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WOMEN AND GENDER ISSUES

**Contract No. 624-0219-C-00-2094-00
Guinea Natural Resources Management Project**

**Submitted to:
United States Agency for
International Development/Guinea
Conakry, Guinea**

**Submitted by:
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A

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AID	(U.S.) Agency for International Development
BRP	Bassin Représentatif Pilote
GRG	Government of the Republic of Guinea
NRM	(Guinea) Natural Resources Management project
OMVG	Organisation pour la Mise en Valeur du Fleuve Gambie (Gambia River Basin Authority)
PMU	Project Management Unit
PRA	Participatory rural appraisal
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WMU	Watershed Management Unit

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SECTION I
TRIP PURPOSE AND ORGANIZATION

A. Purpose of Trip

The objective of this short-term assignment was to review how various policies and regulations of the Government of Guinea (GOG) affect the well-being of Guinean women and how project interventions could be targeted to encourage equitable, sustainable development for both men and women. It was also intended to identify pertinent gender issues relative to programmed activities for the various watersheds and to improve the understanding of these issues among the project technicians (see Annex A).

B. Persons Contacted

S.K. Reddy	Project Officer, USAID/Conakry
Dan Jenkins	Deputy ADO, USAID/Conakry
Bill Polidoro	Project Manager, USAID/Conakry

K.B. Paul	Chemonics team
Robert Chase	
Tom Erdmann	
Stephen Aversa	

Mathias Haba	National Coordinator, DNFC
Yacine Sow	Regional Coordinator, DNFC

Mamadou Saliou Diallo	WMU team, Kouratongo
Mamadou Coumbassa	
Mamadou Aliou Souare	
Mamadou Malal Balde	
Binta Fady Diallo	

Alpha Bacar Bah	WMU team, Linsan Saran
Abdoulaye Kouye Bah	
Mamadou Linguewy Balde	
Bocar Sow	
Mariama Oury Balde, Mme. Diallo	

Beana Dounamou	WMU team, Sougueta
Jean Lucien Tounkara	
Morlaye Keita	
Abdoulaye Toure	
Rabiatou Camara, Mme. Diallo	

Julie Fischer
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Paul Rippy

Sociologist, University of Wisconsin, Land Tenure Center, Labé
Peace Corps Volunteer, Kouratongo
Project Representative/Director/PRIDE Project, USAID

Villagers in villages visited

I would like to thank all the WMU teams as well as the PMU in Labé for their generous hospitality.

C. Trip Schedule

June 16	Conakry
June 17	Travel to Labé
June 18, 19	Labé
June 20	Travel to Kouratongo
June 21, 22	Kouratongo
Villages visited:	Diaforé Kouné; Ley Diaforé; Ghada Diaforé; Dow Diaforé; Dow Kouratongo
June 23	Return to Labé; travel to Linsan Saran
June 24, 25	Linsan Saran
Villages visited:	Telibofi; Dongol; Guémé; Bindougou; Tyewéré
June 26	Return to Labé
June 27	Labé
June 28	Travel to Sougueta
June 29, 30	Sougueta
Villages visited:	Falloulaye; Farinta; Hafia; Fotongbé
July 1	Travel to Conakry
July 2, 3	Conakry
July 4	Depart Conakry

SECTION II

GENERAL COMMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS

In contrast to many development projects, the Guinea NRM project began with a high degree of attention to women's problems. The Project Paper noted the essential role in agriculture of women in the Fouta Djallon and included a short-term consultant on women's issues in the project design. The team had already begun their work with a sensitivity to women's issues when I was asked to assess current initiatives towards women and development in June 1993.

This report is undertaken in light of the work in progress. Rather than centering on initiatives taken by the teams to meet women's development needs, it concentrates on areas where these efforts could be strengthened. It is addressed simultaneously to the national Watershed Management Unit (WMU)—French equivalent, Bassin Représentatif Pilote (BRP)—teams, to the technical assistance team of the PMU (Project Management Unit), and to personnel at USAID/Guinea. Certain issues raised are already matters of significant concern to one or more parts of the audience, but not necessarily to all of them. The goal of the report is to ensure that all parties are aware of the various issues involved.

The specific terms of reference were to determine how the different NRM activities will impact on the well-being of women and to make recommendations on how these activities can favor sustainable development for both women and men. It also wanted an assessment of the role of the local "*animatrices*" (women extension workers) on the watershed teams and to identify needs for their further training. In addition, the report should relate this to the role of the gender analysis specialist requested for the technical assistance team, and finally, to suggest potential indicators for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

This report turns first to the background and context of the project in light of the social structure and economy of the Fouta Djallon. It then looks at specific project components in terms of their potential gender implications. After a discussion of personnel issues, it suggests indicators for monitoring to determine if project interventions are having the desired impact on women.

SECTION III

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The goal of the Guinea NRM project is to improve the management of natural resources in three target watersheds in the Fouta Djallon Highlands of Guinea for profitable and sustainable agricultural production. The project recognizes that poor people often have no choice but to use natural resources in destructive ways if they are to survive, and if interventions to improve natural resource conservation are to be successful, they must be coupled with improvements in people's living standards so they are not tempted to use their resources in non-sustainable ways. Hence, the project links a natural resources management component with actions to increase agricultural production and earning opportunities of the local populations. The project has three major components: natural resources conservation; agricultural production; and small enterprise development.

Although the project headquarters is in Labé, the regional capital of Moyenne Guinée, the project is being implemented in three quite different watersheds: Diaforé (sous-préfecture of Kouratongo/préfecture of Tougué); Koundou (Linsan Saran/Lelouma); and Dissa (Sougueta/Kindia). While two of the watersheds are in the heart of the Fouta, Dissa is in Maritime Guinea and only vaguely in the foothills of the Fouta. Not only is its ecology quite distinct, but so too is its socio-cultural and economic context. This results in complexity in project implementation that would not occur were the three watersheds somewhat more homogeneous.

This report proceeds under the assumption that the goal of the project is to efficiently and pragmatically increase the living standards of the local population, not to radically change the existing socio-cultural orientation of the population. As cited in GRG (1993:19), the cultural context of the population should be considered "*comme les racines profondes sur lesquelles se greffent et se basent les actions de développement*" (like deep rootstock on which development activities can be grafted and based). This is particularly important in the Fouta Djallon, where the popular perception of the Guinea First Republic was that the government was forcing them to undertake radical social change.

By American standards, and even by the standards of many West Africans, the societies of the Fouta Djallon are quite stratified, and different segments of the population have unequal access to economic resources and power. This includes, but is not limited to, differences between men and women. This report assumes that the most effective way to implement the project is to work within the context of profound inequality between the sexes. Both men and women in the zones maintain that they would like to see improvement in women's daily lives, and the project should work in the areas that the population sees as their priorities. This work needs to be grown from an understanding of the socio-cultural context in the zones.

A. Male/Female Relationships in the Project Zone

The patterns of male/female relationships are affected not only by cultural values regarding the relative roles of men and women, but also by socio-economic conditions. The southern zone of Dissa can be distinguished from the two Fouta watersheds of Diaforé and Koundou by both criteria. Understanding people's reactions to development initiatives must begin with a consideration of these factors.

The populations of both Diaforé and Koundou are primarily Fulbé, who entered the area in the 13th century and gained political control during an 18th century *jihād*. They conquered the autochthonous farming populations, the descendants of whom retain inferior social status, but now speak Fulbé and have adopted Fulbé socio-cultural values. While the past is not forgotten, the Fouta region today is isolated and relatively overpopulated. Since independence many Fulbé there have concluded that they could not make a good life for themselves or their families through farming.

This has led to women being heavily responsible for local agricultural production and family subsistence while many young men migrate to work elsewhere, providing consumer goods for their families. They leave in part because of land shortages in the Fouta and also because of the isolation and related difficulty in selling any locally produced commodities. In the Diaforé watershed as a whole, population density is approximately 30 inhabitants/km², yet 45 percent of the land is *bowe* (lateritic crust) impossible to farm (Diaforé, 1993); in Koundou, population density is 36 inhabitants/km², and half the watershed is in classified forest which cannot be cultivated (Koundou 1993). It also contains a number of very steep slopes. Given the difficult access to good land, young men migrate from both these zones; in Koundou, it is estimated that 50 to 60 percent of young men aged 15-45 have gone to work elsewhere.

This high rate of wage labor migration among young able-bodied men means that much work falls to the women. Not only do they cultivate their *tapades* (fenced fields around the house), but they also help the remaining men on the exterior fields. In addition, they are responsible for all household tasks, such as cooking and getting wood and water. Estimates of their total daily work time range from 6-10 hours/day (Détraux 1992) to 17 hours/day (Magadoux 1992), with the slackening during the dry season offset by even longer hours at the height of the agricultural season.

Despite the fact that male migration means a greater workload for women, some (see, e.g., Roberts, 1991) have suggested that the living standards of families with husbands on wage labor migration are higher than those where the men stay home and farm. In the Fouta basin of Guetoya, Détraux (1992) estimated that 75 percent of women with husbands on wage labor migration received from 20-200,000 GF/year. Although some 25 percent received no remittances, approximately 70 percent received sufficient remittances so that they could either purchase food directly, or could hire labor or buy inputs to improve their farm production. It is highly unlikely that the economic activities of the NRM project will so

transform the basins as to change fundamentally the pattern of wage labor migration. The rate of wage labor migration will probably remain high over the next few years.¹

Despite (or perhaps because) of the men's absence, they attempt to keep a high degree of control of women. Women do not own land, although husbands must provide wives with *tapades*, and a woman's security of tenure is high as long as she and her husband do not divorce. When husbands are present, wives are expected to defer to them and to ask their permission to enter significant new activities.

In Dissa, the more southern watershed, the situation is somewhat different. With rolling hills and relatively rich soil in comparison to the Fouta, and somewhat higher rainfall, it is easier to grow substantial food and cash crops. Population density is lower, 22 inhabitants/km², with a greater percentage of arable land. More men stay in the zone; the team even counted more men than women, 1164 to 1043 (Dissa 1993). Not only is it easier to grow things, it is also easier to sell them. Just adjacent to the main road from Conakry to Labé, people sell a variety of foods to intermediaries who bring them to national and regional markets. In contrast to the other two watersheds where the local economy is oriented around subsistence production, both women and men in Dissa are already substantially involved in a commercial economy, which they hope the project will make even more advantageous.

Ethnically, Dissa is a mixture of Susu and Fulbé. The area is "owned" by the Susu, and although Fulbé are a numerical majority, they are not politically dominant. Villages are rarely ethnically mixed, but different ethnicities live side by side. Although tension between the groups exists (each prefers for example to go to "their own" market), cultural patterns have become an amalgam of the two groups. The Fulbé of Dissa appear relatively less hierarchical than those of the Fouta, and the Susu have adopted some of the Fulbé entrepreneurial values. Both Fulbé and Susu women strike the casual observer as much more independent than those of the other two basins; they are more vocal in group meetings and have more entrepreneurial activities and plans.

Although these existing socio-cultural and economic patterns form a context for people's actions, they do not determine them. People attempt to improve their lives in a variety of ways; they manipulate cultural patterns and values to individual advantage. This is, in fact, one of the main goals of wage labor migration. Expectations vary about the extent to which different groups of the population can or should live up to cultural values. And different individuals live up to cultural ideals to varying degrees, leading to further variations.

Men's expectations of controlling women varies with the life cycle. Young recently married women are the most closely controlled, while older women (often as young as 40 in this area where women marry in their teens) with grown children often have much more autonomy. While young women are expected to work for their husbands, older women

¹Political changes in receiving areas could of course change patterns of wage labor migration in unpredictable ways.

expect their male children to work for them. Women are not only wives, but are sisters, mothers and daughters, and in these roles are often less dominated by the men in their lives.

The model of the autonomous woman earning money also exists in the cultural repertoire. While in the field, I found women who were relatively wealthy and independent; the president of one of the groups, for example, was difficult to contact, because she was always off "doing commerce" somewhere. We were also told the story of a woman who basically supports her husband. While the inequality between husband and wife is a fundamental socio-cultural feature of these societies, it is not the only relationship between men and women that orients life in the project zone. Male/female relationships are in fact quite complex and variable, and should not in themselves preclude women's participation in development activities.

B. Improving Women's Lives in the Project Area

This report assumes that women's lives can be improved only by respecting the socio-cultural context in which they live, and understanding the desires of the women and their families themselves. The major project goal should be pragmatically to increase existing living standards, within the structure of existing social relations. In the first stages of project activity, actions should be oriented around those that both women and men think will improve their daily lives.

It follows, then, that activities to improve women's opportunities in the Fouta must take place within the existing context of male/female relationships, or they will not succeed. Men usually are in favor of improving women's lives, but only if their own lives are also improved in the process; if they feel threatened by women's advancement, they are liable to limit women's access to project activities. Thus, the project must work simultaneously for the improvement of the lives of both men and women, in the context of male/female interdependence, but cognizant of the fact that men have more power. In pragmatic terms, this means moving relatively slowly with project activities, and beginning with those activities that both men and women see as positive for women. It is also important to remember that women are not isolated individuals but parts of families and extended kin networks.

The explicit attention to integrating women in development projects came about because of the growing evidence that women (and other segments of the poor) were an "at-risk" group of the population. The benefits of development projects often did not trickle down from men who were benefiting; there were even flagrant examples of men drinking away the benefits, leaving their women and children as sick and as uneducated as ever. The goal of integration was to open benefits of development to women in a culturally appropriate way.

The obsolete belief that men will always help women was replaced by a new, and equally false stereotype, that men will never share benefits with women. In most societies, men share benefits among family members in standard socio-cultural ways. One example here is the better standard of living among the families of male migrants, which suggests that

these men are indeed sharing a portion of their earnings with their wives. In the field, women consistently told us that their husbands would be the ones to take sick children to the hospital and pay for the medicines. Women did not expect to pay for these needs themselves, as they sometimes do in other societies.

Thus, in the Fouta, the way to improve the living standards of women and children may sometimes be to deal with them directly, but other times, it may be to improve the living standards of the entire family.

Although it is difficult for any outsider to get women to spontaneously discuss their goals, when they are involved in project activities, women typically want to improve their own and their families' lives, most particularly their children's. Rural women in most of Africa are not primarily interested in equality, independence, or even autonomy, but rather with pragmatic improvements in their daily lives. If in the process of becoming better able to meet their daily needs, they also become more autonomous, both they and donors may be appreciative, but practicality should be the focus of any development intervention. It is in light of this goal—improved lives for themselves and their children—that project activities have been evaluated.

People have taken a variety of initiatives to improve their lives and appear open to project interventions aimed at improving living standards. Women themselves were adamant about wanting to do new things to earn money; if they had to give some of their earnings to their husbands because this is part of their cultural system, so be it. No project activities have as yet been so remunerative that this has been a problem.

SECTION IV PROJECT INTERVENTIONS

This section looks at the major project components in terms of their potential impact on women's lives. Since a large number of individual interventions are planned, they are grouped in terms of the three major project components. These individual sections are preceded by a discussion of one issue, women's work load, relevant to all project activities.

A. The Overarching Issue: Women's Work Load

Women would appear to benefit from many of the potential actions of the NRM project, and they themselves are clearly interested in the chance to earn more money. However, most of the potential benefits will require that women spend more time on more things. For example, activities such as the preparation of compost, integrated pest management on termites, increased tree planting and care, small enterprises, food processing activities, and participation on resource management committees will all require a time commitment.

Yet, as already discussed above, women's time is in very short supply. In addition to farming, women spend long hours on the basic activities of getting wood, fetching water, and preparing food. Lightening any of these activities would let women spend more time on income-earning activities or leisure. Project activities may decrease women's work loads in regard to getting wood and water; however, they do not really address the issue of daily food processing.

A major problem of the area has been access to clean water, particularly during the dry season; women often have to walk long distances and/or queue up, all of which is tiring and time-consuming. Although initially seen as a "target of opportunity" in the work plan, improving water sources and wells should have a direct impact on women's work day, and should help decrease the demands on their time.

The other intervention already planned that should have some impact on women's time is that of improved wood stoves. If women need to use less wood for cooking, they will also need to spend less time getting it. However, time spent in getting wood in the project areas would appear to be significantly less than that in Sahelian and savannah areas; even there, getting wood was less of a concern than water (Koenig, 1986). Women can pick up wood on their way home from the fields. Hence, wood stove programs are most successful when women also see other benefits, such as a higher heating temperature, etc.

Wood stove programs have been in existence for over 10 years in neighboring Sahelian countries, and it would probably be useful for project personnel to learn from their experiences before beginning a full-fledged stove program. These other programs had many false starts, despite a much greater sense of national urgency behind them, and the NRM

project could probably draw on what they have learned. At the moment, project personnel seem more convinced about improved stoves as a source of increased income for blacksmiths than as a way of improving ordinary consumers' lives. Yet blacksmith incomes will increase only if there is a consumer demand for the stoves they produce.

The third major component of women's work load, food preparation, receives less attention from this project. At least two types of processing can be distinguished: daily processing of basic food grains, and the transformation and processing of seasonal foods for future consumption and sale. While the project touches on the second issue, the first has not been addressed. Yet it is the first which takes more of women's time.

Women spend significant time processing the basic food grains of maize and *fonio*; Koumantho (1993, 17) estimated an average of five hours to prepare *fonio* couscous, of which three was grain preparation (i.e., hulling and pounding). They also spend time drying and processing cassava. One possible project intervention concerns mills for food processing. While these will not themselves affect natural resources, they will give women more time to be involved in community or income-earning activities. Owning and running a small mill is another opportunity for small enterprise in the zone. (Of course, feasibility research will need to be done.) For *fonio* (as for rice) the main need for a machine is for hulling, while maize needs to be ground into two different sizes: couscous and flour. Finally, mills would only be successful if women (or their men) have sufficient income to pay for them. In other words, while mills would not be appropriate interventions in the beginning of the project, they should be looked at seriously farther down the road.

The project is exploring the possibility of processing seasonal foods for storage or sale. Some work is being done in Dissa with tomato processing, and fruit drying is being studied in several zones. We will discuss these further as potential small enterprises, below.

The focus on the household or family unit (rather than women as individuals or groups) suggests that another way to change women's work load is to encourage men to take over some of women's activities. Clearly, this cannot be done unless men have sufficient incentives. In terms of this project, the most likely potential benefit would be for men to control new technology. While in many respects it would be desirable for women themselves to have access to ownership and control of new technology, the track record of initiatives for women to own "male" technology appears to be quite poor. On the other hand, the pragmatic approach outlined above suggests that there may be several ways for women to get project benefits, only one of which is direct control. In other words, from a woman's point of view, it may be just as desirable to have less work as to have more control.

Two examples present themselves relatively clearly, although the feasibility of either would need to be checked out. The first concerns the mills mentioned above. Ownership of a mill is a potential enterprise for one or a small group of people. Given existing patterns in West Africa where mills have already been introduced, it is likely that they will be owned by men, although women would not be entirely excluded.

Another possibility is that in some places men take over the preparation of fields with plow and draft animals. This could be seriously considered in Dissa, for example, where a pilot animal traction program is underway. Project personnel are proud that one of their pilot farmers is a woman, who in the past has paid labor to work on her fields; she appears to be an "above average" farmer. She is the one buying the plow, but her son and other younger male family members are working it. While it is important that this program be open to women, it is likely that men would more often be the ones purchasing animal traction. Animal traction would also appear to work in some the villages of the Koundou basin, where the village as a whole is enclosed, its *tapade* fields are relatively flat, and there are few fences between households. A significantly large area could be cleared at one time. The men would benefit by access to the new technology, and the women would see some lessening of their work load. Both options for animal traction should be encouraged: opening programs to women, as well as encouraging men to plow the fields.

The umbrella issue of women's work loads needs to be kept in mind in all project activities. As noted above, many expect more work from women, and it is likely that they will be willing to invest the time if they see clear, tangible, and substantial benefits. But if the benefits are small in contrast to the investment, or if promised benefits do not appear, then women will not see any reason to participate in suggested activities. The monitoring and evaluation component must examine the time aspect of women's activities, as well as explore the tangible benefits of each new project before it is undertaken.

The sections that follow discuss four major intervention areas in light of women's time as well as other issues specific to each additional component. They will be presented in order of importance.

B. Small Enterprises

In terms of improving women's lives, the success of small enterprises is key. At least some of the activities suggested for cutting their work load, such as milling grain, will only be successful if women can pay for them; it does no good to have new technology available if everyone remains too poor to use it. In Dissa, women already have money to invest, but this is not necessarily the case in the other two watersheds.

Essentially women need access to money-earning activities to be able to afford some of the time-saving technologies suggested above, which supposes that they have the time to earn money. Despite constraints, at present, time is more available than money; hence any small enterprises open to women must offer quick, relatively high return for a relatively low capital investment. Even very cursory discussions with women suggest that they expect that the project will open up the possibility of earning more money. On the whole, the men present at meetings with women also say that they would like their wives to earn money.

Efforts toward a number of small scale income-generation activities have already begun in the first phase of the project, including beekeeping and the sale of honey, the cultivation of small peppers for sale, vegetable growing, soap making, development of improved woodstoves, training of para-veterinarians and nurserymen, improved chickens and

eggs, and a study of banana marketing. In most cases, these activities build on skills already held to some degree by the local people, and whether men or women enter these activities is decided primarily by who has prior experience, individual preferences, and in some cases, other criteria, such as the level of literacy.

The end result is that a greater variety of potentially high income-earning activities are targeted to men (e.g., beekeeping, stove making, veterinary activities, nursery activities). Not only is the range of activities open to women smaller, but the activities proposed for women tend to be less risky and require less capital investment. While this makes these activities easier for them to enter, it also means that they can expect lower returns. The issue of local competition also appears to be potentially greater for the large number of women, all of whom are looking at the same limited number of opportunities. This is especially true of vegetable gardening.

Women have high expectations for significant remuneration, but if a large number of them try to sell the same commodity at the same place, prices may drop, thus discouraging their efforts. Whether local markets can absorb the all the extra production is a matter of concern to the implementation teams; the planned systematic study of marketing possibilities for the different small enterprise interventions has not yet taken place.

The two basins in the Fouta, particularly Kouratongo, remain isolated and relatively poor, which means that people will need to walk to local markets to sell their goods. They are also ultimately targeting markets outside the watershed. Alternatively, intermediaries may come to them, but this will only be viable if the quantity of produce available is offered at a price low enough to justify transport costs.

The most likely commodities at the present moment are non-perishable items with established domestic urban or regional demand. Some of the initial enterprises—small peppers and honey—would appear to fill these criteria, but it remains to be seen if the other planned activities do. In particular, eggs and the more perishable vegetables would appear to have a limited markets. This is especially a problem in Kouratongo where the closest market, a weekly one, is in the neighboring sous-préfecture of Kollet.

Although these products would clearly enrich people's diet, it is clear from talking to women that their priority for investing time and energy is to earn money, not improve their nutrition. Although the initial small enterprises appear to have been well thought out, the project should take care that further activities have adequate markets. Otherwise people will become quite disillusioned, and may give them up.

In the Dissa zone, the marketing issue is somewhat different. Because of the proximity to paved roads and the Conakry market, both women and men already sell perishables, such as gumbo, in significant quantities. The area is already relatively highly commercialized, so people have money to spend on locally produced consumer goods. Yet people would like to broaden the range of commodities they sell, as well as branching into new markets. Certain interventions, e.g., the improved wood stoves and the soap making activities, are geared toward the local market rather than the national one, despite the that

fact that the local market is apt to have much less absorptive capacity than the national one. In other words, for income-earning activities targeted to local markets, care must be taken that so many people do not get involved that the market becomes saturated. Because the number of activities targeted toward women is smaller than those targeted to men, this would appear to be more of a problem for them.

In Dissa, overproduction seems to be a less significant problem for activities geared to the national market, e.g., agricultural produce, but the zone will be at the mercy of national trends, including seasonality issues.

In general, the project would do well to develop specialized niches that capitalize on the special strengths of zones, such as a night market for truckers at Falloulaye. One potential job for the new gender analysis specialist should be to find overlooked niches among activities already undertaken by women that could be improved by interested individuals and groups, on the model of the soap-making and dyeing cooperatives. Experimental efforts on the part of the *animatrices* (women extension agents), e.g., initial efforts at drying mangoes, should be encouraged by the WMU and technical assistance teams, but no formal extension should be undertaken until marketing issues are clear.

When activities are undertaken primarily for home consumption, such as the proposed tomato puree, teams must make very clear to the individuals involved the low marketing potential. They should expect that success rates will be lower for these activities than those done for market sale.

C. Increasing Agricultural Production

Because women are so strongly involved in agriculture, being almost exclusively responsible for their *tapades*, while helping their husbands on the outer fields, they are directly interested in activities to increase agricultural productivity. Many are acutely aware of constraints on their production and have directly asked for both chemical fertilizers and herbicides. However, they can pay for neither of these inputs without credit, and in the absence of a highly remunerative cash crop (except for some Dissa farmers) potential for repayment is low. It would be inappropriate for a natural resources management project to encourage the profligate use of agricultural chemicals; nevertheless, the plans for judicious use of these inputs by the project are important and should be sustainable. Two issues in particular present themselves: termites and fertilizer.

The project used an initial method of investigation, participatory rural appraisal (PRA), in which a project identifies people's major needs, and works with them to meet those needs. It also focuses on local opportunities. Nevertheless, no project is free to pursue any direction, and is likely to be confined to a relatively limited set. When the major constraint on agricultural production in the Diaforé basin turned out to be termite infestation, the project found its hands tied. The technical assistance team did attempt to get permission to buy insecticides to treat selected termite mounds as well as other stored grains, but after two months they were still awaiting an answer. The agricultural season, and the termite damage, is well underway in that zone, and it is clear to both men and women that the

project may not be able to help them confront one of the most significant hurdles to agricultural production.

Whether or not permission is granted to use insecticides during the initial years of the project, project personnel should follow up on their plans to investigate integrated pest management techniques for dealing with termites. There are plans to work with the national crop protection laboratory on this issue.

The other major stumbling block is soil fertility, and this too is especially problematic in Diaforé. It would seem pertinent for a trained agronomist to study whether composting, plus improved use of mulching and manure, will be sufficient to maintain soil fertility under continuous cultivation. Gladwin (1991), in a study of small farmers in both Cameroon and Zambia, found that only the wealthiest farmers could get sufficient manure from cattle to maintain soil fertility. Subsidizing or even bringing large amounts of fertilizer into the region falls outside the scope of this project.

In light of this, the project plans to strengthen the utility of natural composts with some urea and possibly phosphorus, depending on the results of soil analyses, which they will contract out to the OMVG laboratory in Labé. Given the fact that men and women already value fertilizers, and believe that they offer a "modern" alternative to traditional techniques, the addition of some fertilizers to compost may also help convince the farmers that they have improved what they put on their fields.

Composting techniques will require more work on the part of women farmers. Again, prospects for improved production will need to be high enough for the efforts to be worthwhile.

In addition, women find weeding an impediment to increased production. Mulching, which the project sees in terms of maintaining soil fertility, is conscientiously done by women to avoid a third weeding. If improved compost turns out to increase soil fertility but does not reduce weeds like leaf mulch does, women are likely to remain unsatisfied. Project personnel should consequently link women's concerns about weeds and soil fertility in their interventions.

The plans for fruit trees and land improvement for vegetable cultivation have implications for women, since ownership issues come into play. In general, trees are planted and owned by men. The project is considering growing trees in *tapades* to increase land fertility, and a controversy has arisen about whether women would be permitted to plant them. A possible compromise might be to get men to plant the trees, with women able to use leaves and produce (not an unprecedented practice). Ownership rights would be vested in men, which would make them more interested in planting the trees, and would also make inheritance issues less complicated, since it avoids the issue of women's heirs. This solution would appear to build more closely on existing cultural forms than getting people to agree to let women plant trees.

In at least one village, men were competing over which one would let the women use his land for a vegetable garden. The reasons for this competition were not clear, but were evidently linked to perceived land improvements that would outlast the project. Since women usually raise vegetables on land lent by/rented from a (male) landowner, typically not of their own family, contracts should be drawn up, analogous to those for spring head tree plantations, to ensure that women have reasonable rights to the land and its produce.

Insofar as the agricultural research stations work on women's crops (e.g., cassava), they should work closely with women farmers.

Living hedges and green manure on the outer fields will likely be men's work, but they will probably get help from women in their households. Women with migrant husbands may also need to learn about pruning and caring for the living hedges.

Livestock as a part of agricultural production is touched by a number of project interventions, including the training of para-veterinarians, the emphasis on forage crops, and the use of manure. All these interventions should keep in mind that women are important owners of sheep and goats, and that if their income-earning activities are successful, they will likely invest further in small stock.

D. Women as Resource Users

The resource protection component of the project includes reforestation of spring heads to increase infiltration, construction of fire breaks, increasing supplies of potable water through capping of springs, and improving wells.

The first significant impact on women is their involvement as laborers on projects that require village participation. For example, women carried rocks and/or sand for the construction of spring caps; they are typically mobilized with other members of the village for this work—even though many of these projects are not seen as particularly affecting women. Again, this will increase their work load. Insofar as possible, these activities should be scheduled so that they do not compete with other important work that women need to do; specifically, the teams should pay attention to the major peaks of the agricultural season and not schedule community level activities at this time.

The second major role for women has been on project resource management/user committees that have mandated the inclusion of women. These have begun as water management committees, where the presence of women is clearly important since they are the major water source users. They are intended to remain a major part of the committees, as they expand over the life of the project to "*comités de gestion de terroir villageois*," village land management committee, managing all of the community's major resources.

This is important because women are major resource users and need to be aware of project activities. However, the project should not expect them to take a determining role in mixed-sex activities at this time, e.g., by being a functioning president of a group. This is so contrary to existing cultural expectations as to be almost unimaginable. However, their

simple presence on committees will provide an invaluable means for women of the village to get access to information. Even if women do not take an active role in meetings, those present will pass on information to their co-villagers, and women can play a prominent role in promoting all female groups and activities (e.g., water source activities). Experience as less active members of village level committees may well pave the way for a more active role in the future, when both male and female villagers are ready to accept the idea.

E. Complementary Activities

The project also has a number of activities which complement the natural resource focus: construction of roads, markets, and schools, and potentially, literacy programs. Improved infrastructure should better integrate the watersheds into the national economy and society, and insofar as it enables people to get more actively involved in the larger economy, they will probably use it. However, project personnel should not expect any radical changes in social patterns (e.g., gender or status hierarchy) over the short term. It may encourage change, such as sending more girls to school, but it should not attempt to force that change.

One issue is that of including a functional literacy component in the project, building on the fact that many men, and a few women, thanks to Koranic education, are already familiar with Arabic script. Although increased literacy for the population is a salutary goal, a literacy program should not be undertaken without a serious study of its potential for success.

Such a program would be a large undertaking, and none of the project personnel has specialized training in this field, since essentially all local project personnel as well as the technical assistance team are agricultural professionals. Hence, special personnel would be needed to plan, formulate, and implement any literacy program.

Second, literacy programs are dependant on a regular supply of materials, both during initial training and afterwards, so that people have something to read once they have learned how. In general, this seems to be more of a problem than developing teaching materials. This issue should be analyzed before the program is begun to determine if sufficient materials are available.

Third, the literacy programs with which I am familiar have begun with men and have been fairly successful; female programs have followed, and have not been as successful. Men hesitate to let younger wives (who tend to be the primary targets of programs) attend these programs, while older women, usually freer in terms of both time and marital constraints, tend to be ignored by recruitment efforts. If women are targeted, thought must be given to which sub-segment of the population will be recruited.

In any case, the team should engage an expert in African functional literacy programs to evaluate the program possibilities within the context of the project if it hopes to pursue this activity.

SECTION V PERSONNEL ISSUES

The ability to deal sufficiently with gender issues depends on personnel for whom these issues are a priority. At the time of this study, there were three *animatrices* in the WMUs mandated to focus on gender issues and women's development in the context of the NRM project. However, the entire structure of the project suggests that gender issues are of lower priority than technical ones, despite the conscious attention to women and development on the part of the implementation teams and USAID. Unlike the three other project technicians, the *animatrices* have no counterpart on the technical assistance team. Furthermore, they are less prepared for their jobs than the other technicians, since the male technicians are all working in fields in which they are not only experienced but had received technical training, and the *animatrices* all had their major formal training in fields other than women and development and rural animation. Some have had subsequent on-the-job training in these fields, but in any case the level of their preparation does not match that of their male colleagues in the WMUs. Reinforcement of the personnel focusing on gender issues is needed, a fact already recognized by the technical assistance team, which has requested a new member of their team to serve as a counterpart to the WMU *animatrices*.

This section deals with the personnel associated with gender issues. First, it looks at recruiting the new member of the technical assistance team. Secondly, it examines the potential role for the new Peace Corps volunteers who will be associated with the project. Finally, it turns to the issue of upgrading the skills of the existing *animatrices*. Since this will be done primarily through further training, the report offers suggestions for topics.

A. The Gender Analysis Specialist in the Project Management Unit

As noted, the *animatrices* in the WMUs are in a peripheral position because they have no counterparts on the Project Management Unit technical assistance team. Women's issues are further marginalized by the fact that, with the exception of the *animatrices* (and secretaries), no project personnel on either the national or technical assistance teams are women. In addition, all the *animatrices* are in the extremely difficult position of having to live in communal housing where they are greatly outnumbered by males. Virtually all basins are in isolated areas where it is difficult to find adequate domestic help, so in addition to their professional responsibilities, the duties of senior female (who makes sure that everyone eats, etc.) are shouldered by the female members of the team. That they are willing and able to keep up with such demanding work schedules is to their great credit and a tribute to their dedication.

To give greater importance to gender issues, the technical assistance team decided to recruit an expert in women and development—because of budgetary considerations, a Guinean national. This person will have an extraordinarily demanding role to fill, because she will be the only Guinean member of the technical assistance team, and will be viewed

differently from other members of the team from the very beginning. The team will need to hire someone for whom this will be seen as a challenge rather than a liability.

If this expert is to be taken seriously, it is imperative that the national expert be treated the same as other members of the assistance team—with the same access to project vehicles, support staff, computer equipment (including access to a portable computer), and office space. Otherwise, she will be seen as not quite equivalent to the other members of the team.

The job description asks for someone (male or female) with strengths in agricultural extension, community development, and experience in audio-visual methods for local populations. Audio-visual techniques would appear to be more important than Radio Rural, which does not reach either Kouratongo or Linsan Saran, according to the WMU teams there. In addition, finding someone with a strong technical background in the field of women and development/gender issues would help make sure this position gets the respect it deserves.

Finally, the gender analysis specialist on the team will, by default, be a role model for the zones on how an *animatrice* can interact with the team. She must be someone who will let/demand that the WMU directors treat her as an expert. It would be helpful if her educational level were the equivalent of other technical assistance team members, at least an M.A.

B. Peace Corps Volunteers

At the time of this report, eight new Peace Corps volunteers were in training in Senegal for placement with the project in Guinea. It was planned that two, probably one man and one woman, would be placed in each of the three watersheds, with two others placed elsewhere. If any of the female volunteers want to work with the WMU *animatrices* on women's issues, this would seem most desirable, as well as offer additional technical assistance to the WMU *animatrices*. The existing collaboration between the PCV and *animatrice* at Kouratongo provides a model to follow.

On the other hand, it is important that female PCVs not be relegated to the job of "*promotion féminine*" simply because they are women; if they are trained in agronomy or forestry, they should work in these fields. It would provide a useful model for all personnel to work alongside a female colleague competent in a technical field.

C. Training

Useful training develops from the needs of the project as expressed in the project goals and issues discussed above. Three different kinds of training would appear to be of value. First, all *animatrices* could use training in the technical aspects of the innovations they are going to encourage. Second, it would be useful for them to have training in development theory that stresses the basic organizing principles of this project, namely, flexibility in implementation, responsiveness to local needs, and sustainability. Third, they

would be able to better fill their jobs if they had more formal training in the methods necessary to analyze local needs and develop appropriate responses to them.

All the WMU *animatrices* appear to do much of their work in collaboration with other team members. Although this is important, as the project proceeds, it will be increasingly necessary for them to work on their own. Although some of them hesitate to work alone now, my observations of their interaction with village women suggest that all three have the capacity to do so. Further practice as well as training should increase their confidence in their ability to do a good job on their own.

C1. Technical Training

Increased knowledge should lead to not only greater confidence among the *animatrices* but should also enable them to do more than simply follow basic orders. It should allow them to better understand the activities they are encouraging local women to undertake, and provide a knowledge base similar to that held by the other technicians. The theme behind much of this technical knowledge should be the activities that they are likely to encourage local villagers to undertake.

As discussed above, food conservation techniques, for later home use, but especially for future sale, are an important likely small enterprise for women. Some possibilities are conserving fruits found in the region, including mangoes and oranges. Both these are found rotting in the fields because they are abundant at certain times and markets are flooded; if they could be preserved, women could sell them at other times and at greater distances. Second, improved techniques for products are found here; for example, some Sahelian countries have projects in improved karite preparation, either in the pressing or oven stage. Both these could be explored for ways of improving women's ability to earn incomes. Giving the *animatrices* more knowledge about the range of these techniques and their potential costs and benefits is a high priority.

Further training in storage techniques of traditionally stored foods, e.g., grains, would also be useful prior to implementing the actions foreseen in the work plan. This includes combatting the weevils that plague dried foods.

Animatrices could also benefit from technical training in the production of improved wood stoves—*foyers améliorés*. While it is not likely that either they or the women they motivate will actually construct the stoves, a sounder knowledge of the technical aspects involved in construction as well as in the chemistry of burning should help them better explain this intervention to the local population. The greater their level of understanding about the reasons for and the processes by which any given intervention works, the better they should be able to explain these to the local people.

Village women who want to undertake these activities would in turn need their own training. In some cases, the training the *animatrices* receive may be sufficient for them to do the actual training themselves. Even if specialized trainers are brought in for particular

activities, the *animatrices* can offer better support after the village women are trained if their own technical formation is sound.

C2. Development Concepts

While much of the development literature stresses grass roots development initiatives based on people's felt needs, and working in a flexible fashion (in contrast to a blueprint approach) toward sustainable development, the fact is that few development projects actually work that way. Most are designed from the top down, and work according to relatively rigid sets of guidelines. As a very large scale, donor-funded project, the Guinea NRM project was indeed conceived at the top, but it has been structured in a much more open and flexible way than many, if not most, of its predecessors. As such, it is a new experience for the donor, the technical assistance team, and the host country. It appears that the host country teams, including, but not necessarily limited to the *animatrices*, would find further exploration of these recent development themes useful.

The whole project is based on the idea that, although local people need to learn more about the causes and effects of resource depletion, better paths to resource conservation can be developed by working from grass roots understandings of what people see as their priorities and needs. The development of work plans using PRA techniques was based on this concept. Yet there remains a tendency for all the technicians in the zones to talk about what they need to convince the people to do. At the same time, the people are eager to please the technicians by going along with their suggestions—to get the project benefits they perceive. These ways of dealing with villagers have developed over a long time period and will not be changed with one training session, but some emphasis on these issues in a more formal way might be useful.

If a team proceeds on the basis of people's felt needs, then there might be several valid ways of pursuing a development initiative; flexibility is needed in developing a strategy appropriate to the personnel and the place. The ability to use a flexible implementation strategy was marked in the Diaforé watershed's approach to pepper growing; in some places people did all the work collectively, while in others they cleared collectively but divided up the beds for individual work later on. While most villages had only one plot, one village decided to do two plots and that was acceptable. This kind of flexible thinking and approach ought to be encouraged across watersheds and across interventions (wherever logistically feasible). Some training in recent development concepts and the pros and cons of a blueprint vs. a flexible approach would be useful.

Finally, all the WMU teams could probably use some reinforcement in the ideas of sustainable development. While the concept of sustainable use of natural resources is high in everyone's consciousness, the idea that the actions undertaken by the project need to be sustainable after it ends has received very uneven support. The technical assistance team is aware of this issue, but its importance does not appear to have always been successfully transmitted to the WMU teams. This may be in part because all share a desire to get programs underway quickly and show results, even when prior analysis and groundwork for implementation is insufficient. While all parties (USAID, the technical assistance team,

WMU teams) can help by letting actions proceed only after proper preparation, this in itself is probably not enough. The teams would surely benefit from further understanding of human as well as environmental sustainability.

C3. Women in Development: Animation and Extension

Further training would be beneficial in a number of arenas concerning the practice of "*promotion féminine*." Training might also be useful for WMU technicians as well for the *animatrices*.

Many previous and present development initiatives are based on the concept of group action. In economic initiatives, economies of scale can be achieved by group efforts, and small scale credit operations are increasingly using the Grameen bank model of group guarantees. However, not all activities need to or should use group organization models. Alternatively, when groups are the preferred form of organization, some groups may be self-selected, while other activities, e.g., the *terroir villageois* concept, must use the community as a whole as the relevant group. To create groups smaller than the community, there are a variety of different means by which this can be done, and a variety of criteria that can be used.

At present, the *animatrices* (and other technicians) have no means to evaluate different methods of group organization, and the trade-offs between individual and group organization for a particular activity. They have asked for training in the processes of group formation, group dynamics, and how to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of individual vs. group organization. In this, as in all cases, it would be useful for them to learn about comparable activities in West Africa and elsewhere.

Also beneficial would be information on the composition of women's work loads, with comparative information about women's work loads in other parts of the world, particularly elsewhere in Africa. *Animatrices* should learn techniques to evaluate the women's time allocation. Some work labeled as women's is in fact done by children, especially girls; this include both getting water and pounding grain. Issues of seasonality in work loads could also be understood in greater detail. With more understanding of how women's work loads can vary, and how to evaluate them, *animatrices* should be able to play a greater role in evaluating the potential impact of women's work load on proposed new activities.

The sociologists as well as the *animatrices* thought it would be useful to have greater training in small enterprise management, in addition to the training session already held by PRIDE. Many issues are involved in the development of the small enterprises, including group vs. individual enterprises, the re-investment of earned money, finding markets, and accounting. The teams believe that more training would help them better deal with all of these.

Finally, the *animatrices* would like to upgrade their skills in the art of training. Although they are not doing extension proper at this point, learning training/teaching techniques should aid them to work more effectively with rural women.

C4. The Organization of Training

Two issues arise in regard to the organization of training issues. First, should the *animatrices* have training by themselves, or should other technicians also have access to it? Second, where will they be trained? The first issue is pertinent because some of the training, e.g., development concepts, might be useful for the entire WMU team, and some of the women in development topics, e.g., micro-enterprise development, would also be of interest. Nevertheless, at least some of the training should be done with the *animatrices* alone so that participatory aspects will not be dominated by the male technicians. All technical training should probably be given uniquely to the *animatrices*, so that they develop a specialized knowledge of their own. Although further training cannot be expected to change basic cultural values about appropriate forms of interaction between men and women or basic personality types, women should gain greater self-confidence with greater knowledge.

In terms of where training ought to be held, in some cases it would be appropriate to have training held in Labé, with the trainer brought there. Other types of training may be held in nearby cities on a regular basis. On the other hand, it would be very useful for *animatrices* to have contact with counterparts in other projects, either at a centralized training course (which they would take with *animatrices* from other projects), or by visiting projects in other parts of the country. It is already planned that they visit programs in neighboring countries, such as Senegal, Mali, or Burkina Faso; they would find this extremely enlightening.

SECTION VI POTENTIAL INDICATORS

Following is a suggested list of indicators to be evaluated by the monitoring and evaluation specialist, given the personnel and time available to the team for monitoring and evaluation.

Children's Health. Many studies have found that women will use increased income to feed their children better; as well as a general way to monitor the impact of the project, it would be useful to follow a sample of children in regard to their health. Using standards from charts (see USAID Health Officer for samples), one can follow what percentage of a sample is below average on one of the following: weight or height for age; weight for height; or upper arm skinfolds thickness. Living standards are improving if the proportion of children below normal is decreasing.

Children's education. Follow school census (including gender breakdown) to see if it increases or decreases; get a rough measure of attendance from school authorities, to see if it is improving or not; if the number of girls registered for and/or attending school increases, this is another indicator of development.

For **water source improvements**, examine the time it takes women to get water (through interviewing, spot labor observations) with particular focus on dry season months; see if it is decreasing and by how much; spot census diarrheal disease levels, especially at the end of the dry season.

For **use and effects of *foyers améliorés***, measure time women use to get wood (through interview or spot survey); wood consumption (spot survey); cooking time for a standard dish (choose one that is very common); numbers of burns reported.

Women's savings. Women will save any substantial amounts of money earned in a number of forms: livestock (especially sheep and goats), porcelain enamel bowls, gold jewelry, and more clothes. It will be almost impossible to ask them about cash income directly and expect reliable answers, but these things might be studied. It will also be impossible to get reliable answers about livestock, but women might be asked about recent jewelry purchases; it should also be reasonable to count enamel bowls among a sample of women.

Contributions to ceremonial occasions. Women contribute to a variety of local ceremonies; if the average contribution they make increases, this will likely be due to increased income.

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ANNEX A

SCOPE OF WORK

PROJET DE GESTION DES RESSOURCES NATURELLES
B. P. 26, Labe, GUINEA

SCOPE OF WORK

Gender Analysis Specialist

I. Background

The goal of the Guinea NRM project is to increase value added, sustainable agricultural production in three watersheds in the Fouta Djallon. Women are responsible for a major portion of production activities, and are the predominant users of the natural resource base. A range of information exists on the division of labor and agricultural activities that are performed by both men and women. Consideration of gender issues when conceptualizing and executing each project intervention is essential to assure sustainability of these activities. Each watershed team has a female technician (animatrice) who is responsible to work with the rest of the technical team to identify and address gender-related project issues and to act as a conduit to reach women in the target watershed population.

II. Objective

The objective of this short term consultancy will be to review how various GOG policies and regulations affect the well being of Guinean women and how project interventions can be targeted to encourage equitable, sustainable development for both women and men. The consultant will identify pertinent gender issues relative to programmed activities for the various watersheds and will improve the understanding of these issues among the project technicians.

III. Scope of Work

The Gender Analysis Specialist will:

1) Study background documents on NRM and small enterprise activities in the Fouta Djallon Highlands; analyze GOG policies and regulations affecting women; review diagnostic survey data and interventions proposed by the Guinea NRM team and how each activity will impact on the well-being of women.

2) Working with the local WID/Extension Specialist, visit all BRP's to identify gender issues associated with on-going and/or planned activities for the watershed population, and make recommendations on how these activities can favor sustainable development for both women and men.

3) Work with the watershed animatrices to improve their understanding of gender issues in their individual watershed, and to clarify and further integrate their program into that of the technical team.

4) Identify training needs of both the animatrices and village women in order to improve management and increase profitability of agricultural and artisanal activities.

5) Make recommendations to the technical assistance team and the regional coordination regarding how to effectively integrate the animatrices into the technical team.

IV. Qualifications

The selected candidate should have at least five years of experience working on WID/gender related issues in developing countries, preferably in Africa. French fluency is required.

IV. Reports

The consultant will produce a draft report on his/her activities and submit it to the TA/Guinea NRM Project, and to the USAID Project Officer in Conakry before departure. The report will give recommendations on gender related policy issues and how project interventions can best achieve sustainable development for both women and men. (S)He will debrief the USAID Mission prior to departure. Within 30 days from the end of the contract, the consultant will submit a final report, incorporating the comments made by the TA team and USAID/Conakry. This report will be sent to Chemonics International, 2000 M St, NW, Suite 200, Washington, D.C. 20036, for transmittal to the field office.

V. Period of Contract

The consultant will spend 4 weeks in Guinea beginning on/around June 15th, 1993. (S)He will need to spend about 1 week in Conakry, and the remainder of time in the three watersheds and Labe.

VI. Logistical Support

The Project Management Unit will be responsible for providing all logistical support to the consultant while in country, including accommodation, transportation, and making the initial contacts/appointments. The consultant should bring his/her own laptop computer; the printer and the photocopy machine at the PMU/Labe will be available if necessary.