

Women and water: Education builds empowerment

In recognition of the crucial, yet often unacknowledged, role of gender issues in water resources management, GWP adopted a gender strategy in 2014. In the first two years after the launch, GWP has improved gender mainstreaming in many of its activities and across its network, supporting specific processes and opportunities. At the global level, the organisation is working on identifying opportunities to capitalise upon its ability to convene leading thinkers and practitioners. With the aim to add value to the broader sustainable development debate, GWP will work to highlight the importance of gender issues within water-related policies and investment programmes.

GWP Highlights 2016

Women tackle water scarcity in Central America GWP

Central America organised rainwater harvesting workshops in El Salvador and Honduras targeted at women from the six countries of Central America. The women had previous experience in water management and were leaders in their communities, non-governmental organisations, or municipalities. The training included a theoretical part, in which the participants strengthened their knowledge of integrated water resources management, climate change, watershed management, rainwater harvesting systems, gender, and leadership. This was followed by practical sessions, where the women learned to construct a rainwater harvesting system based on a geomembrane bag, a technology that has proven successful in the dry areas of Honduras. The aim was to give them knowledge that would allow them to replicate the workshop in their home communities.

“Women are the ones who haul the water...making sure there is water for the family,” said one participant. “Now we can rest!” Another added: “This inexpensive project could help many families,” going on to say that the installation was so easy, everyone should be able to do it.

Including gender aspects in regional water policy

The Economic Community of West African States Water Resources Coordination Centre (ECOWAS WRCC) requested GWP West Africa to contribute to improving gender aspects in the regional water policy document. A member of the GWP West Africa Regional Technical Committee proposed some guidelines to be included and follow-up actions are underway, with an ongoing study on good practices in gender issues.

Strengthening gender mainstreaming in water in Palestine

The role of gender in promoting sustainable water management was highlighted during a national dialogue on water governance and financing conducted by GWP Mediterranean in Palestine. The event involved 229 stakeholders from 39 different institutions and culminated

with the preparation of a national report providing policy recommendations. Besides raising awareness and stimulating debate on gender mainstreaming, the national report linked its findings to the official gender strategy of the Palestinian Water Authority and recommended actions for implementing gender mainstreaming in alignment with the work of related stakeholders.

What's next?

In order to identify opportunities for GWP to capitalise on its Network and ability to convene leading thinkers and practitioners with the aim of adding value to the broader sustainable development debate, a gender-water-development nexus scoping study and expert consultation is in the making.

The study has recently commenced with the following objectives:

- To identify key barriers and opportunities to improve gender-water outcomes at a range of scales i.e. global, regional, national and local, based on an in-depth understanding of the current work carried out in the gender-water-development nexus agenda and the key actors involved
- To make use of GWP's Network and convening power to bring together key actors who can identify practical measures and opportunities to strengthen the integration of gender dimensions across water programmes, setting out clear next steps and practical actions.
- To identify GWP's niche and entry points where GWP can make an impactful contribution i.e. through mobilising the Network, the GWP Technical Committee, international fora, etc.

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