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Integrating gender in water and sanitation activities

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THE AFRICAN MEDICAL and Research Foundation (AMREF) is an independent non-profit making organization (NGO) whose goal is sustainable and equitable improvement of the health and well being of the most disadvantaged populations of Africa.

Its headquarters are in Nairobi, Kenya. Country offices are found in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia and South Africa. In its approach, AMREF places emphasis on developing, testing and evaluating methodologies that are appropriate, relevant, affordable and effective. AMREF's major targets are vulnerable groups: women, children, and the poor in rural and urban underserved areas. To achieve this, AMREF works very closely with ministries of health, UN agencies and other NGO's.

AMREF activities are structured into five programme areas:

- Sexual and Reproductive health;
- Child and Adolescent Health development;
- Environmental Health;
- Health policy and systems reform and;
- Clinical Services and Emergency Response.

Primary health care is the basis for most of these activities with special emphasis given to community participation and gender equity. AMREF promotes gender sensitivity, rejects gender discrimination and bias.

What is gender?

Gender identifies with the social differences between men and women that are learned, are changeable over time and have wide variations within and between cultures as opposed to biological sex differences.

Gender sex roles are roles that a male or female performs by virtue of their biological make up. These are performed by only one of the sexes. There are very few sex roles e.g. pregnancy, breast feeding, etc.

Gender identity refers to the subjective feelings of maleness or femaleness irrespective of ones sex. Gender Analysis is the systematic effort to identify and understand the roles of men and women within a given context.

What is meant by gender concerns?

These are issues that affect one gender negatively. They stem from relationships between men and women that need a change. There is always a disadvantaged sex in society.

Which policies are being used by AMREF in Uganda to address gender concerns?

AMREF uses two policies:

- The ones developed by AMREF for implementation at all country offices and;
- The ones developed by Uganda for use in all districts.

The Uganda government gender policy

The overall goal of the Uganda Government in Gender is to mainstream gender concerns in the national development process in order to improve the social, legal/civic, political, economic and cultural conditions of the people in Uganda in particular WOMEN.

The specific objectives are:

- To provide policy makers and other key actors in the development field with reference guidelines for identifying and addressing gender concerns when taking development policy decisions.
- To identify and establish an institutional framework with the mandate to initiate, co-ordinate, implement, monitor and evaluate national gender responsive development plans.
- To redress imbalances which arise from existing gender inequities.
- To ensure the participation of both women and men in all stages of the development process.
- To promote equal access to and control over economically significant resources and benefits.
- To promote recognition and value of women's roles and contributions as agents of change and beneficiaries of the development process.

AMREF gender policy

The goal of AMREF in Gender is to fully Integrate women as both agents and beneficiaries of AMREF activities and programmes.

The specific project objectives of AMREF are to:

- Ensure that greater attention is given to research in the area of gender issues and women's health as well as into the political, economic, cultural and social factors which affect women's health.

- Establish a resource centre and a data bank for the sharing and dissemination of resources, research findings, data and the activities of various organizations concerned with women's health.
- Liaise with donor organizations, the community and other NGO's and Government organizations dealing with women's health.
- Identify and eliminate any discriminatory barriers based on gender at the institutional and project levels.
- Inco-porate Gender into every aspect of AMREF's policies, programmes, projects and activities.

The policy is implemented at two levels: institutional and project levels. The project level policy focuses on the following areas:

- Indicator development to inco-operate gender at every project stage
- Training on gender indicator use and Gender Analysis
- Development of other units, departments and on-going projects and continuous research on participatory control and benefits women derive from projects.
- Ensuring a 50 per cent representation of women at the community level in all projects and adequate sensitization of community members on gender issues. Also reporting adequately on gender issues in progress reports.
- Explicit measures of the project's effect on women in monitoring and evaluation.

AMREF's experience

AMREF has been implementing water and sanitation activities as part of the environmental health programme in four subcounties in the districts of Luwero and Nakasongola located in central Uganda. The project is part of an integrated programme which also focuses on child survival using CBHC approaches, solving the problems of orphans and, youth sexual and reproductive health.

Water and sanitation activities were initiated in October 1996 after a special request by women for improved water supply facilities, if health improvements were to be realized.

The project has attained several achievements through the provision of safe water in schools and villages and improvement of sanitation. Twenty nine Shallow wells installed with UIII hand pumps, have been improved in 29 villages; 04 rainwater jars have been installed in homes and; 39 ferrocement water tanks (capacity 14m³ - 25m³) have been installed in primary schools.

Improvement of sanitation has been ongoing both in the villages and primary schools.

The project emphasizes full integration of gender at every stage, from planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

The gender framework table attached attempts to outline the different project stages, how gender has been integrated and, Gender concerns identified in the water and sanitation activities.

Tools used in coping with gender challenges

The following tools have been used in coping with the Gender concerns in the communities:

- The harvard framework which considers;
 - Activity profile** which considers the triple roles of production, reproduction and community. Here the definition of who does what, where, and when is also described.
 - Access and control profile** defines who has access to resources, who has control and what the benefits are for who.
 - The social-economic profile** analyses the economic conditions, political environment, Government policies, Institutional factors, Demographs factors, cultural factors, religious and legal parameters in the community and attempts to define how each affects the community.
 - The project cycle** analyses different stages of a project and how the community can participate at each stage bearing in mind the above findings.
- The Gender identification framework which considers: Division of labour, income sources, expenditure, resources, availability of labour and decision making.
- Meeting the practical and strategic gender needs of women:

Practical needs are basic needs which in this case is improving water supply and sanitation services. However once this is done the status of women is not yet addressed, but this is an entry point for addressing the strategic needs of women;

Strategic needs refer to improving the status of women in society. This calls for empowerment of women to enable them access and control resources.

Empowerment of women is being addressed through:

- A review of the existing bye-laws in communities
- Making sure that women are aware of the need to have access and control of the resources in their community.
- Separate sensitisations for men on the need to empower women and associated benefits using music dance and drama.
- Affirmative action
- Continuous advocacy on gender issues.

Table 1. Gender framework for AMREF water and sanitation activities

Stage	Activity	Purpose	How Gender is integrated	Gender concerns.
Preparation visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact visits at subcounty level. Contact visits in villages and schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To make appointment for council meeting. To make appointments for meeting all community members in the selected villages and parents in selected schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The visiting team must be gender sensitive. Find out who will attend from the local leader. Remind the local leaders that all concerned men and women must attend. Choose a venue which will make this possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The contact person responsible for calling a meeting is not yet gender sensitive. In most cases the contact persons are men.
Community Sensitization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sensitization at subcounty level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To share experiences in water and sanitation. To sensitize the subcounty on gender issues and identify gender concerns related to water & sanitation activities. To discuss project objectives. to select target beneficiaries. to establish a monitoring team. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record attendance of both men and women present. Recording all issues raised by men and asking the women how they feel about it. Recording all issues raised by women and reactions from men. Discouraging domination by men. Identifying and analyzing cultural issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most attendants are men. Men dominate women in discussions and discourage them from contributing. Women are either shy or leave men to contribute for them. Attendance by women is low. Men don't visualize health benefits quite easily.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sensitization in villages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To share experiences in water and sanitation activities. To determine the present level of coverage. To discuss project objective and select beneficiaries. To identify a management committee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same as above. Ensuring that all community members especially women are happy with location of water source. Ensuring that committee has at least three women with a female treasurer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In areas with abundant water resources women are reluctant to attend meetings. Men don't allow women to contribute local materials because they are owned by men. <p>Committees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most attendants are males. Men dominate discussions and discourage contributions from women. Women who attend together with their husbands are always quiet and always side with them. Only educated women accept leadership positions.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sensitization in schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To share experiences in water and sanitation activities. To determine the present water supply and sanitation facilities in the school. To discuss project objectives. To identify a management committee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collecting gender aggregated data of pupils and teachers. Ensure the water committee is represented by both men and women at least a third women. Ensure that contributions for local materials are both by male and female parents. Girl's school first priority then mixed and boy's last. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is difficult for women to carry out hard tasks and those which take a long time. Since they have a lot of work at home. Men still prevent women from participating in activities which take time.
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning meetings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To prepare for construction of shallow wells and water tanks in villages and schools. To prepare for improving sanitation facilities in villages and schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making sure that activities to adequately involve women are identified. Further strengthen the local committee to be gender sensitive Designing strategies to prevent men from interfering with activities of women. Making sure that both men and women are adequately informed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Men discourage their wives from participating. Men sabotage activities in communities where women are very active e.g Kyanika. Local Masons who are trained are males.
Implement-ation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction of water supply facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide long lasting water sources for communities and schools. To impart knowledge and skills for replication and easy maintenance of facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limiting on the number of men participating. Encouraging more women to participate. Following the action plan. Making sure that females on the committee manage activities by women. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement of sanitary facilities involves construction which is perceived as a male activity. Improvement of hygiene behaviour for children is perceived as an activity for female. When sanitary facilities breakdown women wait for men to make repairs.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction of sanitation facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safe and hygienic sanitary facilities. Improvement in hygienic practices. Improvement in hygienic environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage both man and woman to improve domestic facilities jointly . Encouraging men to help women in changing the hygiene behaviour of children. 	

Stage	Activity	Purpose	How Gender is integrated	Gender concerns.
Implementation (Continued)	Training of committees, local leaders and local masons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity building for sustainability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training all women and reducing on the number of males. Full session on gender. Preparing them to monitor activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entrenched cultural beliefs. Men complain that training and other related meeting consume time for domestic work.
Project monitoring	Monitoring improved water sources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To identify and correct defective areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring that the monitoring team is gender sensitive. Collecting gender desegregated data. Getting views of both men and women separately. Targeting more women as respondents. Identifying benefits and possible negative effects on both women and men. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women fear to point out issues when their husbands are present. Time limitations in participating. Most able counterparts with monitoring experience are men.

Conclusion

Development processes impact differently on women and men and so do the dividends. Due to the different effects, development projects and strategies should involve both men and women. The process also needs to be monitored and evaluated to guard against gender discrimination. This can be done continuously using gender analysis tools and combining policies within organisations and a given country.

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