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# **WEST AFRICA WATER INITIATIVE (WAWI) LESSONS FROM GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN WATER & SANITATION ACTIVITIES**

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**West Africa Water Initiative (WAWI)**

**Lessons from Gender Mainstreaming in Water & Sanitation  
Activities**

**Ghana, Mali, and Niger**

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## **ACRONYMS**

ASEG	Analyse Socio-Economique et du Genre (French training program)
CIFAD	Cornell Institute for Agricultural Development
EGAT	Economic Growth and Trade
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
IQC	Indefinite Quantity Contract
PNLC	National Program Against Blindness
STTA	Short-term Technical Assistance and Training
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WAWI	West Africa Water Initiative
WID	Women in Development

## Foreword

DevTech Systems is the prime contractor on the Short Term Technical Assistance and Training (STTA) Task Order under the Indefinite Quantity Contract (IQC) of the USAID Office of Women in Development (EGAT/WID). As an activity under this task order, the *West Africa Water Initiative (WAWI) Gender Mainstreaming Project* was designed to assist in mainstreaming gender into WAWI's water and sanitation programs in Niger, Ghana, and Mali. The Gender Mainstreaming Project was unique in that it took place over a longer time frame than most of the Task Order's activities (one year) and involved the use of gender mainstreaming strategies focused at the field level.

For an organization, learning to mainstream gender into its work is not a one-time fix, but rather a process that evolves through stages to a point when the roles of men and women and the terms of their interactions are as much a part of the context for the project as are physical considerations, like water access. USAID has made a commitment to devote resources over a period of time to achieve this mainstreaming in WAWI activities. The one-year effort analyzed here followed an initial gender workshop in each country for WAWI implementing organizations in 2003. The purpose of the workshops was to take the first step toward mainstreaming by generating awareness of the potential impact of gender on WAWI activities. This project sought to build on this awareness by providing tools to the implementing organizations for incorporating gender considerations in community activities, and a structure to reinforce gender mainstreaming over time.<sup>1</sup>

This report discusses lessons learned within the context of WAWI and the water and sanitation sector in West Africa. In this foreword, DevTech Systems moves beyond the scope of WAWI, to highlight several observations about gender mainstreaming that may inform development programs more broadly.

- Working with local gender experts on the ground is an effective strategy for gender mainstreaming. Local experts know the context and the players, and can readily tailor technical assistance and training to the needs and perspectives of the local organizations. Because they are based locally, they can provide support to the target groups in an ongoing manner, by participating in the partners' regular meetings, frequently visiting worksites and offices, and being responsive to spontaneous requests for support and follow-up. This ongoing support and involvement demonstrates that gender is a part of everyday programming.

To be effective, the gender mainstreaming consultant must have credible and respected technical expertise, and access to and the support of the leadership of partner organizations. A balance must be reached between the requirements of the contracting organization for management and quality control, and of the consultants for flexibility to respond to partner organizations' needs and requests. Where there are different project sites (such as in WAWI, where there were three different countries involved) interaction among local consultants is valuable as an opportunity to share materials, tools, and experiences across different sites.

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<sup>1</sup> Local consultants will continue gender mainstreaming activities in WAWI during 2006 through a different USAID funding mechanism.

- Gender training -- frequently seen as the main strategy for building capacity in gender mainstreaming -- often falls short in achieving intended results when approached as a stand alone intervention. When an organization is asked what would help them better integrate gender into their work, training is often the only activity proposed, in part because the organization is unaware of other options. Training is also a discrete, time-bound activity that can be planned and accomplished relatively easily. The WAWI experience reaffirms the importance of support for organization-specific technical assistance to accompany training and to assist participants in applying the skills in their own work.

After an initial gender awareness workshop, subsequent training sessions also need to be customized to the particular organizations. Scheduling time for the consultant to analyze the needs of the organizations is crucial in setting out the work plan for training and technical assistance. Identifying which organizations and which people in each organization need to be included in various training sessions is also important. As the process moves forward and organizations become involved with gender issues in the field, a group of practitioners may form gender working groups to share lessons learned and exchange tools and experiences among themselves.

- Training and technical assistance go only so far without a strong institutional commitment to gender mainstreaming on the part of the target organizations and donors. Given the time demands for managers of development organizations, consultants should employ alternative means for communicating the importance of gender mainstreaming to managers, besides training sessions or workshops. (One suggestion might be to set up a field demonstration within the project in which central managers are brought to a project site where they can observe first hand decision-making in gender issues around water and sanitation.) Institutional commitment to gender by an organization is evidenced by allowing staff to take time to work with gender experts on integrating gender into their programming or hiring staff or consultants with gender expertise. Institutional commitment to gender at the donor level may be demonstrated by evaluation frameworks that include a focus on access to and use of services by men and women as well as the tally of tasks completed. Field implementing organizations allocate their resources to achieve the ends that the donor (or the client) deems important. To ensure that the implementing organizations act to integrate gender into their programs, donors need to communicate to them that they will be partially judged on this basis, and to provide space in the calendar and the budget to do it.
- When we talk about gender mainstreaming in the water and sanitation context, it is important to know what to look for as indications that gender is mainstreamed. Some indicators may include:
  - ✓ Does the implementing organization's work plan include objectives and activities focused on getting information and feedback from both men and women in the communities?
  - ✓ In describing its activities in water and sanitation, do organizational representatives discuss gender differences as a factor in decision-making?
  - ✓ Has the organization supported gender training for its staff, received technical assistance to integrate gender into some aspect of its program, employed a gender expert, carried out an organizational gender audit, etc?

- ✓ In the communities, do both men and women receive training on water and sanitation?
- ✓ Does the organization use a procedure in the community to elicit information about water use, needs, and preferences from both men and women as a part of the decision process for type and location of infrastructure projects?
- ✓ Do both men and women in the communities demonstrate and use knowledge about water and sanitation in their actions?
- ✓ Are both men and women involved in the maintenance of water and sanitation facilities in the communities?

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The one-year Gender Mainstreaming Project for WAWI-supported water and sanitation activities commenced in October 2004. The purpose was to assist WAWI partner organizations to take account of the roles and relationships of men and women in the planning and implementation of their activities. The project was carried out by a gender consultant in each of three WAWI countries, Ghana, Niger, and Mali, and a consultant/coordinator from the United States. The consultants were contracted on a half-time basis. The work was funded by the USAID Office of Women in Development through its Task Order for Short-term Technical Assistance and Training with DevTech Systems. The project Scope of Work (SOW) called for three principal tasks: on-going technical assistance with partner organizations in each country; a workshop in each country, tailored to the needs of the partners in that country; and, formation of a gender working group in each country with representatives of partner organizations.

The final report for the project describes the activities under the project and analyzes their relative effectiveness. The first task of the consultants, which absorbed more time than was anticipated originally, was an analysis of partners' gender attitudes and knowledge, and of the incorporation of gender analysis in their activities. The diagnostic visits with each partner organization served to introduce the gender consultant to the organizations and provide crucial information for customizing technical assistance and the workshops.

The most successful aspect of the project was the individual technical assistance provided to the partner organizations, largely because the organizations requesting assistance were motivated to make the most of it. In organizations where the managers were less convinced upfront of the importance of gender analysis, the consultants made less headway in providing technical assistance.

A workshop was hosted in each of the three countries in June 2005. The content of the training varied across countries, depending on the needs of the partners in each place. In Ghana, which has participated for several years in WAWI, attention was given to integration of gender considerations into the organizations' work plans; in Niger and Mali, the focus was on tools for gender analysis in the field. The workshops were particularly successful in generating additional requests for individual technical assistance.

The third component planned for the project, the establishment of gender working groups, was not achieved in any of the three countries, in part due to the lack of a critical mass of people with a serious interest in gender issues in water and sanitation. This task may be achieved in the future as the partners gain experience with gender issues and seek a forum to discuss it with peers. On the other hand, the consultants in Mali and Niger did attend the monthly country meetings of the WAWI partners, and found them useful to inform others about their planned activities and achievements as well as to get up-to-date information about WAWI and its partner organizations.

The report concludes with a series of recommendations for the next phase of the WAWI gender mainstreaming program including:

- Planning of the next phase of the gender mainstreaming program should be carried out with the participation of WAWI partners and the national consultant in each country and be based on partners' needs.

- The next phase of the gender mainstreaming program should assist field workers in learning how to help communities identify, analyze, and integrate gender issues into the water and sanitation activities they undertake with WAWI.
- Special attention in the next phase should be given to government water and sanitation agencies, as well as other government agencies working with WAWI.
- National gender experts should attend WAWI partners' monthly meetings and report from time to time on gender mainstreaming activities.
- National gender consultants should compile a set of documents on gender integration in water, sanitation, and health/hygiene projects, and funds should be made available to share them with gender focal points and participants in training activities.
- Monitoring indicators for the gender mainstreaming program need to be developed in collaboration with WAWI partners and associated government agencies.
- WAWI funding organizations need to demonstrate their commitment to gender mainstreaming through continuous support and oversight of the institutions with whom they work to make sure that partners' commitment to gender mainstreaming goes beyond words.

The work of the gender consultants in the three countries is expected to continue under a different source of USAID funding for at least another year.

## I. Background

The West Africa Water Initiative (WAWI) is a water and sanitation program that began in Ghana over a decade ago and recently was extended to Mali (2002) and Niger (2003). WAWI supports the provision of infrastructure (boreholes, hand pumps, latrines) and health/hygiene activities aimed at the prevention of water-borne diseases. Funding is provided by the Conrad Hilton Foundation and, to a lesser extent by USAID, to 14 international and national NGOs (World Vision, WaterAid and others) and United Nations Agencies (UNICEF) who carry out WAWI-supported activities as part of their regular programs.

The year-long Gender Mainstreaming Project discussed in this report was jointly funded by the USAID Office of Women in Development and the USAID Water Team. USAID planned the project based on recommendations from a series of three USAID-funded gender mainstreaming workshops held in Ghana, Mali, and Niger in February 2004 for WAWI partners and the government agencies that work with WAWI.

## II. The 2004-2005 Gender Mainstreaming Project: an Overview of the Challenge

Three gender experts from Ghana, Mali, and Niger, respectively, and an international consultant/coordinator were contracted for about 110 days each to carry out activities aimed at building the capacity of WAWI partners and water/sanitation/health agencies in government to identify, analyze, and deal with gender issues in the context of their work. WAWI partners and government staff were trained in gender analysis and in gender-sensitive program planning, implementation, and monitoring both in a second national workshop and via organization-specific technical assistance.

National gender experts were engaged so that their technical assistance would be culturally appropriate and tailored to the context in each country and region, and so that they could maintain an extended relationship with the partner organizations. *This proved to be an excellent model for technical assistance.* It was also a huge challenge for the national gender consultants. Two of the three gender experts had worked with WAWI previously, during the 2004 Ghana and Mali workshops. All the gender experts had a good deal to learn about WAWI partners and about the collaborating government agencies--departments of hydraulics, sanitation, health, and others. The number of organizations working with WAWI in each country varied from 10 to 14. The gender consultants also had to learn about the administrative complexities of the funding agency, which is not a trivial issue given the variation on these matters among the many donors working in the Sahel.

The extent to which gender has been a salient issue for the international and governmental agencies working in the particular country had an effect on the gender consultant's approach in each country. In Mali and Niger, the national gender consultants had to lay the groundwork of gender mainstreaming, by sensitizing the leadership of WAWI partner organizations about the need for gender analysis and gender-sensitive planning, and what a gender sensitive program would actually mean for that organization's activities. This was also true in Ghana, although many Ghanaian partners and government agencies already had experienced at least introductory gender sensitization.

The gender experts also had to adapt their gender mainstreaming tools and methods to the water and sanitation sector and to the rural or peri-urban communities in which WAWI partners work. This required not only modifying standard gender training tools to specific activities in the water and sanitation sector and to specific communities, but also learning about how different agencies and their field agents actually work with communities and government agencies and then developing ways to help both managers and field workers mainstream gender into their work.

To give a sense of the challenge, consider only a few gender issues in the water and sanitation sector and then try to imagine learning how these issues play out in different communities. For example, how do customary gender roles affect how people use water? Who has what types of responsibilities related to the use of water? Within a given community, how do gender roles affect who is involved in the planning of WAWI activities? Who decides where water sources for women's responsibilities are sited? How does this affect actual use of the water (or sanitation) infrastructure?

To see the challenge in terms of the national gender consultants' work, consider the following: if WAWI activities are aimed at improving both men's and women's access to water and sanitation facilities, how can gender experts help both WAWI partner field workers (and project planners) as well as individual communities understand how male dominance in decision-making can impair women's access to facilities for household water needs and/or impair the sustainability of new facilities?

In addition to identifying the salient gender issues in water and sanitation, an even bigger challenge was figuring out how different organizations either do or do not deal with them. To cite an example of problems that occurred because gender analysis was only summarily considered, we draw on cases observed both by the gender team and by the Cornell University CIFAD (Cornell Institute for Agricultural Development) team conducting research within the WAWI partnership. Boreholes equipped with hand pumps are a technology designed primarily for domestic water supply. WAWI, however, tends to use this technology to meet all village needs for water: families' need for water for drinking, bathing, and clothes washing, women's need for water for their gardens, and men's need for water for cattle and small ruminants. Trying to meet all these needs from a single borehole inevitably creates problems. Problems of sustainability emerge when the agency planning and financing a water program in a village does not investigate all of the technical as well as the social facets of gender-differentiated needs for water. A pump-equipped borehole, for example, tends to be unsuitable for watering large herds of cattle since the amounts of water needed require too much pumping, a factor that can decrease the effective life of the pump. But men may be forced to use a pump-equipped borehole designed for household water supply because they don't have a wide diameter well suitable for cattle watering. The problem has technical and financial aspects that go beyond the capacity of technical assistance in gender to solve, but it is a problem that gender-sensitive analysis can bring forcefully to people's attention.

The problems cited above involve gender, technology, and finance. They have important implications for the WAWI program as a whole. If WAWI's water and sanitation projects are to be sustainable and effective investments, the gender, technical, and financial issues need to be analyzed with communities before individual project planning and execution are undertaken. The WAWI funding agencies must build more flexibility into the overall support and planning systems so that WAWI partners can work with communities to act on a gender-sensitive participatory problem analysis by choosing technology that is adapted to the needs of both men

and women. What this means in terms of short-term planning is that WAWI partners and their government collaborators need time and resources for training their managers and field agents in gender-sensitive project planning and, most importantly, for actually putting what they learn into practice by working with communities on participatory, gender-sensitive problem analysis before choosing specific water and sanitation infrastructure and management structures.

As it should by now be apparent, the national gender experts and the managers and staff of WAWI organizations, government agencies, and funding organizations all have a great deal to learn so that gender-sensitive planning and implementation of water and sanitation projects will one day actually take root. Progress was made during the 13 months of the gender mainstreaming project, but there is still a long way to go. We are gratified to know that the gender mainstreaming activity will be extended for another year in order to build upon the experience gained and to extend the use of gender-sensitive tools to organizational work plans, and to help managers and field agencies implement gender sensitive problem analysis and planning with communities.

### **III. 2004-05 Gender Mainstreaming Activities: Overview**

The WAWI Gender Mainstreaming Project's terms of reference identified three areas of activity:

- A gender mainstreaming workshop for WAWI partners
- Individual assistance to WAWI partners
- Formation of gender working groups among WAWI partners

This section reviews progress and challenges in these areas with an emphasis on what worked best. It begins, however, with a discussion of the initial activity undertaken, a diagnosis of partners' attitudes toward gender issues, and needs for technical assistance.

#### **Initial Diagnosis**

The 2004-2005 Gender Mainstreaming Project began in October-November, 2004, with brief visits by the national gender experts and the international consultant to inform WAWI partners and government agencies of the existence, objectives, and potential activities of the gender mainstreaming program. The national gender experts followed up with visits to assess the extent to which gender issues seemed to be of interest to each organization's management and field staff, the extent to which gender was taken into account in actual field activities and work with communities, and the needs of each organization for gender training and/or for more individualized technical assistance.

This diagnosis took three to four months, longer than originally anticipated, partly because WAWI partners are incredibly busy at the end of the year, but mainly because of the large number of partners and related government agencies. The process initiated more frequent contact with interested partners and, especially in Ghana, requests for individual technical assistance.

#### **The Gender Mainstreaming Workshop for all Partners and Government Associates**

The major single activity planned by USAID and DevTech for the gender mainstreaming program was a series of three, four-day workshops for WAWI partners. The workshops

brought together an approximately equal number of men and women (for a total of 30-35 at each workshop) from WAWI partner organizations and government agencies that work with WAWI. Many WAWI partner participants had attended the 2004 workshops, but most of the government participants had not. The content of each workshop was based on the needs analysis the gender expert in that country had conducted during the diagnostic phase. Since a separate report on each workshop and a summary report are available, this section will only briefly review the activities undertaken.

The Ghana workshop drew participants into a detailed gender analysis of their own activities and worked with them in developing a process for reformulating these activities to take better account of gender issues. The participants began a process of integrating gender considerations and gender sensitive problem analysis and planning tools into their organizational work plans. This had been a major goal of the 2004 workshops, but had not been achieved because participants knew too little about gender concepts and methods to be able to convince organizational managers to integrate gender issues into their actual work plans. By June 2005, most participants in the Ghana workshop were ready to make their first attempt at mainstreaming gender in this way. Participants requested that the gender consultant visit their organizations individually after the workshop to evaluate the results of their efforts and to help them move ahead. Unfortunately, logistical support for the consultant to travel to Tamale was unavailable and this activity was not implemented.

The Mali and Niger workshops focused on tools for participatory gender analysis, activity planning, and monitoring/evaluation. Tools like village resource maps were adapted to the analysis of water and sanitation infrastructure and water, sanitation, and hygiene management needs. Separate men's and women's groups worked with each tool in a situation that simulated a village setting. Gender issues were noted and discussed with the whole group as each group presented its results to the other. Descriptions of the tools, many of which are found in the FAO francophone ASEG manuals, (*Analyse Socio-Economique et du Genre*, [www.fao.org/sd/seaga](http://www.fao.org/sd/seaga)) were distributed to participants. Workshop activities were well received for their potential to provide highly relevant information and participatory planning activities with WAWI assisted communities, but participants also feared that their organizations (especially those that are providing infrastructure like boreholes and latrines) would be reluctant to program enough time to undertake gender analysis and participatory planning with communities before infrastructure construction begins.

The problem of lack of time to take gender issues into account in actual field activities stems from a pre-occupation with infrastructure, i.e. how many hand-pump equipped boreholes are installed and how many latrines are built per quarter. The fact that real-life action plans provide little or no time for activities like participatory gender analysis and local activity planning suggests that those who direct WAWI's overall planning and WAWI's funding agencies need to be convinced that participatory methods that take gender into account are important to project effectiveness and sustainability. This is a problem that is beyond the scope of the national gender consultants. It, like the related problem of integrating gender and community participation indicators into WAWI's overall monitoring program, must be taken on by a project-wide entity that is firmly supported by the WAWI funding organizations. A gender mainstreaming project cannot simply assume that there will be a place for gender-related activities until decision-makers at the very top of the project see the value of such activities. What the national gender consultants *can* do is to contribute to a process that will create a demand from below for effective local participation and the integration of gender-sensitivity into

the planning of WAWI activities.

### **Individual Assistance**

In Mali and Niger the diagnostic report was presented to a meeting of WAWI partners. Soon thereafter one or two partners requested individual assistance. Most also took interest in contributing to the planning of the all-partner (and related government agency) gender workshops. The workshops generated a great deal of interest in follow-up activities for specific organizations or organizational collaborators. In particular, WAWI direct partners and government representatives wanted to extend training in gender analysis and in the tools of gender-sensitive participatory planning, implementation, and evaluation to others within their organizations.

Two-day follow-up workshops took place in both Mali and Niger. Both focused on the integration of gender analysis and project planning/implementation tools in water and sanitation projects. The follow-up workshop in Mali was requested by the Segou Regional Directorate of Hydraulics and Energy. It was paid for by a major WAWI partner, World Vision, although World Vision sent only one person to the training. In Mali, there were also four other requests for mini-training/gender discussion sessions with particular local groups working with WAWI partners such as Water Aid and the National Program Against Blindness (PNLC).

In Niger, the severe famine from July to October 2005 delayed the follow-up workshop in Niamey until November. This workshop was directed to some of WAWI's smaller organizational and government partners that had not attended the main workshop in Maradi (a 12-hour drive from Niamey). It replicated the participatory approach and the focus on analytical and planning tools used in the main June workshop in Maradi. Participants felt, however, that a two-day workshop was too short to meet their needs for gender training adapted to their current work.

In Ghana, due to a longer history of gender training in the country and to the fact that the expertise of the gender consultant was well known, interest in individual assistance with gender issues in water and sanitation was high even before the June workshop. The managers of several WAWI partner organizations were acquainted with the work of the national gender consultant and were quick to request individual assistance. UNICEF asked the gender expert to provide gender training in hygiene issues for their government partners, including District Assembly members, technical staff such as health, hygiene and environmental health officers, and educators. A series of local workshops was held to accommodate this request. WaterAid-Ghana requested that the gender expert work with its local partner in Tamale to develop a series of training activities. WaterAid also asked the national gender consultant to participate in an organization-wide gender audit.<sup>2</sup> World Vision requested that the gender expert work with its field staff at the village level, helping them to learn directly how to deal with gender issues through the method of village discussion, the traditional village *durbar*.

The technical assistance to UNICEF and WaterAid was carried out, but the six village *durbars* planned for March-April 2005 had to be cancelled because of logistical and funding problems. This recurring problem also resulted in a lack of funds for Ghana's post-workshop activities, i.e. collaboration with the gender expert in an assessment of the WAWI partners' attempts to

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<sup>2</sup> A gender audit measures institutional sensitivity to gender issues and the level of incorporation of gender-sensitive tools in planning and implementation of activities, among other issues. Organizations are likely to want a gender audit only if they are very serious about changing their institutional culture and activities to better incorporate gender concerns.

integrate gender into their actual organizational work plans. During and after the gender workshop in Ghana, several organizations attempted for the first time to integrate gender into organizational work plans. Follow up is needed if those who are championing the integration of gender into organization work plans are to have the confidence and support to affect organizational working methods and activities.

### **Gender Working Groups**

The third activity planned for the Gender Mainstreaming Project, establishment of gender working groups, did not succeed in any of the three countries, even though an effort was made to establish such groups. Gender working groups were described in the terms of reference for the gender mainstreaming activity as a group of gender focal point persons from WAWI organizations who would meet regularly to exchange ideas and successful practices.

A basic reason for the failure of groups of this type to take root is that most people, including officially nominated gender focal points in various organizations, have little sense of what gender analysis is, much less what gender mainstreaming in an organization's activities would mean in terms of change. Except for UNICEF-Ghana and WaterAid in Ghana and Mali, which are training their collaborating government agencies and local partners in gender analysis and gender-sensitive planning of water and health related activities, WAWI partners are not currently engaging in gender-related activities or using gender analysis in planning activities with communities. Thus, as yet, there is little positive experience to exchange.

In Ghana, the gender expert discussed with partners the possibility that the existing monthly WAWI working group meetings in Tamale might be used from time to time to discuss gender issues. The answer was "no," in part because various people from each organization rotated their attendance at these meetings, and the gender focal points from the two main WAWI partners, World Vision and Water Aid/New Energy, were never invited to these meetings. And in this case, the gender focal points are actual gender experts, a very different case from that in most other organizations in Ghana and certainly in Niger and Mali.

Gender working groups may well become a relevant institutional mechanism for sharing information about gender mainstreaming in the future, but training and actual experimentation and experience with gender analysis and planning at the field level have to take place first. Until a critical mass of persons are grounded in gender mainstreaming concepts and methods, the direct assistance of gender experts is required not only for training, but also to assist field workers in their initial attempts to apply gender mainstreaming in their actual work and in subsequent planning.

### **IV. Lessons Learned: What Worked Well? Why? What Would Have Made it Work Better?**

The process of gender mainstreaming encompasses a wide variety of activities: awareness raising, learning and applying new analytical tools (gender analysis and gender-sensitive planning, implementation, monitoring), working to adapt tools and methods to different communities and project situations, and, finally, changing organizational and community cultures to incorporate what people have learned about gender-sensitive interventions.

The achievement of gender mainstreaming is not an easy task anywhere. Even in Ghana, where there is a relatively long history of various types of gender training, the national gender consultant for this project observed in her final report:

The weaknesses of the various partners came into sharp focus during the diagnostic phase. Despite the number of workshops held by the WAWI organizations, gender mainstreaming has not been understood [enough to allow people to incorporate gender awareness] into action plans and programs. The Gender Focal Persons remain ineffective because the institutions they represent do not fully understand what is required to achieve gender mainstreaming in their work.

### **Initial Analysis of Organizational Knowledge of and Attitudes toward Gender Mainstreaming**

An analysis of partners' gender attitudes and knowledge and of the extent to which gender issues are reflected in project activities is a crucial first step in the development of effective gender mainstreaming interventions for a multi-organization project like WAWI. This analysis cannot be accomplished fully in meetings with organizational leaders. It requires a series of conversations with staff at various levels and also field observations of actual project work. It is deepened as the consultant engages with individual organizations in a variety of technical assistance activities.

The diagnostic phase of this project provided the gender consultant with an initial knowledge of attitudes, activities, achievements and needs among WAWI's multiple partners. In all three countries there was significant variation in the level of knowledge about gender issues both among and within (between management and field staff) organizations. Government agencies dealing with water and sanitation issues had little knowledge of gender issues and how they might affect projects. Government cadres were, however, generally very interested in learning more about gender. Very few organizations had actually attempted to integrate gender concerns into their activities.

There were significant differences in interest in gender at the management level. When an organization's leaders were interested in exploring how gender mainstreaming might contribute to its activities, the diagnostic phase initiated a relationship in which organizational managers became acquainted with the gender expert and what she had to offer. This process created a collaborative relationship in which WAWI-wide activities in gender mainstreaming were planned in a participatory manner. It also resulted in requests for individual assistance. On the other hand, not all organizations are responsive to offers of technical assistance in the area of gender. Some are led by people who see no relation between their technical work and gender issues. It is not clear how the gender consultant should react to such a situation, but Mali's gender consultant has suggested that, given the large number of WAWI partners and associated government agencies that are interested in assistance with gender-sensitive analysis and planning, it may be best to focus the gender expert's limited time and budget on the partners who make it clear that they want the assistance.

### **Individualized Technical Assistance**

The provision of individual assistance proved to be the most successful aspect of the WAWI gender mainstreaming project, largely because the people who requested the assistance (and planned it with the individual gender experts) were motivated to make the most of it. All the

national consultants provided organization-specific assistance. The success of these efforts owed a great deal to the time that the consultants took to get to know individual WAWI partners during the three to four months in which they conducted their diagnosis. Success also was predicated on the experts' openness to trying new methods and to learning from both problems and successes. The more experienced the consultant, the more varied were the types of assistance provided. But even the most experienced gender experts were continually learning by doing as they adapted their gender expertise to specific organizational and community needs.

Effective individualized technical assistance requires that the gender expert be in a position to create her own program of individualized collaboration with specific WAWI partners and government agencies. The consultant also would benefit from access to funds for the initial activities undertaken with agencies that have no budget for gender-related activities or that may not be willing to pay the full cost of an activity until they are convinced of its value. It is not uncommon that gender consultants have to prove themselves to skeptical organizational directors or managers who control the purse strings of an organization. Success may not be achieved until an organization's staff reports that a workshop or community meeting was very helpful in showing people how attention to gender can improve project functioning and sustainability.

Continuing skepticism about the value of gender mainstreaming among organization managers means that for a funding agency like USAID to successfully promote gender mainstreaming, the people working on this task in the field must be competent and experienced, and they must have the funds and the latitude to design and implement their program of technical assistance and training.

## **Workshops**

Workshops can fulfill a variety of functions. Awareness-raising workshops are a useful gender-sensitization tool, especially when they apply African case studies that allow participants to analyze the reasons for successes and failures in water and sanitation activities. At the end of this type of workshop, people tend to be motivated to learn more. Organizations are stimulated to request individualized help from a gender expert, either to repeat a training activity at their organization or to help them analyze specific gender problems in their work.

Training workshops are an important intermediate level gender mainstreaming tool. People who are already interested in gender issues can gain by learning how to use gender analysis and participatory gender-sensitive problem-analysis, activity planning, project implementation and monitoring tools. Learning is enhanced if workshop participants work with tools in gender-specific groups or, even better, are able to practice using these tools in villages and urban areas where their project activities are taking place. Case studies based on an organization's own field experience are another useful tool for a training workshop.

The Niger and Mali workshops were a combination of gender sensitization (What does attention to gender mean, especially for water and sanitation projects?) and training (What gender sensitive tools can be used to help communities and organizations actually integrate a concern with gender into projects?). Since many participants had already attended the 2004 WAWI gender mainstreaming workshops, the emphasis in 2005 was on tools, hands-on experience in using them, and discussion of how this or that tool contributes to gender mainstreaming in a water and sanitation project. This approach was highly successful, if we

measure success in the importance participants attached to follow-up workshops with their colleagues to spread this knowledge to a critical mass of people who may then be able to apply it in their actual work. In Niger, the famine of July to September took precedence over the normal water and sanitation work of many partners (eg. UNICEF), but workshop participants took their knowledge of gender tools into their work with communities around the famine.

A more advanced level of workshop-based training in gender mainstreaming tends to focus on the participating organizations themselves. Here training in how to conduct a gender audit of the organization's own gender culture and gender commitment in programming might be a prime tool. Another is the examination of organizational work activities and work plans to identify how more attention to gender analysis and the use of gender-sensitive planning and implementation tools might improve the outcomes and sustainability of water and sanitation activities. The latter was the main approach used in the Ghana workshop. Participants actually began the process of revising work plans during the workshop, but also requested follow-up assistance from the gender consultant.

The type of workshop that will have the most positive impact depends on where the participants (and their organizations) are in the long process of gender mainstreaming. Workshops of increasing complexity should have participants with enough experience with gender issues to take on complex activities. This does not necessarily imply that only a small group of persons should be trained at different levels. How gender training should proceed depends critically on the interest of the WAWI organization. Some organizations may be interested in extending initial gender awareness training widely before taking on a second step of moving more directly into using gender analysis and planning tools in their own work. Gender programs need to be flexible and targeted to organizations' particular readiness, interests, and activities.

The Mali gender consultant has suggested that larger multi-organization workshops may have limited value now that a small group of people in many WAWI partner agencies have been sensitized and trained in that type of workshop. She suggests that WAWI gender workshops should now be planned with a group of people who work together (such as NGOs and government agencies) and that the types of tools included in the training should reflect a prior analysis of the needs of those specific organizations. Follow-up activities, such as taking the tools to villages or the main venue of the organization's work so that participants can use what they have learned in their actual work situation, should also be part of the overall envelope of gender mainstreaming activities. This model has different implications for costs and funding than a traditional workshop, and will need to be taken into account in planning.

Flexibility in the use of workshop and training funds is essential so that the gender consultant and collaborating WAWI partners can work creatively together to design the program to meet their needs. When training is focused on an individual partner, if that partner receives considerable funding from WAWI, it can be expected to pay for the individual assistance it requests. But when a government agency is the prime focus of a training activity, support for mini-workshops or field-based training activities usually will need to come from the agency funding the gender mainstreaming program.

## Gender Working Groups

Our experience suggests that it was too early to establish WAWI gender working groups in any of the three countries due to the lack of a critical mass of people with a serious interest in gender issues in water and sanitation. The national gender consultants may want to try to establish gender working groups in the future when there is a greater demand from the gender focal points and others in WAWI partner organizations.

The success of the 2005 workshops in generating concrete ideas about what can be done to integrate gender issues into WAWI partners' participatory activity planning may make the attempt to establish separate gender working groups worthwhile—especially in Ghana. WAWI partners like WaterAid and World Vision have effective gender focal points whose job descriptions are to promote gender mainstreaming and many government agencies in the water and sanitation sectors as well as the Tamale Metropolitan Authority have gender focal points. In Niger, by contrast, the naming of gender focal points and deputies is a new phenomenon. It is the fruit of the urging of the Niger gender consultant, who suggested the idea to WAWI partners and government agencies during her diagnostic exercise. These people *may* be ready to meet to share ideas for activities, or they may still need more gender training or individualized assistance before participation in a gender working group can be useful to their work.

What *did* work in terms of the national gender consultants integration into a regular meeting cycle was the attendance of the WAWI gender consultants at the monthly meetings of the WAWI partners held in Niamey and Bamako. Attendance allowed the Mali and Niger gender consultants to learn about WAWI and its individual partners as organizations. At these meetings, the national gender consultants informed the partners about their activities, made individual appointments, and reported on the results of gender mainstreaming activities, such as the initial diagnosis of gender needs, the June workshop results, and the planned workshop follow up activities.

## V. Recommendations for the Continuing Gender Mainstreaming Project

The following recommendations are specific to the continuing WAWI Gender Mainstreaming Project, but they also have relevance vis-à-vis the planning and implementation of a gender mainstreaming project on a more general level. Most of the recommendations are based on the experience and suggestions of the national gender experts in the 2004-05 gender programs in Mali, Niger, and Ghana.

**Planning of the next phase of the Gender Mainstreaming Project should be carried out with the participation of WAWI partners and the national consultant in each country.**

The Gender Mainstreaming Project and the workplan of the national gender consultant should reflect the concerns and desires of all interested WAWI partners and the major collaborating government agencies with respect to their needs for assistance with gender mainstreaming activities and training. It would be best to develop the program in the context of a one-day workshop with all interested partners and government agencies in attendance. Indicators for monitoring the program could be developed at the workshop.

**Gender mainstreaming activities in the next phase should concentrate on activities based on the needs of particular WAWI partner organizations and be planned jointly with them.**

Mini-workshops planned with partners should be held in field sites of particular organizations. Individualized support for partner organizations may also take the form of village-level discussions about gender issues in water and sanitation in which the field agents of a particular agency learn how to use gender analysis in their actual work situations.

UNICEF tends to work through government agencies and elected governmental bodies. All three national consultants have emphasized that the WAWI gender program needs to focus on government agencies in order to improve the way they take gender into account in their work with villagers and peri-urban residents.

In the later stages of the second phase of the gender mainstreaming activities, individual assistance might take the form of working with WAWI partner agencies to integrate gender into their annual work plans. To this end, it is important that the gender consultants study partners' work plans early in the program (without attempting to initiate a process of changing them) in order to better plan activities oriented toward the specific needs of individual partners.

Those organizations that have considerable gender awareness and are trying to deepen their commitment to gender-sensitive participatory planning and implementation may want assistance with a gender audit of their entire organization. It is still, however, too early to suggest this type of activity on a WAWI-wide basis. An effective gender audit must be initiated from within an organization. WaterAid-Ghana conducted a gender audit in early 2005.

**The next phase of WAWI technical assistance in gender mainstreaming should assist field workers in learning how to help communities identify, analyze, and integrate gender issues into the water and sanitation activities they undertake with WAWI.**

The consultant from Niger has strongly emphasized the need to prioritize field-based activities in the second phase of the project, especially participatory problem analysis with communities and hands-on workshops with field workers and communities, to test the relevance of the tools introduced in the 2005 workshop in the real world work situations of WAWI partners.

Since WAWI is a participatory program that must work closely with communities, on-the-job training of WAWI partner field workers and managers in methods of working with communities should be a central focus of gender mainstreaming activities. The objective of community-based activities is to assist communities in identifying gender issues in the water and sanitation sector, in analyzing how these issues affect WAWI project outcomes, and in helping communities take gender into account in their water-related activities. The Ghana and Mali experts have already started direct work with WAWI's WaterAid partners in peri-urban communities. This type of work was planned but unfortunately not completed with World Vision in Ghana. Direct community-based gender mainstreaming training of WAWI partners needs to be continued in the next phase of the project so that WAWI field workers learn how to work with communities in integrating gender issues into their core activities.

**Special attention should be given to government water and sanitation agencies, as well as other government agencies working with WAWI partners.**

This gender mainstreaming activity found that water/hydraulics and sanitation departments are commonly left out of gender sensitization and training programs. It is essential that they not only be included in WAWI's gender mainstreaming activities, but that the gender consultants pay particular attention to reinforcing their capacities to understand the gender issues that affect their activities so that they can be more effective in resolving the gender-based problems they face on a daily basis. One way of doing this would be to train a core group of gender focal persons who can work with the national gender consultant in training water and sanitation field agents. The ministries for women's issues in each country also might be given special training in water and sanitation as well as water-related health and hygiene issues so that they can assist in providing specialized training for government agencies in the sector.

In Mali, there is a need to support the *Direction Nationale de l'Hydraulique* in a review of the Water Code so that gender issues can be integrated into this critical national policy document. This activity, however, goes beyond the type of assistance that can be provided by the national gender consultant.

**The national gender experts should attend the WAWI partners' monthly meetings and report from time to time on gender mainstreaming activities.**

The monthly WAWI partners' meetings, which typically last two hours, are not, in most cases, an appropriate venue for engaging in the types of gender mainstreaming experience sharing or mini-training that had been envisioned as the rationale for the formation of WAWI gender working groups. On the other hand, we think it is crucial that the WAWI gender consultant be a regular member of these meetings. Furthermore, at one or two meetings each year, a gender focal point from a partner organization or a government agency could be invited to discuss a particularly successful gender-related activity in a water or sanitation project and its benefits for his/her organization. This would help the organizational decision-makers better understand how a similar gender-related activity might improve the effectiveness and sustainability of their own projects.

As the gender mainstreaming project evolves during its second year, the national gender experts may want to experiment with the formation of gender working groups in particular areas and regions where interest is high and the gender consultant feels that groups might benefit from learning about each others' experiences. These meetings might also encourage the planning of some joint work in integrating gender into partners' fieldwork with government agencies.

**The national gender consultant should compile a set of documents on the integration of gender in water, sanitation, and health/hygiene projects, and funds should be made available so that relevant documents can be duplicated and shared with gender focal points and participants in training activities.**

Each national consultant has begun to develop a set of documents (case studies, tools, analytical studies) that are particularly appropriate to various types of training exercises in the area of gender mainstreaming in water, sanitation, and hygiene activities. Funds are needed to reproduce the most useful of these documents so that they can be distributed to the gender focal points and other interested parties as gender mainstreaming activities are being developed in particular agencies. All training and mini-training activities should be able to provide participants with copies of documents that can help them reinforce their learning and actually

use the tools of gender-sensitive problem analysis and planning tools they have learned in their own work. Funds must also be available to the gender consultants so that they can identify and collect additional documentation to use in their activities and to distribute to others, for instance to other gender experts, gender focal point persons, and participants in training activities. This will greatly facilitate the experimentation with new gender analysis and planning methods at the field level and the reproduction of training within WAWI partner organizations.

**Monitoring indicators for the gender mainstreaming program need to be developed in collaboration with WAWI partners and associated government agencies.**

As indicated in the first recommendation, the second phase of the gender mainstreaming should be jointly planned with WAWI partners, government collaborators, and the supervising agency, preferably in the context of a one-day workshop. Appropriate monitoring indicators should be developed at the workshop. At the level of monitoring indicators for the success of the gender mainstreaming program as a whole, the following might be considered:

- The number of requests from WAWI partners and government collaborators for individual or group-based technical assistance from the national gender consultant.
- The number of activities that are financed in part or in full by WAWI partners.
- The number of activities organized and led by gender focal persons and others from within the WAWI organizations.
- National gender consultants need the freedom to plan and carry out their individual program activities and to have their professional opinions about the substance and the timing of those activities respected and supported. They also will benefit from the opportunity to visit and participate in one another's programs.

The day-to-day complexities and changes in the requirements of the innovative gender mainstreaming technical assistance being attempted under WAWI, with multiple organizations requires that the national gender experts have flexibility for program planning and implementation. The work plan devised at the beginning of the activity provides a framework for the consultant's work, recognizing that organizations may ask for a new type of assistance they had not envisioned initially. They can benefit from the opportunity to exchange experiences with one another, but each should have the full responsibility for his/her program. The supervising agency should limit its interventions to timely logistical support and to monitoring and evaluating the gender program.

**WAWI's funding organizations need to demonstrate their commitment to gender mainstreaming through continuous support and oversight of the institutions they support to make sure that partners' commitment to gender mainstreaming goes beyond words.**

The success of WAWI-based funding for gender mainstreaming depends crucially on the importance the funding organizations accord to the involvement of WAWI partners in gender mainstreaming activities. Are the funding organizations aware of the attitudes of the partners toward gender mainstreaming activities? Are the partner organizations open to analyzing their own needs for technical assistance (as well as their achievements) in this area? Do their managers help plan gender mainstreaming activities with the gender consultant to make sure that they are relevant to organizational needs? Are partners actively supporting the activities of the gender expert, or are they, by neglect or negative attitude, undermining these activities? USAID and the Hilton Foundation need to show partners that they care about these questions

and that they are actively following partners' involvement in the gender mainstreaming program. If gender mainstreaming is to contribute significantly to the effectiveness and sustainability of the WAWI program, the partner organizations need to understand that the funding organizations regard the gender program as a core activity.

On a very practical level USAID needs to ask whether the logistical support arrangements for the gender consultants are appropriate and sufficiently flexible to permit the consultants to work effectively with partners. The disruption of planned activities due to an administrative failure can damage relations with partners who may still be skeptical about the value of gender mainstreaming. USAID should review and assess the constraints placed on the program by the funding arrangements for the consultants in order to develop a system that will minimize the chance of program damaging experiences.

Finally, USAID and the Hilton Foundation must ask themselves if they are willing to allow partner organizations to spend time on community involvement in gender analysis and gender sensitive-planning of water and sanitation activities. This question is most pertinent when plans are made for the number of boreholes to be dug and the number of sanitary facilities to be constructed. The allocation of adequate time for gender-sensitive problem analysis and participatory planning of water and sanitation activities at the community level is an absolutely central issue. If partner organizations don't have time to take gender issues into account because they are rushing to meet quantitative infrastructure objectives, there will be few positive effects of the gender mainstreaming activities on the WAWI program as a whole. If partners see gender mainstreaming as a peripheral activity, they will accord it only peripheral attention.