

Of particular interest in the survey were issues around power, challenging hierarchies, and inclusion-as perceived in the respondent's home institution, not necessarily GWP. These issues are fundamental to gender transformative approaches because such approaches target the underlying structures and systems that keep inequalities in place.

1. Given strong resistance to cultural change around gender in Benin, WACDEP-G/Benin should immediately begin gender analysis within their organization and with key partners to understand barriers to change.
2. Develop a learning and development plan based upon the capacity needs assessment survey results. The programme's success will depend upon how well WACDEP-G Benin implements these approaches, not just the gender lead. Engage experts (including new partners) with skills in gender responsive budgeting, participatory monitoring and evaluation, gender analysis, and gender-sensitive facilitation. Have partners collaborate and lead these capacity building efforts to increase the diversity of ideas.
3. Workshop participants recommend continuous awareness and advocacy to reconcile national policies with local customs and the need for political good will at government level for continued support.
4. Facilitate cross-country learning platforms for WACDEP-G teams in Benin and Cameroon. Learning events should take an action-learning approach so lessons can be fed back into planning and implementation. This will help both teams address documented resistance to gender transformation.
5. Mandate gender analysis and gender disaggregated data in all activities.
6. Analyse, document, and promote the unique knowledge and skills of women and marginalized populations to use as leverage in decision making processes around water and climate change.
7. Generate missing data. Analyse the water, climate, and gender nexus to determine who is excluded from decision making and who benefits from women's continued exclusion. Share the evidence to stimulate civil society and NGO advocacy. Support negotiation between stakeholders by conducting gender analysis research and providing gender-disaggregated data that clearly illustrate the relationships between gender, water security, and climate resilience.

Partnership Recommendations

A list of programmes was identified as potentially relevant to WACDEP-G/Benin going forward. They cover multiple sectors, levels, programs and partners-and have many possible linkages to project activities going forward.

1. Revise partnership agreements to include language holding partners accountable for integrating gender. Help them bridge gaps to change institutional culture and entrenched behaviours.
2. Link funding tranches to gender results.

Potential Entry Points

The gender analysis conducted in Benin resulted in the following entry points for gender transformative approaches to water security and climate resilience. They are based upon structure, agency, and relations. In addition to these entry points, another priority point emerged from the workshop. Participants were concerned that transformation of culture or perceptions in favour of gender transformation needs clarification to avoid destroying endogenous tradition and culture. They concurred with a need to deepen reflections through an innovation platform at the interface of gender, water and climate resilience.

Structural level entry points

- The National Gender Promotion Policy
- Gender and Social Protection Technical Groups that bring together technical and financial partners supporting Benin
- Existing gender promotion structures (e.g. Gender and Climate Change focal point; Gender Focal Points in line ministries) in the ministries of water and climate resilience
- Existing planning institutions / mechanisms in the water and climate resilience sectors (e.g. National Committee for Climate Change, Social Change Observatory)
- Women's associations at national level

Relation level entry points

- Existing consultation frameworks or platforms in the water and climate sectors (i.e. CIE, CNE, National Climate Change Committee, National CDN Committee, etc.)
- Microfinance structures
- Professional organizations at grassroots level

Agency level entry points

- Capacity building programs for existing gender promotion organizations and institutions.
- Gender units at the level of ministries and gender focal points in sectorial ministries.

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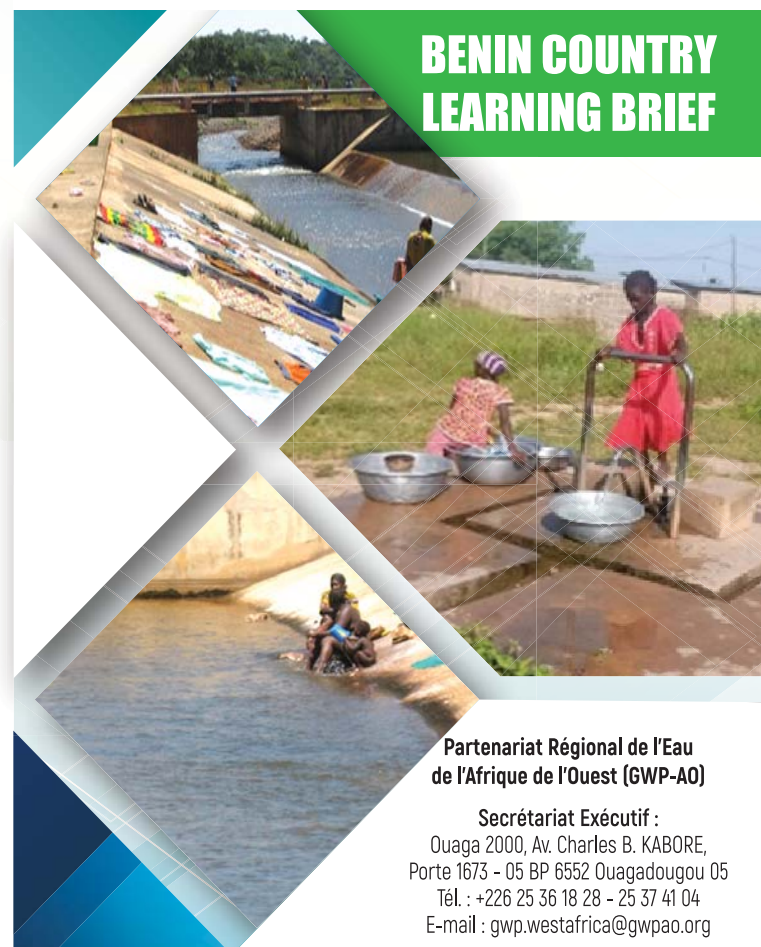


Africa Water Investment Program (AIP)

**AFRICA WATER INVESTMENT SUPPORT
PROGRAMME TO WATER, CLIMATE,
DEVELOPMENT AND GENDER (WACDEP-G)**
*Gender Equality and Climate Resilient Water
Investment in Africa*

AIP WACDEP-G

BENIN COUNTRY LEARNING BRIEF



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This brief summarizes key findings and recommendations from the gender analysis undertaken by Includovate for the WACDEP-G project in Benin. It presents visions of gender transformative approaches under the programme, recommendations, and entry points for priority actions going forward. The brief includes feedback and inputs, as validation, from a workshop in Benin on October 28th and 29th 2020.

WACDEP-G is taking a gender transformative approach (GTA) to addressing inequalities at the intersection of water security and climate resilience. GTAs aim to understand norms, attitudes, behaviours and underlying social systems to transform existing power dynamics and structures that perpetuate gendered inequalities. Thus, GTA goes beyond individual self-improvement of women as the answer to inequitable treatment and seeks to change existing power structures that continue to limit women's potential. Rather than increasing women's capacity to operate with limited power within existing systems, this approach sees a collective responsibility to change the systems so that women and their needs are on equal footing with men's.

WACDEP-G is first and foremost a gender programme, which is transforming water security and climate resilience investments to be gender equal. WACDEP-G aims to influence future water investments so that they address historic inequalities and put women's water security and climate resilience needs on equal footing with men.

While workshop participants generally agreed with the project premise and preliminary findings, they questioned the lack of grassroots consultation, rephrased certain assertions in the results of root cause and barriers analysis, and discussed establishing an 'oven guard' when using gender transformative approaches because they touch on culture and tradition. Of 19 workshop participants, 4 were women.

Gender transformative approaches in WACDEP-G would:

- **Empower and support national gender agencies** to implement and enforce existing policies. They would receive the necessary financial, political, and human resources to do so. These agencies would lead water and climate institutions in: 1) revising policies in line with gender transformative principles; 2) making their decision-making processes transparent and inclusive; 3) supporting transformative policy implementation, which includes targets and accountability mechanisms; and 4) adopting nuanced measures of success, beyond numbers, which more accurately reflect women's meaningful engagement in processes that impact them deeply.

- **Reframe water security from a technical and economic issue to a gender issue.** The water sector will acknowledge women's primary roles in ensuring household and community water security and address their persistent invisibility and exclusion from water-sector decision making at all levels. IWRM focus will expand beyond popular principles so that water governance and management directly address gender, inclusion and grassroots participation. A simple starting point is requiring all water investments to adopt Multiple Use Systems—thereby removing the false sense of single-purpose water and identifying user's needs.
- **Put women at the forefront of climate resilience** by acknowledging (and proving) that they bear disproportionate burden of climate change; provide evidence through rigorous gender analysis and consistent use of gender-disaggregated data. Despite raised awareness, national planning processes do not adequately identify or address gendered dimensions of climate adaptation or resilience. Climate strategies and plans that specifically address women's needs will improve overall resilience.
- **Generate momentum, expertise and a critical mass for gender transformative approaches to programming.** There is no tool kit for applying GTAs, which are first and foremost inclusive and participatory, are built upon gender analysis, and aim to understand and address gender inequalities at structure, relations and agency levels. This requires programme level gender expertise to lead, and broad commitment to manage culturally sensitive change. Applying GTAs at programme level means on-going investment in internal capacity, sophisticated monitoring, and regular reflection and learning.

Policy Recommendations

While well-developed policies alone do not guarantee gender equality, the absence of such policies continues to prevent it; policies are necessary but not sufficient to address existing gender inequalities. There are a number of opportunities for WACDEP-G/Benin to engage at policy level to fill existing gaps.

1. The African Ministers' Council on Water 2011 Policy and Strategy for Mainstreaming Gender in the Water Sector in Africa is well designed and has the potential to reduce gendered impacts of water insecurity across the continent. However, implementation has not been prioritized and after nearly 10 years, it lags. A mechanism for monitoring implementation of this policy would raise awareness and highlight gaps in accountability. Use the mechanism to hold pan-African partners and states accountable for policy implementation.

2. Follow-up on Benin's implementation of the Policy and Strategy for Mainstreaming Gender in the Water Sector in Africa and the African Union Draft African Strategy on Climate Change. These policies have potential to address gendered inequalities—but only to the degree that they are supported (financially, politically, and technically) at the country level.
3. Review the Africa Water Vision for 2025 for opportunities and approaches to gender transformative approaches and develop guidelines to improve its implementation. Raise citizen and NGO awareness of these issues so they can hold the government to account for inaction.
4. Adapt the Water Security and Climate Resilient Development: Strategic Framework to gender transformative approaches and reframe each of the four phases accordingly.
5. Create a platform, task team, or ad-hoc committee with terms of reference to revise existing water and climate policies to address gender. The team would include the Ministry of Social Affairs and Microfinance, Ministry of Finance, and the line ministries responsible for water and climate policy development and implementation.
6. Generate evidence supporting the need for gender transformative approaches to policy development, implementation and monitoring in water and climate.
7. Convene multi-stakeholder platforms to address the gender gaps in regional, basin and national policies. Include traditional leaders; explain the impact of gender inequality in water security and climate resilience for Benin.

Workshop participants concurred with the policy analysis findings that the majority of water and climate policies in Benin have not attempted to integrate gender. They claim that the main barriers to implementing policy recommendations are at tradition and culture levels, which needs to be verified through feminist policy analysis and gender analysis. While participants recognize that transformation of tradition and culture is required, they sought to establish an 'oven guard' or barrier to pre-determine limits on how far change can go.

Practice Recommendations

Applying gender transformative approaches takes expertise and practice to develop the requisite skills. As indicated above, there is no toolbox for implementing gender transformative approaches. It requires commitment, practice, reflection, learning and improvement. A capacity survey identified gaps between attitudes and practices, and constraints to addressing gender inequalities using GTAs; each aspect included in the survey is relevant to GTA implementation.