador, 2011. This gender review was later extended to include all eleven programmes, with the complete documentation of the programmes' implementation reporting and evaluations reviewed from a gender and inter-cultural perspective. This formed part of the review of grey literature for a study on socio-cultural clashes in sanitation and water supply (included in Tinoco *et al.*, 2013).

The programme documentation consists of:

- Project documents, i.e. the document which is the agreement between the UN Agencies, national counterparts and the MDG-F to carry through the programmes. This is the document reviewed to ascertain the programmes' design.
- Progress reporting, which is carried out on a quarterly basis. These are brief reports produced by the programme itself throughout its span of operation. Greatest focus in this review have been given to the Annual and Final Narrative Reports, which explain with more details what the programmes have done
- Evaluation reports: Mid-term and final evaluations were carried out by external evaluators. These documents are rich with information and reflections about the programmes' strategies, results and reporting; and have also generated valuable 'improvement reports' written by the programmes in response to the mid-term evaluations.

Beyond the programme documentation, additional gender-related reports (like the UN Habitat (2012) gender evaluation of the Ecuadorian programme, the UN Women and MDG-F (2013) report on the lessons learned and joint achievements of all the MDG-F programmes) and other types of products (such as videos; see e.g. Bonilla Cáceres, 2012; MDG-F *et al.*, 2012) were also reviewed. In particular, a series of case studies of promising practices to promote gender equality initiated by UN-WOMEN has provided important insights into the gender work of the programmes in Mexico and Panama (Bonilla Cáceres, 2013; Vega, 2012, respectively). Beyond documentation, this review also draws upon extensive personal communication with the programmes on their gender work, organisational structures and results reporting.



# Incorporating Gender into Programme Design

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The foundation of development projects is the situation analysis and problem formulation along with the theory of change. These define the logic on which the programme is based; the goals to be achieved and subsequently the information to be reported back, essentially to the donor.

The remainder of this section discusses the reasons presented by the programmes to justify gender-related activities, the situation analyses, and finally how gender-related work fits into the results-based management framework. As will be seen, the strengthening of the role of women is presented as a means for achieving greater efficiency in the intervention, and not a goal in itself, which can explain the tendency to include gender at the level of activities rather than in the higher-order goals. An effect of this, however, is that the actual achievements regarding gender will not be systematically reported.

## **Instrumental reasons for working with gender**

As women's daily life is directly affected by the accessibility and quality of water and sanitation services it is thought that they hold a specifically strong interest in well-functioning services. Women are often seen as more responsible in water management as their everyday experience generates a special awareness about the importance of safe and accessible water. Thus, to work towards gender equality and women's empowerment in water projects is often justified by increased efficiency in programme implementation and strengthened sustainability of the results as (see e.g. Cap-Net & GWA, 2006; Water, 2006). The idea of investing in women as a means to more sustainable, efficient and inclusive impacts has a long history and was already being criticised in the late 1980s for oversimplifying women's reality and neglecting gender barriers that impede their possibilities to have agency. Meanwhile, responsibility for basic services, such as health, was pushed onto women in times of austerity (Moser, 1989). Currently, the economic crisis in the global North has increased the pressure on donors and NGOs to invest cost-effectively, reinforcing a discourse where gender work is motivated by greater economic and social benefits, rather than by moral imperatives (Chant & Sweetman, 2012).

Accordingly, the majority of the eleven programmes analysed in this report motivated their gender work with expected improvements in the implementation efficiency and the sustainability of results. Only one justified its gender work with the furthering of the achievement of MDG number 3 – to promote gender equality and empower women – even though six more programmes recognised that their activities could contribute to the achievement of MDG number 3. Three programmes did not explain at all why activities to increase gender equality would be important or relevant for their work.

Even if the majority of the programmes committed to the human right to water and to use human rights-based approaches neither of them framed their gender strategies in a rights dis-

course. The instrumental perspective – not as an objective in itself but as a means to achieve other development goals – also dominated the programmes' motives for including participation by local communities in the programme activities and processes. Yet, the UN Special Rapporteur on the human right to water stresses the moral obligation of governments and other actors to focus their efforts on breaking the structural barriers that impede the access of marginalised groups, such as women, ethnic minorities, disabled people and children, while recognising that the participation of women in water and sanitation projects strengthens sustainability. Further, the Rapporteur emphasises that "realising any right, including the rights to water and sanitation, will almost invariably require that existing power structures be challenged, so that people who do not enjoy their rights to water and sanitation are given the opportunity to claim these rights" (de Albuquerque & Roaf, 2012).

The instrumental view on gender equity has shown to foster an adoption of gender mainstreaming that ignores the structures and relations of power in society that generate gender inequalities. As a consequence, for example collective action to challenge social structures is downplayed in favour of individual women's education, employment and political leadership. Yet, "in a context where cultural values constrain women's ability to make strategic life choices, structural inequalities cannot be addressed by individuals alone [...] The project of women's empowerment is dependent on collective solidarity in the public arena" (Kabeer, 1999, p. 457).

The importance of collective action is supported by studies on women and corruption, where the benefit of women's organisation has been shown to be twofold; it empowers women to fight corruption and it reduces corruption among women in positions of authority, as they are held accountable to the greater interests of the group (UNDP, 2012).

As suggested already, the instrumental view on gender equality had important effects on how programmes were subsequently designed, both on the strategies chosen and on the reporting system.

## **Incomplete data for situation analyses**

One of the fundamental components of programme planning is constituted by the Situation Analysis. It places the intervention in the national and local contexts, and forms the basis for justifying the specific intervention. Thus, relevant and reliable gender-disaggregated data on women's situation in relation to water and sanitation is central to identifying the most pressing problems and to devising adequate strategies to change the situation described. Data gaps in the baseline also make it difficult to monitor progress towards the achievement of goals. Lack of data in general, and of gender-disaggregated data in particular, were common problems for creating baselines. Of all programmes analysed, only the programme in Panama

presented gender systematic disaggregated data to support its situation analysis. The rest of the programmes either included some gender-disaggregated data or presented no gender disaggregated data at all, making their situation analysis weak and potentially flawed as they were based on general assumptions and anecdotal evidence.

Even so, most of the programmes, seven out of eleven, included a substantial narrative description of women’s situation, both at large and in relation to water and sanitation in particular, in the implementation areas. Yet, the main focus of the descriptions was on the effects of gender inequalities; little attention was given to the root causes and power relations behind these inequalities.

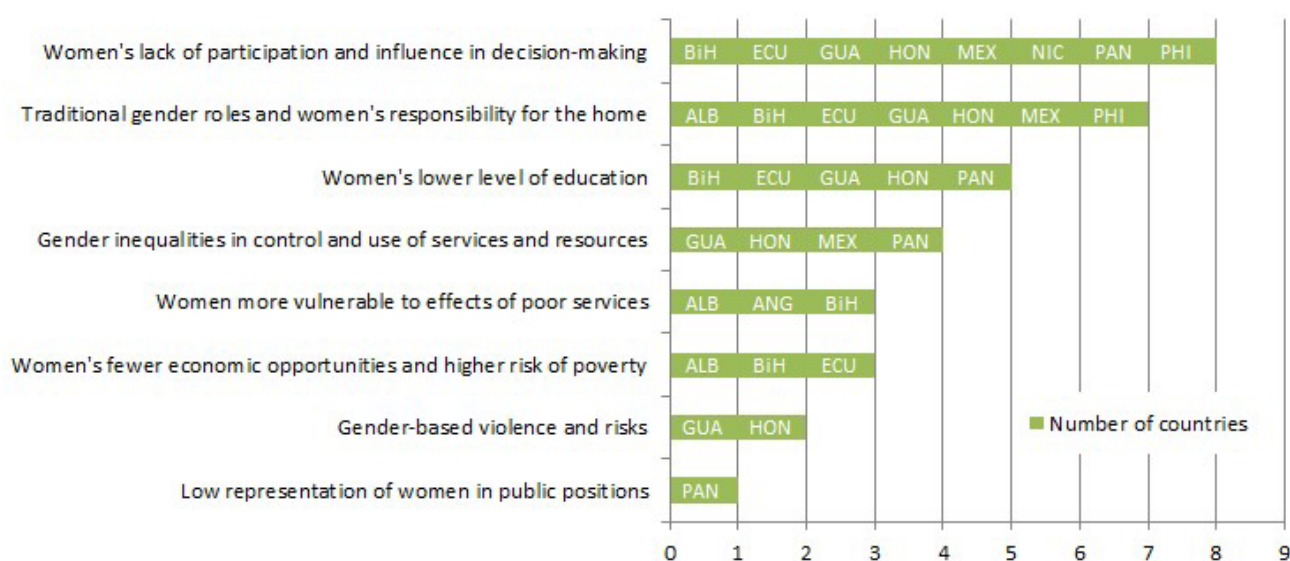
Most of the programmes concurred that women’s low level of participation in decision-making was one of the main problems related to gender (see Figure 1). The unequal division of household chores, where women carry the main responsibility for the domestic sphere and the family, including domestic water management, was also recognised by the majority as an effect of gender inequalities. It was also acknowledged that women, as a consequence, are more vulnerable to deficiencies in quality and quantity of water and sanitation services and infrastructure. Women’s lower education levels and higher rates of illiteracy are partly linked to this vulnerability, as girls have lower attendance in schools as a result of the burden of chores in the home and the lack of adequate sanitation facilities in schools which was highlighted by the programme in Honduras (UNDP *et al.*, 2008). Pervasive cultural values which deem boys’ education more important than girls’ form another important hindrance to equal education, according to the programme in Albania (World Bank *et al.*, 2009).

Gender-based inequalities existed in relation to the control, use of and access to services and resources in the implementation areas were also highlighted. Further, women’s higher risk of living in poverty, partly due to having fewer economic opportunities than men, was acknowledged. Both the Honduran and the Guatemalan programmes described the risks of women and girls being affected sexual harassment and violence, partly due to insecure and deficient services and facilities (UNDP *et al.*, 2008), and partly as a way to control women and maintain gender roles (UNDP *et al.*, 2009c).

Finally, the Panama programme highlighted the low representation of women in public offices, counted in the baseline as less than 9 per cent of political positions held by women in the intervention area (pers. comm., Vargas, 2012-07-25).

Many of the programmes failed to recognise the interlinkages between the different gender related problems identified in the Situation Analysis. The great majority of the programmes recognised that women generally have low participation in decision-making related to water and sanitation, and consequently lack influence in the management of the services. Only half of them also recognised inequalities in the control and use of services and resources. Even so, most of the programmes recognising both problems did not indicate a link between them, even though they are strongly interdependent. Similarly, the relationship between women carrying the main responsibility in the domestic sphere and their increased vulnerability to poor services was identified only by a few programmes. Equally, women’s lower level of education was not always connected with women’s fewer economic opportunities and higher risk of poverty.

Figure 1– Gender-related problems for women recognised in programmes’ Aituation Analyses



Data source: DEG programmes’ project documents and UN-WOMEN (2011) *Gender Mainstreaming in MDGF, plans, tools, people*.

Note: ALB=Albania, ANG=Angola, BiH=Bosnia and Herzegovina, ECU=Ecuador, GUA=Guatemala, HON=Honduras, MEX=Mexico, NIC=Nicaragua, PAN=Panama, PAR=Paraguay, PHI=Philippines

### Gender incorporated in activities rather than results

The eleven governance programmes were structured in line with the results-based management approach, which is centred on a chain of results that defines the logical connection between resources invested, activities carried out and the achievement of a programme's goals. The activities subsequently produce outputs (products, goods or services resulting from the intervention) which in turn generate the outcomes (short- and medium-term effects of the intervention) and eventually, in accordance with the programme's theory of change, the envisaged impacts (i.e. improvements in peoples' lives) (UNDP, 2009). In relation to this chain of results, indicators are developed to measure progress towards the different levels of results (outputs and outcomes), including those related to gender equality.

A thorough gender mainstreaming in goals and indicators in the programme design has been highlighted by reviews of development projects as key for effective implementation and monitoring of gender related activities (AfDB, 2012; OIOS, 2010). The absence of gender-related indicators has been shown to result in low compliance with gender-related goals as the programme monitoring is based on the results framework. Instead activities and resources become geared towards issues and goals which have stronger presence and compliance mechanisms (Snyder *et al.*, 1996).

With regard to outcomes, three of the programmes had statements that referred to gender, see Box 1. The Ecuadorian outcome statement can be taken to be the strongest one, relating to a substantive shift in influence over policy formulation and monitoring by empowered women and social society organisations. As will be seen later, this is also the programme which reports the most progress with regard to gender-related results. As regards the other two outcome statements in the Mexican and Paraguayan project documents, even though the Mexican one refers to change processes in institutional practices neither explain how gender inequality should be reduced. While the Ecuadorian and the Mexican outcomes were deemed by UN Women as gender sensitive, the Paraguay programme's outcome was criticised for not articulating clearly how gender equity would be enhanced as a result of the achievement of the outcome (UN Women, 2011).

All but one programme included gender-related results at the lower level of outputs. However, the UN Women (UN Women, 2011) gender mainstreaming scan found several of the outputs to refer to gender only in passing but with insufficient logical connection to changes in gender equality. The general trend among the programmes was that the gender strategies were expressed mainly at the level of activities (UN Women & MDG-F, 2013).

#### Box 1 – Outcome statements that include gender

##### *Outcome 3 (Ecuador):*

Empowered women and civil society organisations influence the formulation of regulatory frameworks for water and sanitation services, the monitoring of water quality and sustainable management in the intervention area of the programme.

##### *Outcome 2 (Mexico):*

Strengthened institutional and citizen capabilities for risk prevention due to extreme hydro-meteorological events taking into account environmental sustainability, gender/ethnicity and ethnic equity and recognition of the economic value of services.

##### *Outcome 1 (Paraguay):*

Enhance abilities to provide quality potable water and sanitation services, with gender awareness.

Sources: (CEPAL *et al.*, 2008, p. 3; UNDP *et al.*, 2009a, p. 16; UNDP *et al.*, 2009b, p. 1).

It could have been thought that the lack of gender mainstreaming in high-level goals would have had far-reaching consequences for the information that has come to be reported on the implementation of the programmes' strategies relating to gender: Since activities are not goals or results in themselves, they are not reported on in the result-based management framework. Yet, as will be seen later, the poor mainstreaming in goals and in the monitoring framework did not have any major effects on neither the reporting nor the implementation. Indeed, the gender mainstreaming in the programmes' monitoring frameworks was found to be even weaker than in the result chain. Almost half of the eleven programmes included gender-related indicators in their monitoring systems, but of them three had only one single gender-related indicator. Nine of the programmes, therefore, were deemed not have any gender-sensitive monitoring. The two programmes with more than one gender related indicator had these at the output level, measuring the direct effects of the programme activities, see Box 2. Even for most of the indicators where women were mentioned, a logical connection to changes in gender equality was lacking.

The weak integration of gender-sensitive goals and indicators in the results framework was criticised by several of the programmes' evaluators. As one evaluator put it:

“The project document has various references to the integration of a gender approach in the intervention, however, when analysing the indicators they do not correspond to a predefined strategy, hence they do not aim at a mainstreaming process but at disaggregating data.” (Carravilla, 2013, p. 27)

It should, however, be mentioned that the majority of the programmes were criticised for their gender work or their gender strategies in their mid-term evaluations, but in response to the criticism improved and strengthened both strategies and implementation. Yet, given the weak gender mainstreaming in the result reporting, the intended accountability mechanism by way of progress monitoring was undermined.

In sum, the instrumental perspective on gender mainstreaming, coherent with the lack of deeper analysis of the structural gender inequalities, and the weak mainstreaming in the project design corroborates previous findings that engineering-dominated sectors have difficulties in taking gender concerns on board. As will be discussed further below, the lack of gender-sensitive indicators also contribute to the underreporting of gender-related work that has indeed taken place in many of these water governance programmes.

## **Box 2 – Gender-Sensitive Indicators**

Selected indicators Ecuador:

- 1.2.3 – The protection plan for water resource of SENAGUA include operations guides to gender mainstreaming
- 3.1.3 – By 2010, 80 per cent of the existing women's organisations in the implementation areas participate in decision-making and new female leaders are trained.
- Selected indicators Paraguay:
- 1.2.2 – Support to the development of a national water and sanitation plan and policy with gender perspective.
- 1.3.6 – Support to the planning of sector investment, based on the Integral Planning of Rural Access, in at least 3 municipalities, guaranteeing women's equal representation

*Source: Review of DEG programme documents.*

## Putting Gender into Practice

Even if improved access to affordable and safe water and sanitation services is probable to have positive effects on women's practical situation, the structural barriers women face require specific gender strategies to combat gender inequalities to ensure that women's voice and interests are included in investments and governance processes supported by projects.

This section presents the strategies the eleven programmes took to translate their commitment to gender mainstreaming into practice and the role of central organisational elements in the implementation of these strategies. Yet, as will be described subsequently, critical gaps in the programmes' gender strategies compromise their possibilities to have substantial and sustainable impacts on gender inequalities.

### Implementation strategies – focussing on women

Looking at the types of activities and strategic choices of the programmes analysed in this report, seven types of activity areas or implementation strategies were devised:

- Strengthening women's participation and leadership;
- Gender mainstreaming in policies and plans;
- Enhancing women's economic empowerment;
- Communication and education campaigns with a gender perspective;
- Strengthening women's organisations;
- Women's participation in public auditing and oversight; and
- Collection of gender-disaggregated data.

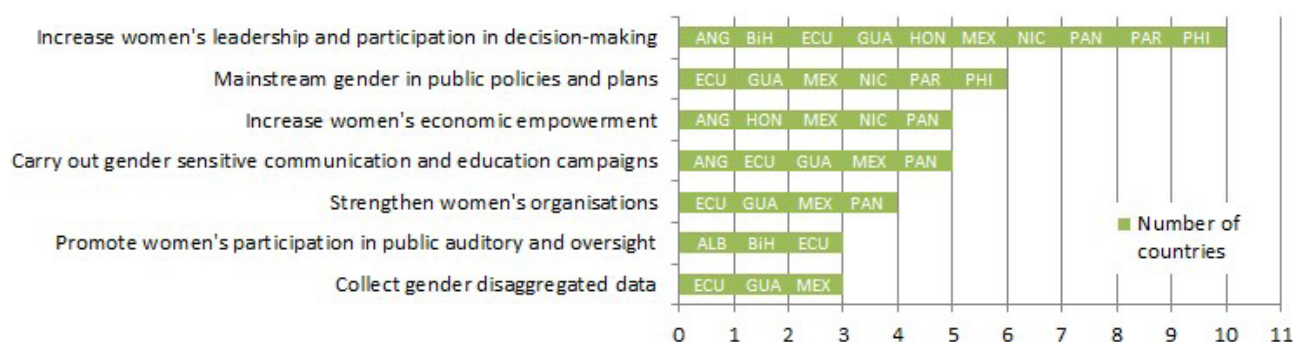
These types of strategies are in no way exclusive: Rather, as also shown in Figure 2 all programmes combined at least two or more types of strategies, sometimes as many as six, to empower women and to combat gender inequalities.

Even if several of the programmes used similar strategies, the activities and focus of the gender work were diverse and highly dependent on the scope, geographic and socio-cultural context of each programme.

The programmes in Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina had a strong focus on women as consumers of water and sanitation services: the Albanian programme sought to strengthen women's knowledge about their rights as consumers (pers. comm., Guda, 2012-07-10) while the programme in Bosnia and Herzegovina aimed at getting women involved in the formulation of municipal sector plans and priorities (pers. comm., Mahmutcehajic-Camdzic & Palandzic, 2012-07-19). The programme in Bosnia and Herzegovina aimed also to collect gender-disaggregated data for the water sector (UNDP & UNICEF, 2009b), but activities related to this specific strategy have not been found in the reporting of the programme.

In Angola the programme worked to increase women's incomes and to include them in local water management and decision-making. Activities to increase awareness and exposure in the media were also implemented (Carravilla, 2013). According to the programme plans the programme was to give support to the national women's ministry as well; this has however not been reported.

Figure 2 – Types of implementation strategies / main activity areas of DEG programmes



Data source: DEG programmes' project documents and UN-WOMEN (2011). Gender Mainstreaming in MDGF, plans, tools, people.

Note: ALB=Albania, ANG=Angola, BIH=Bosnia and Herzegovina, ECU=Ecuador, GUA=Guatemala, HON=Honduras, MEX=Mexico, NIC=Nicaragua, PAN=Panama, PAR=Paraguay, PHI=Philippines

The Ecuadorian programme displayed a wide range of gender strategies. Among the most central strategies were supporting women's participation and leadership in local decision-making and water management; mainstreaming in public policies; educational material for schools with a gender perspective; and support for the inclusion of water in the agendas of two organisations for women's rights (González Torné, 2013). The programme implemented a more diverse set of strategies than was originally planned (UNDP *et al.*, 2009a). The importance of high-level engagement and collaboration with the Gender and Water Alliance (GWA) for the implementation and monitoring of the gender strategies of this programme will be further discussed later in this report.

In Honduras the programme focused on strengthening women's participation in local water management, but the programme also supported gender mainstreaming in sector policies and plans. According to the Mid-term Evaluation (Huertas Díaz, 2010) dialogue between communities and the government had been facilitated. There were, however, no indications of specific measures to include women or to ensure that their interests were considered.

During its implementation the programme in Guatemala was forced to undergo a substantive restructuring, through which the gender strategies were also partially re-designed. From the outset the programme focused on women's participation in local water management (UNDP *et al.*, 2009c), which was complemented after the re-design with a strong component on institutional capacity building on gender, interculturality and water at the municipal and basin level. The communication campaign was also strengthened in the new gender approach (PROATEC SRL, 2013).

The programme in Mexico was one of the programmes which integrated the gender and intercultural perspectives in its strategies. One of the main strategies of the programme included enhancing access to information on women, ethnicity and water, which was used to mainstream gender and intercultural perspectives in water policy frameworks at province level. At the local level the programme focused on the strengthening of women's participation in local decision-making, economic empowerment and education campaigns in schools (CEPAL *et al.*, 2013; Luisa Torregrosa *et al.*, 2012).

In Nicaragua the programme worked in the two autonomous regions at the Atlantic coast where it ensured gender mainstreaming in the regions' water and sanitation regulatory frameworks. In the communities women's participation in local water management was promoted as well as their economic empowerment (Jambrina, 2013; pers. comm., Luna-Bello, 2012-07-11).

The Panama programme was one of the programmes with the strongest focus on strengthening of women's leadership and participation in water management at the local level, implementing a range of activities linked to this aim. In parallel it worked to create income-earning opportunities for women and to support disaggregated data collection. It was the only programme that did not include activities at the municipal,

regional or national level (Huertas Díaz, 2013a; pers. comm., Vargas, 2012-07-25).

Due to scarce information on the gender strategies, activities and results for the programme in Paraguay it has been difficult to assess what strategies were actually applied in the implementation. According to the mid-term evaluation (Huertas Díaz, 2011) of the programme a sector study with a gender perspective was to be conducted. The evaluation also indicated that gender should be mainstreamed in public policies and that gender related capacity building would be carried out at local and national level. These activities were, however, not documented in the Final Evaluation or the Final Narrative report of the programme (Huertas Díaz, 2013b; UNDP *et al.*, 2013b), so it is difficult to know to what extent they were realised. However, according to one of the national counterparts, work at the local level to increase women's participation in local water management had indeed been carried out (interview Mancuello, 2012-08-27). This is a palpable example of the complexities in monitoring and insufficient reporting on the gender work.

Women's participation in local water management was supported by the Philippines programme, and women were engaged in the compilation of baseline data. A toolbox explaining the human rights-based approach to local water management for Local Governments was developed by the programme, including a chapter specifically on gender, (Chiwara & Reyes, 2013, pers. comm., Mangune, 2012-08-16).

In sum, the implementation strategies and actual activities carried out on the ground by the programmes primarily focussed on improving representation and opportunities in a very positive manner. Also, greater consumer protection and awareness of rights and obligations should generally be favourable to the most vulnerable. In some areas, however, programmes were forced – during implementation – to look more deeply into the gendered structures behind inequalities.

### **Identified gaps – men, interculturality/intersectionality and gender-based violence**

In their review of experiences related to men and gender in development Chant and Gutmann (2000) describe how the inclusion of men in gender activities can generate men's buy-in, enhancing the progress of the gender work, as it allows men to take part in the change process and reduces their fear of unknown changes in the power relations. Thus, gender sensitising of men and boys and liaison with men in leadership roles can be key to the success of the gender work and to combating discriminating values and structures (Wendoh & Wallace, 2005). Oluwu (2011) also highlights that by leaving men out projects force women to handle potential backlashes and hostilities resulting from demands for changes in patriarchal power relations by themselves. An extreme example is when the backlashes result in acts of violence against women, as was experienced by both the Ecuadorian and the Mexican programmes. In these cases the domestic violence was a response to changes in gender roles generated by the activities of the programmes (interview, Aróstico & Martín, 2011-03-23; interview, Sanchez-Cuenca,

### Box 3 – Overview of Relation between Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

“Why should we be considering violence when working on WASH programming and service provision? This is a question for WASH professionals (who are not protection professionals) and for professionals who work in the areas of protection, gender and GBV (who may not have specifically worked in the WASH sector).

WASH programming that does not consider safety can exacerbate the vulnerabilities of women and girls, and sometimes men and boys and people of other sexual and gender identities as well as other marginalised groups. Vulnerabilities to violence can have a significant impact on the access of women and girls to adequate water, sanitation and hygiene.”

Some of the main links between water and sanitation services and gender-based violence highlighted in the toolkit are:

- to carry water long distances makes women and girls vulnerable to sexual harassment and violence;
- children in particular risk facing violence when they are forced to wait to fetch scarce water from pumps or water tanks;

- unsafe sanitation facilities, or unsafe paths to the facilities, increase vulnerability to harassment, violence and sexual assault, often leading to women and girls not eating or drinking in the evening and during the night;
- lack of privacy and possibilities for proper disposal make women refuse to use sanitation facilities during menstruation due to shame and stigmatisation, resulting in girls dropping out of school and diseases from bad hygiene;
- pressure to agree to transactional sex to get access to water can be strong when water is scarce and men hold a gatekeeping role – especially in emergencies ;
- due to male dominance in the sector female staff may face harassment and verbal abuse from colleagues, bosses, partners and users; and
- women challenging traditional gender roles, for example by taking on leading roles in water management, may face violence and harassment from men who feel threatened.

Source: House et al. (forthcoming 2014), Briefing Note 2, pp. 8-9.

2011-03-24). As backlashes are not detectable in the reporting framework of the programmes it is not known whether more programmes have had similar experiences.

In the Mexican programme there were several experiences of how the power relations between men and women directly hindered women from taking part in activities. In an exercise to visualise women’s specific needs and practices related to water, it was not until permission from male relatives had been granted that the programme was able to carry out the activity – and only after the men’s participation had also been accommodated. The men wanted to supervise the women so that they were not indoctrinated with subversive and culturally disruptive ideas (interview, Aróstico & Martín, 2011-03-23).

The issue of gender-based violence is underdeveloped by most organisations and actors working with water and sanitation services. Even if the access to such services does not condition the levels or forms of violence experienced and exercised in a specific context, the safety of women and girls and other vulnerable groups can be negatively impacted by lack of services or unsafe facilities.

A Practitioner’s Toolkit relating to Violence, Gender & WASH as a way for Making Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Safer through Improved Programming and Services, House et al. (forthcoming 2014) have developed the links between gender-based violence and WASH, see Box 3.

The link between violence and gender inequalities has long been established, as “[r]esearch on violence, both personal and collective, has shown a persisting connection of violence [...] to dominance-oriented masculinities in hierarchical gender systems” (DAW, 2003, p. 12) Both programmes in Guatemala and Honduras identified the link between gender-based vulnerability to violence and sexual violence, inadequate water and sanitation solutions and patriarchal norms and values (UNDP et al., 2008; UNDP et al., 2009c). However, neither of the programmes included strategies to combat gender-based violence or to challenge norms. Only the programme in Panama seems to have engaged directly with gender-based violence; where UNICEF provided capacity building to women about how to evade, reduce and respond to domestic violence (Huertas Díaz, 2013a).

The Ecuadorian programme recognised patriarchal value systems and structures as potential risks to women’s equal participation in the implementation of the programme, and consequently implemented strategies aimed at sensitising youth and at collaborating with women’s organisations (UNDP et al., 2009a). Apart from these Ecuadorian strategies, none of the programmes analyses indicated any intention – in their original plans – of challenging the socio-cultural values and power relations that justify and recreate gender inequalities and related violence. This is indicative in the primary focus on

women rather than on the relation between men and women in the programmes' gender strategies.

Yet, even if it did not form part of the programmes' original design, at least three programmes carried out gender-sensitising both in the communities where they were intervening and within their counterpart organisations. The decision to include gender-sensitising activities arose, at least partly, from the resistance faced during the implementation of the generally women-related gender strategies (pers. comm., Morales, 2012-07-11; UN Habitat, 2012; pers. comm., Vargas, 2012-07-25).

Most of the programmes, nine out of eleven, work in areas with ethnic minorities or indigenous peoples, yet only the programme in Guatemala explicitly integrates the two perspectives in its Gender and Intercultural strategy. Also, in the situation analyses, the programmes' descriptions of the intersections of discrimination based on ethnicity and gender are lacking. However, as with gender-based violence, in the field several programmes saw the complementarity of the two perspectives. One approach that combined the gender and intercultural perspectives was to hire local facilitators for the community work to enable capacity building and dialogues in the vernacular languages of the communities. In effect women's participation increased and became more active. The Mexican programme carried out studies that looked at gender, ethnicity and socio-economic variables in combination (Luisa Torregrosa *et al.*, 2012; Vega, 2012). The programme in Ecuador developed a Culture and Water Policy, integrating values and concepts stemming from the national indigenous peoples (UNDP *et al.*, 2013a). There are, however, no indications of if and how that could have affected the gender-related strategies.

Depending on the context, class, religion, age, capabilities, sexual expression and orientation can be as, or even more, decisive for the opportunities and barriers of a person. Thus the analysis of how different structural barriers collate, intersectional analysis, allows actors to see beyond the dichotomy women-men (Crenshaw, 1989). Thus to integrate the gender and intercultural perspectives is not the same as applying a lens of intersectionality, as an intersectional analysis consider discrimination based on more systems of inequality than those based on gender and ethnicity.

Even if none of the programmes commit to applying an intersectional analysis it is indicated in the Final Narrative of Guatemala that "inequality in its multiple dimensions has been a cross-cutting issue throughout the programme" (UNDP *et al.*, 2013c, p. 34), yet the practical manifestations are not described. For the programme in Angola, which did not operate in an area with indigenous peoples, living with HIV/AIDS was identified as an additional and intersecting barrier to equality (ILO *et al.*, 2013).

Considering the documented difficulties of mainstreaming gender in many water and sanitation projects, the adoption of an intersectional analysis is perhaps even further in the future. Yet, due to the complex interplay of the different systems are women's identities, like men's, not fixed, hence all women do not have the same interests in all situations. Thus, in particular,

when working with women's representation and leadership it is important to recognise that women do not per se represent women's collective interests, but have many more affiliations which motivate them when participating in governance processes (Cornwall, 2003). To explore how the different inequalities play out in the varying settings of an intervention is therefore essential to enable equal participation of all groups, to promote women's collective empowerment over the empowerment of individual women and to ensure that resources and services reach those most in need (Kabeer, 2010).

The Need for Resources, Expertise and Management Support Resources, expertise and high-level support are three aspects which reappear in reviews of gender mainstreaming as key elements for success in the implementation of gender activities in development programmes (AfDB, 2012 ; Hageboeck *et al.*, 1993; OIOS, 2010). However, the same reviews conclude that few development programmes include all three. The present review of the water governance programmes shows a mixed picture, with varying levels of support within programme management, different ways of acquiring the necessary expertise, and difficulties tracing the level of resources dedicated towards enhancing gender-sensitivity of programme activities.

The predominant use of integrated budgeting is a salient feature, i.e. that there is no specific budget destined for gender-related activities and that such activities are subsumed under other activity areas. Only the programme in Guatemala could specify the amount of funds destined specifically for its gender approach (pers. comm., Morales, 2012-07-11). At the onset, it the programme in Bosnia and Herzegovina was designed on the basis of gender-sensitive budgeting (interview, Tadic, 2011-03-22), but this was not followed up in the reporting from the programme. Similarly to what was concluded above regarding indicators; where these are absent, or as in the case of the budget, not earmarked or traceable, it is difficult to know how much resources have been dedicated to gender activities in comparison to other activities and goals.

UN Women indicate, however, in their review of all the MDG-F programmes that even most of the programmes that included gender markers in their budgets had great difficulties tracing the money once the programme started operating (UN Women & MDG-F, 2013).

Both specific budget and specific expertise are mentioned when the Ecuadorian programme coordinator is asked what would have been useful to strengthen the gender work of the programme: "include a specific budget for gender-related activities and hire a gender specialist with decision power to implement such activities. The rest comes along," (pers. comm., Sanchez-Cuenca, 2012-08-09). From the opposite perspective, the same is confirmed by experiences from the programme in Paraguay; if the gender strategies are the responsibility of all there is a great risk that no-one champions the issue and it is consequently overlooked (interview, Ganoa & Yorg, 2011-03-23).

Figure 3 indicates that only three programmes had a clearly established and articulated structure for gender responsibility over a longer period of time, with adequate expertise employed



by the programme. Meanwhile, half of the programmes received some expert support in their gender work, but it was neither systematic nor long term. For example, both the programme in Honduras and that in the Philippines hired a gender expert to strengthen their gender strategy, but only for a limited time period (interview, Buendia & Reyes, 2011-03-23; interview, Chavarría, 2011-03-23).

Two programmes partnered with gender related organisations to bring in expertise: The programme in Ecuador collaborated with Gender and Water Alliance (GWA) and the programme in Mexico formed a partnership with provincial government units (interview, Aróstico & Martín, 2011-03-23; pers. comm., Sanchez-Cuenca, 2012-08-09). The programme in Bosnia and Herzegovina received support from UN-Women in the design phase, but during the implementation the programme did not receive expert gender support (pers. comm., Mahmutcehajic-Camdžic & Palandžic, 2012-07-19; interview, Tadic, 2011-03-22).

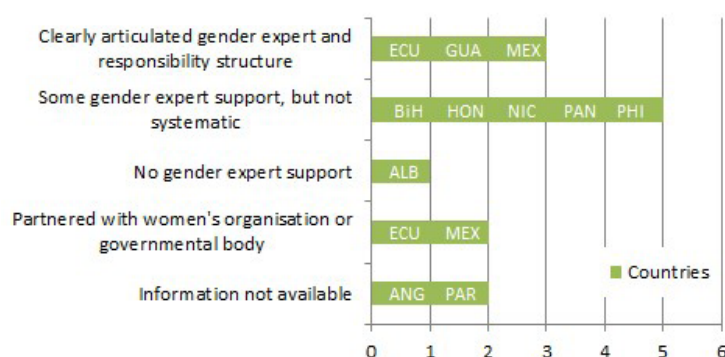
The programme in Panama had apparent success with its gender strategies, yet according to its coordinator the responsibility for the realisation was equally shared between the three UN agencies – each one within its area of expertise – with no focal point for coordination. This appears to have been possible largely due to the agencies’ in-house expertise and the strong support to the gender work by the programme coordinator herself. The programme in general, and the gender work in

particular, also benefitted greatly from the close relationships between the agencies and the communities, generated through long term partnership through various interventions according to the coordinator (Huertas Díaz, 2013a; pers. comm., Vargas, 2012-07-25).

Several of the programmes changed programme coordinator at least once during their implementation. A change in the top management substantially affected the progress of the gender work in the case of Ecuador, where an upswing in the activities followed immediately after the gender focal point in fact became the overall programme coordinator about half-way into programme implementation (González Torné, 2013). A similar, though less pronounced, upswing can be seen in the programme in Guatemala after its mid-way restructuring and change of leadership (PROATEC SRL, 2013). For most other programmes there is little or no information on the support and engagement of the programme coordinator in the gender work. Yet, the Ecuadorian, Guatemalan and Panamanian cases all point towards the importance of management support.

This review hence points towards the importance of programme leadership – if not higher-level support which has not been possible to ascertain, but which is unlikely to be independent of the leadership at programme level – for the emphasis given to gender-related activities. This important factor appears to be largely independent of the programmes’ design.

Figure 3 – Responsibility structure and expertise



Data Source: Review of DEG Project Documents, 2013.

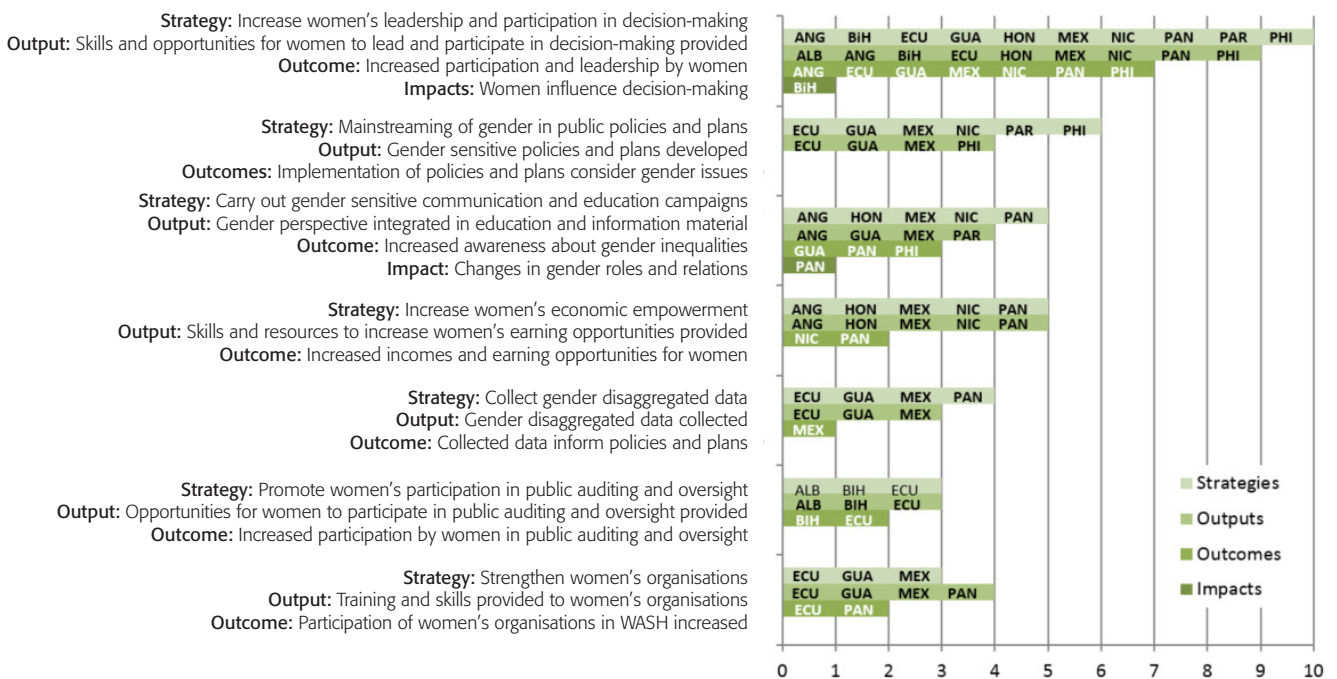
Note: ALB=Albania, ANG=Angola, BIH=Bosnia and Herzegovina, ECU=Ecuador, GUA=Guatemala, HON=Honduras, MEX=Mexico, NIC=Nicaragua, PAN=Panama, PAR=Paraguay, PHI=Philippines

# Achieving Gender-Related Results

As mentioned previously, the reviewed programmes have all been designed in line with the outputs, outcomes and impacts chain of results (see UNDP, 2009). With gender-related goals and indicators being scarce in the programmes' design, reporting on gender results have few or no entry points. The complexity of reporting and monitoring of process-related results is revisited at the end of this section. Below follows an overview of what is known about the gender-related achievements of the programmes, which actually points toward greater achievements than what would be expected to be ascertained given the structure of the reporting framework.

The presentation of results is structured around the division into seven types of implementation strategies (see above), which coincides with pertinent groupings of outputs and outcomes, see Figure 4. The figure shows that generally a greater number of programmes have been categorised in this review as adhering to certain implementation strategies. Linked to these are the set of similar outputs and outcomes in the project documents, which have also been categorised together. The bars in the figure show how many and which programmes have been included in each category of strategy, output, outcome and one impact.

Figure 4 – Implementation strategies, related to reported outputs and outcomes



Data source: DEG programmes' project documents and UN-WOMEN (2011) Gender Mainstreaming in MDGF, plans, tools, people.  
 Note: ALB=Albania, ANG=Angola, BIH=Bosnia and Herzegovina, ECU=Ecuador, GUA=Guatemala, HON=Honduras, MEX=Mexico, NIC=Nicaragua, PAN=Panama, PAR=Paraguay, PHI=Philippines

## Outputs produced

The outputs have been collated thematically below and fitted with the implementation strategies of the programmes. Yet, as described previously the strategies often were integrated with one another and carried out in combination.

### *Skills and opportunities for women to lead and participate in decision-making provided*

To achieve this output the majority of the programmes focused activities on increasing women's representation in decision-making and water management at local levels. A common strategy was to institute a gender balance quota in the boards of the local water management organisations established and supported by programmes in Honduras, Nicaragua and the Philippines. This was to ensure a minimum level of women representatives in local water management (interview, Chavarría, 2011-03-23; Chiwara & Reyes, 2013; pers. comm., Luna-Bello, 2012-07-11). However, this did not always translate into increased influence for women, as was noted by a staff member from the Honduran programme. In several cases women were given symbolic positions on boards because of donor pressure, but their role remained limited (interview, Chavarría, 2011-03-23).

The programmes in Ecuador and Panama focused on strengthening women's leadership skills as a way to enhance their influence. This was done via a set of activities which included leadership training, the strengthening of women's networks and organisations, capacity-building on rights and gender roles, and support to women candidates' campaigns during elections to decision-making positions (Bonilla Cáceres, 2013; pers. comm., Sanchez-Cuenca, 2012-08-09). According to the evaluations of the two programmes the combination of these activities resulted in more women being elected to leadership at the local, municipal and provincial levels (González Torné, 2013; Huertas Díaz, 2013a). Moreover the programmes have promoted women to take on leading roles in local water monitoring (UN Habitat, 2012).

In order to capture adequately women's and men's differentiated needs and practices related to water, gender-segregated exercises were carried out by the programme in Mexico. The results of this exercise were used as a platform to strengthen women's joint voice at the community level and to facilitate a more inclusive discussion where women's and men's different perspectives were recognised (interview, Aróstico & Martín, 2011-03-23). This gender-segregated mapping of water related practices and needs is the only activity reported that has used a collective approach to strengthen women's participation at the local level, without working directly towards the organisation of women or the strengthening of women's organisations. It is also one of the few known activities to engage with men in relation to gender roles.

### *Gender sensitive policies and plans developed*

The second most commonly reported outcome was gender mainstreaming in sector plans and policies. This was achieved by close collaboration with government institutions, primarily at the national level, but in some cases also at provincial level. It was generally coupled with capacity-building for public officials at relevant governmental levels.

In Guatemala the programme facilitated gender mainstreaming in the National Policy on Water Resources Management and National Policy on Water and Sanitation as well as in the regional water policy of eight municipalities in the Naranjo river basin (PROATEC SRL, 2013). Municipal agendas for gender equality in water and development for each of the three provinces were developed by the Mexican programme, based on the results from a study of women's situations related to water (Luisa Torregrosa *et al.*, 2012).

The Ecuadorian programme supported the development of a guide to the integration of human rights perspectives, including gender, in the formulation of future sector plans and policies (UNDP *et al.*, 2013a). Similarly the Philippine programme developed a toolbox on a human rights-based approach in local water management, dedicating a chapter to gender issues



DEG Programme, Ecuador



(pers. comm., Mangune, 2012-08-16). In the mid-term evaluation of the programme in Paraguay it is indicated that two proposals for national sector regulation with gender mainstreaming had been developed. They are, however, not mentioned in the final evaluation; so it is not known if they were adopted (Huertas Díaz, 2013b).

#### *Skills and resources to increase women's earning opportunities provided*

By providing women with new skills, the programmes in Nicaragua, Honduras and Panama sought to give women greater economic opportunities. They also sought to introduce women traditionally male-dominated areas of work, training women in masonry and plumbing (interview, Chavarría, 2011-03-23; pers. comm., Luna-Bello, 2012-07-11). A testimony to how training can affect relations in the local society was expressed by a Miskito woman in Nicaragua who had been trained in masonry; saying that: "Now we are skilled labour... Before we were community counterpart, now we can be contracted" (ILO, 2012, page 50).

Similarly, in Panama women were trained and also employed by the programme as bricklayers' assistants for the construction of septic tanks in their communities. To diversify women's incomes both the Panamanian and the Angolan programmes supported women's entrepreneurship; giving them training and access to resources for the start-up of small businesses (Bonilla Cáceres, 2013; Carravilla, 2013). By installing UV filters in domestic taps the programme in Mexico gave women an opportunity to commercialise safe and healthy drinking water in their communities (interview, Aróstico & Martín, 2011-03-23).

#### *Gender perspective integrated in education and information material*

Even if most programmes carried out workshops as a complement to their other activities only four of the programmes developed communication and education campaigns specifically aimed at strengthening public knowledge about gender, water and sanitation.

The most common strategy was to integrate gender sensitisation in educational material developed and disseminated to schools, high schools and universities on sanitation, water and

hygiene, as did the programmes in Guatemala, Mexico and Paraguay (UNDP *et al.*, 2013b; pers. comm., Morales, 2012-07-11; UNDP *et al.*, 2013c). In Angola the programme held workshops on the MDGs for networks of female journalists writing for gender equality, Fórum de Mulheres Jornalistas para a Igualdade no Género, as a means to increase the presence of these issues in national media (Carravilla, 2013).

#### *Training and skills provided to women's organisations*

In distinction to other activities, supporting women's organisations and networks and promoting them at local and regional levels focused on women as a collective and encompassed the broader scope of creating consciousness, advocacy and the promotion of women's interests. The four programmes that applied this strategy were among those that have shown most progress towards the empowerment of women.

To generate solidarity, raise consciousness and increase leverage for women's interests at the local level, the programme in Panama supported a network of women from different villages which facilitated meetings for women to support each other by sharing knowledge and experiences (Bonilla Cáceres, 2013). Women's offices at the municipality and province level were strengthened by the programmes in Guatemala and Mexico to increase their capacities and engagement in water and gender issues (PROATEC SRL, 2013; Vega, 2012).

Recognising the important role of civil society for awareness-raising and agenda-setting in the public space the Ecuadorian programme availed knowledge about the links between gender, water and sanitation to two regional women's organisations to promote the inclusion of water and sanitation issues in their agendas (UN Habitat, 2012). In Guatemala the programme supported the formation of a women's network of civil society organisations and public institutions to dialogue on Integrated Water Resource Management (PROATEC SRL, 2013).

#### *Opportunities for women to participate in public auditing and oversight provided*

The backing of women's participation in auditing and monitoring of water and sanitation utilities and water quality presents an interesting approach in the water and sanitation sector, as it allows women to communicate their priorities and needs more

directly to the utilities – a mechanism that usually is reserved for governmental institutions, where women’s representation is low.

In the case of the programmes in Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, to reach this outcome, organisations of service users were established to serve as channels for dialogue and as mechanisms to monitor the quality of the services. In these organisations women’s participation was promoted and strengthened by affirmative action (Melikyan, 2013; World Bank *et al.*, 2013). In Ecuador a Community Bio-Monitoring Guide for the Protection of Water Sources was used by community organisations to monitor the status of the nearby water bodies and women were encouraged to take on leading roles (González Torné, 2013).

#### *Gender disaggregated data collected*

The lack of baseline data available during the formulation of the programmes spurred three programmes to undertake activities to collect gender dis-aggregated data.

To acquire a knowledge base for gender-sensitive policies and plans, the programmes in Guatemala and Mexico implemented studies on women, water and other related socio-cultural indicators (Luisa Torregrosa *et al.*, 2012 ; UNDP *et al.*, 2013c). The programme in Mexico also utilised the participatory studies, Women’s Blue Agenda, as a mechanism for sensitising communities on women’s role in water management. In Ecuador the programme also collected gender dis-aggregated data throughout the monitoring of its activities. It is, however, unclear what type of data and how it was used (González Torné, 2013).

#### **Tracking outcomes and impacts**

Despite the lack of indicators and the inherent complexity of assessing change processes and the achievement of higher-level goals; outcomes related to gender equality were still reported for eight of the programmes.

It should be noted that the distinction between outputs and outcomes varied between the programmes: Several results, such as the improved participation by women, have been reported as outputs as well as outcomes, or both. In relation to the increased participation of women, it can also be discussed to what extent this should be taken to indicate improved gender equality. As Kabeer (1999) points out, if women’s participation is not translated into practical outcomes benefitting their situation the participation in itself is not enough to advance gender equality.

Of the five programmes aiming at empowering women economically, two claimed to have generated job opportunities for women and thus contributed to their increased incomes by way of training and provision of start-up resources (interview, Aróstico & Martín, 2011-03-23; pers. comm., Vargas, 2012-07-25). Yet, the absence of a baseline against which to gage the level of women’s incomes requires such claims to be based on proxies.

To complicate matters, it is important to recognise that women’s empowerment does not follow automatically on new job opportunities or increased incomes. Case studies have shown that in some situations where men are affected by long-term unemployment higher incomes for women can be interpreted as a threat, inciting men to increase their control in the domestic sphere and over women’s incomes (Chant & Gutmann, 2000). Such unintended and potentially unanticipated effects highlight the need to evaluate the structural causes behind inequalities.

Looking at gender mainstreaming in policies and plans,

which was one of the most common strategies for the programmes, it is noteworthy that no outcome or impact is reported from this area of activity, see Figure 4 above. This is probably an effect of the time lag of such effects in manifesting, often far too long to be captured by external evaluations conducted shortly after the conclusion of the programmes. I may also reflect the complexity of detecting the impacts.

The only gender-related documented impact identified in this review was the one documented by the final evaluation of the programme in Panama. According to testimonies from men and women in the communities a re-negotiation of gender roles in the homes had occurred as a result of the gender sensitising and empowerment of women carried out by the programme (Huertas Díaz, 2013a). In this case the data source is also indicated, which facilitates a deeper understanding of the scope, limitations and reliability of the claimed impacts.

This review found that the scarce data on outcomes and impacts is often not well grounded, primarily because baseline data is lacking. Further, issues of attribution are not problematised. Yet, the problems of monitoring and documenting of results need not refute the reported programme outcomes and impacts related to gender equality. On the contrary, this report suggests that the programmes probably have had greater effects on the situation of women and on gender relations than has been documented by evaluators and programme administrators.



DEG Programme, Mexico

## Discussion: Successes and Remaining Challenges

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The water and sanitation sector is far from isolated from the wider norms and power dynamics of the societies in which it operates. As such, a deeper understanding of how interventions affect and are affected by these is crucial to enable change processes to increase gender equality; both for the sake of women and girls, and for the sake of greater programme efficiency. The many cross-linkages between water and sanitation services and vulnerabilities based on gender roles should also spur WASH actors to ensure that increased consideration is given to women's and girls' strategic interests and practical needs.

Yet, as shown in this report, to translate visions of enhanced gender equality into effective implementation that generates the desired results which can be successfully monitored and documented, is highly complex challenge which requires adequate knowledge, sufficient time and sufficient political will. The present review of the eleven water governance programmes of the MDG-F has found that even if programme design with gender-related goals and requisite indicators for monitoring backed by resources are important; it is the type of implementation strategies chosen, and its insertion into the broader structure of gender relation, which fundamentally affects programme progress towards the goal of gender equality.

The context-dependent nature of gender roles and power dynamics makes it impossible to write a single recipe for "how to" further gender equality in water governance programmes. Nonetheless, the review provides insights into which strategies worked in their contexts, and what organisational structures have facilitated the realisation of these strategies. The remainder of this section thus highlights the "success factors" that have been identified, and then goes on to dwell on the greater challenges ahead.

### Management support and expertise

The key organisational elements for effective implementation of the programmes' gender strategies have been found to have been i) management support and ii) access to gender expertise. These two elements are salient features of the four programmes which seem to have implemented most gender-related activities and made most progress; Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico and Panama. These had programme coordinators or higher agency officials showing concern and commitments towards achieving gender equality in their programmes. Whereas Panama might have had less structured support, the coordinator and several agency and government officials were committed and provided requisite expertise. On the other hand, Mexico seems to have had less support from central programme management, but strong support and expertise at the regional level within government as well as within certain agencies.

Hence, going beyond the programme staff and partner with women's organisations and governmental units responsible for women's issues was found to be a successful way of forming

strategic alliances for knowledge and expertise to gain understanding of gendered contexts and to devise suitable implementation strategies. Such elements have also been indicated to be important by other gender reviews (e.g. AfDB, 2012; OIOS, 2010).

The present review also calls attention to the importance of the human factors – knowledge, values and practices. They also encourage actors in the water and sanitation sector not to overemphasise the importance of static measuring systems or formalised structures, but rather to look at how to enable change processes in an organisation's culture, especially at the top, by ensuring that the requisite expertise is available and by seeking strategic alliances with women's organisations and agencies.

### Collective strategies towards gender empowerment

The type of strategies that have been more successful in changing gender roles and power dynamics have been those that a) have approached gender inequality as a collective issue, and/or b) have included sensitising men and boys about gender inequality and gender roles. The more successful programmes are also those which have implemented a set of parallel strategies to generate an integrated approach to combat gender inequalities, such as the programme in Panama that targeted women's economic empowerment, leadership and organisation in combination with broad campaigns on gender sensitising.

Activities to strengthen women's organisations and agency at the local and regional levels showed that they contained great potential to enable women to actively influence goals, investments and processes to align better with their interests and priorities. As they advanced women's organisation around their collective interests they supported women in "setting the agenda" (Jahan, 1995) by creating leverage, solidarity and accountability.

Due to gendered power dynamics and the historical male dominance in the water and sanitation sector a focus simply on increasing the number of women in decision-making easily overlooks the risk of women's participation being ineffective due to socio-cultural barriers to expression and decision-making. Female leaders can also have difficulties promoting women's collective interests if the leverage of a larger group cannot be wielded. In addition, as women's identities are as complex as men's there is also the risk of women in leadership positions not representing collective needs in the absence of a clear constituency demanding accountability (Cornwall, 2003; UNDP, 2012).

Even if it is not possible to indicate how the promotion of collective strategies has helped the programmes to mitigate the risks of women's inactive participation and promotion of self-interests, it is clear that for the programmes in Ecuador and Panama the strengthening and support to women's networks and organisations was a cornerstone in their progress – giving women increased self-confidence and new knowledge. This in turn enabled them to take on leadership roles and increasingly participate actively in local water management.

### **Inclusive strategies involving also men and boys**

Even if none of the eleven programmes originally included strategies to sensitise men and boys about gender inequality and gender roles at least three of them, Ecuador, Mexico and Panama, saw the need to include such activities. In the case of Mexico, this was due to unexpected negative reactions to activities originally directed exclusively towards women.

The inclusion of men and boys can not only prevent hostile backlashes, by creating greater acceptance and buy-in, but also holds one of the keys to the realisation of other intended positive outcomes. For example, it can help to break entry barriers to certain male-dominated job sectors, which enables women to use their skills on the jobs they were trained for by the programmes.

Again it is not possible to determine with certainty the extent to which such effects have manifested themselves, but at least in Panama the sensitising of men and boys (in combination with activities to empower women) resulted in changes in gender roles, both in the household and in management and leadership in the communities.

Ultimately the inclusion of men and boys is also a question of whether it should be only women's and girls' responsibility to challenge and combat gender inequalities, or if it is a change process which needs the involvement of all concerned parties. Understanding the complexity of gender relations

One of the main remaining challenges for interventions in the water and sanitation sector is to improve understanding of the dynamics of gender inequalities and how they link to water and sanitation.

The programmes' strategies to further gender equality were almost exclusively motivated by a desire for gains in the efficiency and sustainability of results. Increased gender equality was not seen as a goal in its own right, but as a means to strengthen water governance, increase access to services and reduce poverty. Governments and development agencies alike have been criticised for adopting such an instrumental view on gender mainstreaming, focused on increased project efficiency rather than challenging power dynamics and structures (Richey, 2002). Such criticism applies also to the programmes reviewed.

Inherent to the simplistic understanding of gender inequalities and the instrumental view of the need for women's empowerment is absence of politics: Strategies to increase gender equality are decoupled from power relations and seen as a win-win situation for all parties. Yet, as experienced by the some of the programmes, and documented elsewhere; resistance and frustration among men are not uncommon responses to changes in gender roles and power dynamics (Chant & Gutmann, 2000).

A second effect of the decoupling of gender inequalities from power relations is the tendency to apply strategies that focus on women as individuals, not as a group (Kabeer, 1999). This is in fact exactly what most of the programmes in this review did. The simplistic view on gender relations and the discrepancy between analysis and strategies leave the programmes without tools to challenge gender roles and barriers or to foresee and prevent potential backlashes. In the worst case the programmes might even run the risk of reinforcing stereotypes and vulnerabilities based on gender and other intersecting disadvantages.

An analysis which includes power relations also helps to make other intersecting inequalities, relating to for example religion, ethnicity, sexuality and age, become more apparent. This is essential to reach the groups that face the greatest barriers to access services, resources and benefits for a life in dignity.

### **The complexity of documenting effects and reporting results**

The fundamental incompatibility between the qualitative change processes in structures, practices and relations needed to combat gender inequality and the strong quantitative focus of the result-based monitoring frameworks, is compounded with the limited time frames of most development interventions, and the even more limited time frame of most programme evaluations. Hence, any claims on effects on gender equality, beyond direct outputs of the programmes, are very problematic to substantiate.

The complexity of measuring effects relating to social processes and institutional change, where results are less tangible and need more time to manifest affects monitoring of gender issues just as it affects the monitoring of water governance interventions (Kjellén & Cortobius, 2013). The assessment of results related to change processes aimed at improving governance and gender equality would require a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. Whereas the UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results (UNDP, 2009, p. 62) acknowledges that a "frequent weakness seen in formulating indicators is the tendency to use general and purely quantitative indicators that measure number or percentage of something," it also suggests the importance of SMART indicators; being Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound. The qualitative changes, that at the most may be possible to describe, have yet to make their way into the result-based management frameworks.

The typical stumbling stone for indicators of women's participation relates to the tendency of measuring the number of women present at meetings or forming part of committees. This does not necessarily indicate that they are able to affect the outcome of the decisions. Counting women by numbers is a weak indicator of progress towards gender equality as it reflects only one aspect of participation.

Yet, evaluations show that projects tend to focus on counting the number of women rather than assessing the quality and influence of women in decision-making. As a consequence, there is a deficit in knowledge and information about the effects of the interventions on gender relations and equality (OIOS, 2010; SADEV, 2010). Six programmes reported that they had increased women's participation in local water management and decision-making. It is generally unclear whether it is the quantity or quality of women's participation that is indicated. In the cases where data was provided it indicated the number of female members in local organisations represented on boards and in different types of capacity-building.

It is furthermore important to distinguish between the types of monitoring that take place on different occasions. Programmes themselves are responsible for producing and reporting their outputs. In accordance with the programme's

theory of change, the outputs should generate outcomes, which in turn contribute to impacts. The impacts depend on a large number of actors and processes, and the long time frames and factors outside the control of one specific intervention make them also difficult to appreciate by evaluators, who tend to come in only a short time after the programme has been operationally completed. With this timing situation, the impacts are hard to ascertain, and the theory of change, i.e. the logical or causal link between the activities and processes of a programme and the resulting outcomes and impacts on peoples' lives is unlikely to be tested empirically.

Water governance programmes and their gender strategies need to explore new methods of documentation; ways to include both qualitative and quantitative data and ways to include a fuller understand and more complex picture of problems and realities – not only in the monitoring of results, but to ensure that the experiences are captured for the benefit of future interventions. Even if the donor in this case instituted a specific knowledge management component on the issue of gender and integrated a specific question on gender for the annual reporting, there information on the gender work of the programmes remains scarce. The present review would not have been possible without complementing the progress and evaluation reports with interviews and other additional information and communication.

### **Uncertainty about gender mainstreaming in programme design**

Somewhat unexpectedly, greater mainstreaming of gender-related effects into the result chain of the programmes did not imply that the level of realisation of the gender strategies was any higher; nor did it appear to lead to any higher level of monitoring of those indicated results. For example, the programmes in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Paraguay are among the few

programmes that have gender-sensitive outputs as well as indicators to monitor them: Yet the gender-related results reported for those programmes are among the poorest. Meanwhile the programme in Panama had basically no gender-related effects or indicators, but was possibly the most successful programmes in terms of achieving gender-related results, and to document them. Yet, while gender mainstreaming into programme design is certainly no guarantee for the programme's subsequent gender performance, the absence of gender concerns in programme design, as asserted by the evaluator for the programme in Angola: Since the intervention was not designed based on a gender needs assessment and the introduction of the gender approach was really weak, the programme has probably contributed to increase the gender gap as a non-desirable effect, which is the usual consequence of non-gender-sensitive interventions (when no specific strategies and activities are designed to address gender issues it is usually the men who mostly access to and control the benefits delivered) (Carravilla, 2013, p. 49)

Meanwhile evaluations of other programmes with more mainstreaming in the result chain, noticeably Paraguay, are far less criticised, even if they supposedly should have had more pressure to report and comply with their gender goals.

In sum, the inclusion and monitoring of gender-sensitive indicators did not function as the intended accountability mechanism or to increase the reporting of results. While a thorough design should greatly help structure a programme towards a fruitful gender-sensitive path, it appears to be trumped by the more influential factors of

- Leadership
- Expertise, and
- Suitable implementation strategies – notably a) collective and b) inclusive strategies.



## Conclusions

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In accordance with other studies of development programmes gender mainstreaming in the design of the eleven programmes was generally weak; lacking relevant high-level goals and adequate integration in the monitoring framework. Yet, a more gender sensitive design did not correlate with stronger focus on gender in the implementation or in the results reporting, even if the programmes' result chain and monitoring framework are supposed direct resources, define activities and hold the programmes accountable to their goals. The level of gender-related results and reporting was neither affected by the programmes' funding structure for gender activities. Instead support from high-level leadership and involvement of gender expertise were key organisational elements for effective implementation of the programmes' gender strategies.

The programmes' situation analyses lacked information about the cultural, economic and social structures and barriers that define and uphold inequalities, which in part is a result of the programmes' view on gender equality not as a goal in itself but as a means to reach other goals. In effect the programmes displayed a lack of gender strategies combating structural gender barriers. Yet, support from gender expertise allowed some of the programmes to confront structural gender inequalities, even if it was not part of their original design, by challenging the values and attitudes of men and boys, taking actions to prevent and mitigate GBV and strengthening women collectively.

The programmes that combined gender strategies that focused on women's collective action and solidarity and which allowed for the inclusion of men and boys were also the most successful in reducing gender inequalities. For the programmes working with indigenous peoples, the combination of the gender and intercultural approaches also proved to be key. It was, however, only done systematically by a few programmes.

The main contribution to gender equality of the programmes was manifested at the local level, where several programmes succeeded with increasing women's participation and representation in water management. The extent to which this was translated into women's increased influence is, however, difficult to assess due to the incompatibility between the long qualitative change processes required for such shift in powers and i) the quantitative focus of the programmes' monitoring frameworks and ii) the programmes' limited timeframes. Yet, the programmes that undertook activities that challenged structural barriers, in particular by collaborating with women's organisations and support new organisations, were more successful in creating opportunities for women to affect the processes and outcomes of local water management.

Most of the programmes were also successful in mainstreaming gender in sector plans, policies and regulation at different governmental levels. Again, the programmes' short timeframes, in combination with their focus on monitoring the production of plans and policies. Similarly, outputs such as number of women trained with a certain type of skill were measured, but the resulting employment opportunities are unknown. Thus, to enable future learning on how to improve progress towards gender equality through water programmes, more qualitative and long-term monitoring systems are required to document the change processes to combat gender inequalities and strengthen water governance.

Yet, to achieve important advances in gender equality within the governance of water and sanitation, organisations and agencies will need to review not only their own structures and practices, but also to develop a better understanding of the underlying power dynamics and structural barriers that reinforce gender inequalities.

It was generally found, as in previous studies, that the gender mainstreaming in the design of these eleven water governance programmes was weak. It often lacked gender-relevant high-level goals and indicators in the monitoring framework. Nevertheless, the programmes with a stronger gender mainstreaming in their design did not automatically lead to a stronger focus on gender in the implementation or in the results reporting. Nor did the programmes with budgetary allocations specifically targeted to gender-related activities appear to achieve or reporting of gender-related results to any greater extent. Instead, support from high-level leadership and the involvement of gender expertise came out as the key organisational elements for effective implementation of the programmes' gender strategies.

Related to the way that gender-related work was understood and justified in the programming, the programmes' situation analyses did not provide much information about the cultural, economic and social structures and barriers that define and uphold gender inequalities. The context-dependent nature of gender roles and power dynamics makes reliable and detailed information about women and water essential for the design of adequate gender strategies. The lack of information is congruent with the justification for engaging with gender equality by the programmes: not as a goal in itself but a means to reach other goals, i.e. more efficient water governance. In effect the programmes' gender strategies did generally not address structural gender barriers, but focused on individual women's education, employment and participation in water management.



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Yet, even though it was not part of their original design, some of the programmes engaged gender expertise and confronted structural gender inequalities. This involved challenging the values and attitudes of men and boys and taking actions to prevent and mitigate gender-based violence and to strengthen women collectively.

The programmes that focused on women's collective action and solidarity and which allowed for the inclusion of men and boys were the most successful in reducing gender inequalities. Regarding the programmes working with indigenous peoples, the combination of the gender and intercultural approaches also proved to be key. While the majority of the programmes intervened in indigenous areas, only a few combined these approaches in a systematic manner.

Finally, to advance gender equality within the governance of water and sanitation, organisations and agencies will need to review not only their own structures and practices, but also to engage more profoundly in the underlying power dynamics and structural barriers that reinforce gender inequalities. This would imply strategies with greater focus on women's solidarity and collective action, and the inclusion of men and boys in the work towards changing values, attitudes and gender relations. To ensure the effective implementation of such strategies the involvement of gender expertise and strategic alliances, and a committed leadership are essential.

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# Gender Practice in Water Governance Programmes:

## From Design to Results

To identify ways to effectively further gender equality in water governance this report reviews the gender work and results of eleven water and sanitation governance programmes supported by the MDG-F. Since gender was not mainstreamed into the programmes' design to any greater extent, most lacked higher-level goals and indicators relating to gender. Yet, for effective implementation of the gender strategies strong high-level commitment and adequate support from gender expertise were key. The most effective gender strategies focused on the collective action of women and involved

men and boys in the challenging of gender relations. Generally, the slow change processes relating to water governance structures and gender relations are not well captured by time-bound quantitative indicators. Thus, while several programmes managed to change the gender composition in local water management and to mainstream gender into national level policies and plans; the broader effects on gender inequalities and water management are not well known.



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