Gender & Social Inclusion in Strategic Social Accountability Approaches: Lessons from the Water Sector in Tajikistan

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TWISA – Improving Social Accountability in WSS (2014-2018)

1. Improving gender sensitive performance indicators for service delivery in the subsector;

2. Developing and strengthening a civil society-based monitoring mechanism with participation of women;

3. Raising consumer awareness and building the capacity of selected operators in cooperation with local regulators, and;

4. Capitalising knowledge and lessons learned to foster transparency, to provide a basis for M&E and for further replication

Launch of TWISA (TWISA 2014-2018)
Context

- 70.6% rural population, reliant on agriculture and remittances

- 48.6% have access to piped water, 20.5% rely on irrigation canals, the remaining get water from springs, rivers and hand pumps

- Privatization of water supply systems is prohibited

- Aging infrastructure

- There is a single tariff for delivery of water irrespectively of the natural and economic factors

- 64% of water pipelines do not meet sanitary requirements
Look into the rural water supply – ‘makeshift’ water systems in TWISA project target areas

A piece of shaped metal installed under the roofing diverts water via container and a hose to an artificial dam intended for collecting water in the yard, Kulyab, Tajikistan, April 22, 2015
Storage of water in Kulyab, Tajikistan

Water is stored in artificial lake in the yards and in containers at cool and dry places at areas with water shortages, Kulyab city, April 21, 2015.
Situation in Tajikistan – water and gender

• Since women are the primary users of household water (cooking, caregiving, house cleaning), they have a major stake in water matters.

• According to a study undertaken by UNDP in Muminabad and Rudaki districts, **women and girls under the age of 14 spend 4-6 hours daily fetching water and missing school**

• Besides the fact that the women carrying the main burden of families to raise their children and care for family members, they are also involved in the implementation of the heavy seasonal field work.

• However, they do not often participate in the decision-making process.

• The difference in the social status of women and men and the lack of gender justice is traditionally explained by so-called “culture” and perceptions.

• Intergenerational families living in one household, inequality in chores sharing and power dynamics is important factor
Young and older women have an undisputable role, responsibility and stake in water...
Collective analysis of water supply through gender lenses - national level

- Revision to set realistic and specific gender sensitive service performance standards

- It was difficult to adopt a gender approach within this process since the indicators and norms were mainly technical

- Inclusive consultations were needed to identify: what are the indicators of a good service according to women?
Creation of CAB: a promising start, active and committed....with differences by district

• Community Advisory Boards comprised of representatives of the community, local authorities and water operator

• CAB task is to carry out an effective dialogue between community representatives and Vodakanal [state water operator] to address complaints and requests formulated by citizens as well as structural challenges

“Even though Vodakanal [operator] has established a suggestion box and a complaint book, the main role is played by the CAB because people feel more confident speaking with the CAB.”

For the last 2 years the share of families paying on a regular basis has increased to 70%. This improvement is due to the ground work of community leaders, CAB and to the improvement of service delivery by Vodakanal. (CAB Muminabad, December 2016).
Collective analysis of water supply through gender lenses – local level

The Community Advisory Board (CAB) that includes local women, provides a perfect platform and have **gained credibility** to discuss gender inclusive water issues and at policy level, the stakeholders use the information to review existing indicators and standards in order to for formulate policy and plans for the next years.
Public sensitization for inclusive participation in SA

Public awareness activities resulted in forming recommendations from both women and men to improve governance and promote the role of women in CABs.

Men in the village able to express that “women and children are the ones suffering” and they note that the sessions on gender and water helped better understand the burden of women. In Kuyab district, CAB members explain that men talked about it at the mosque and in public places.
Lessons – not all women are the same

• Gender mainstreaming should draw on *intersectional analysis* to explore which groups of women are the poorest, what contributes to their poverty, how women exercise agency and devise strategies to cope with their situations, how to address the specific problems and needs of different groups of women.
For example: When in position of leadership, women are strong and determined to create change....
And even formidable! But are they representing the rights and interests of women in their community? Or reinforcing stereotypes and strengthening vested interests?
Women in the community will always defer to head of Mahalla, man or woman
...and not be aware of tariffs, rules and regulations....or their specific rights – Unless they head the household, they are not involved in paying fees and don’t understand the ‘economics of water’
Eventually men are the ones speaking most publicly....while women still bear the responsibility...
Lessons – resisting social norms requires stand alone gender programming!

• Real change requires the transformation of wider social norms and addressing the more pervasive problem of gendered patterns and distribution of power in the wider society;

• Need to address gendered social norms via STAND ALONE gender equality programming as a prerequisite to ensuring women’s participation in wider processes- ex. gender responsive budgeting

• Need to think of the Water Operators- what will be their incentives to gender mainstream their work?
Lessons – profile of gender mainstreaming implementers is crucial

• Women’s needs and impact on women and water should be viewed as the starting point of all activities

• But not all stakeholders understand how to consider gender approach in the service performance as an entry point

• This is not a quick fix and requires long term sustained efforts in capacity building (both formally and informally)
Next steps for TWISA

- Monitoring results show that knowledge concerning women and their hard chores related to water does exist in the communities
- Project focuses now to enhancing behavioural changes (at community level)
- Specific actions directed at improving service performance to improve women’s situation (at CAB level) include:
  - engage on a yearly rotation of the head of the CAB in favour of Community representatives and women
  - conducting a thorough study to target households in which women suffer from poor service performance with regards to water and sanitation and to identify the type of service improvement they request. To build on the recommendations formulated by women during the seminars.
  - encouraging the CABs to put this issue on the agenda of their monthly meetings and to plan pragmatic improvements building on the results of the study and on direct consultation of women.