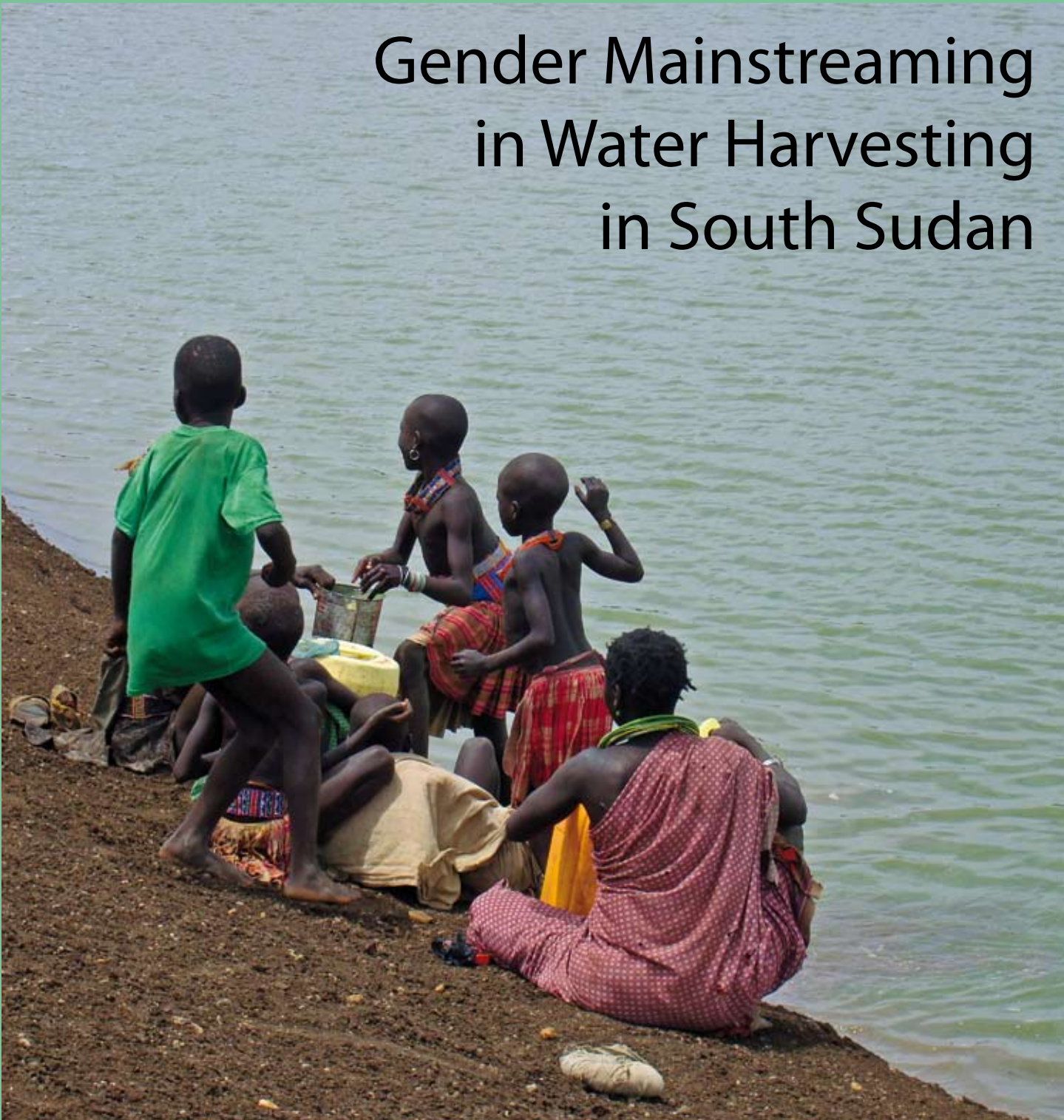




Ministry of Electricity, Dams, Irrigation and Water Resources

Gender Mainstreaming in Water Harvesting in South Sudan



TECHNICAL GUIDELINES



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Cover Image: © FAO, South Sudan/J. Wani – Woman and girls collecting water from Nakurmai *Hafir* in Kapoeta East, South Sudan

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Executive summary

Resource-based conflicts over access to traditional grazing lands and water rights in South Sudan form a fundamental challenge to peace and stability in the country. To tackle the causes of conflict, the Government of South Sudan and the international community have been investing in livestock water provision over the last several years.

Unfortunately the building of water harvesting structures has so far focused mainly on the technical aspects, with less attention to social dynamics and peace-building, with impacts on the sustainability of the interventions. In order to understand water harvesting interventions in the context of livelihoods improvement, conflict resolution and policy discourse in South Sudan, FAO in collaboration with UNEP have embarked on a joint project - "Assessment of water harvesting structures for sustainable livelihoods and peace building in South Sudan", financed from the Peace Building Fund (PBF) for South Sudan.

A gender analysis was conducted to inform the government and development partners to better understand the different needs and priorities men and women as water users. The findings of the gender assessment form the basis of this gender mainstreaming guidelines for future water harvesting interventions.

It is important to recognize women's and men's rights as water users in their own right and consider the different implications of water harvesting for women, men, boys and girls in any project, programme or policy to assess how they will benefit from different interventions. Such a gender approach to water harvesting interventions would contribute to sustainability and impact on conflict reduction and peace-building.

This guideline is a reference document for gender mainstreaming in water harvesting in South Sudan and is meant for organizations investing in and implementing water harvesting projects for livestock.

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Abbreviations and acronyms

CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
KII	Key Informant Interviews
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
O&M	Operation and Maintenance
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UN	United Nations
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Programme
WHS	Water Harvesting Structures

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

After a short period of calm soon after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005, resource-based conflicts over access to traditional grazing lands and water rights escalated in all states of South Sudan, forming a fundamental challenge to peace and stability in the country. Disputes over political boundaries that delimit pasture, water and migration routes have exacerbated the situation. Typically these conflicts are among pastoralists themselves and between pastoralists and farmers in different ethnic communities and are particularly heavy in the drought-prone “arc of conflict” extending through Jonglei, Lakes and Eastern Equatoria States. To tackle the causes of conflict, the Government of South Sudan and the international community have been investing in livestock water provision (including *hafirs*¹) over the last several years. By increasing availability of water for livestock in communities under stress, it is expected to decrease conflict as cattle keepers need to travel less to access water and there will thus be a smaller likelihood for confrontation.

Unfortunately the building of water harvesting structures has so far focused mainly on the technical aspects, with less attention to social dynamics and peace-building, with impacts on the sustainability of the interventions. In order to understand water harvesting interventions in the context of livelihoods improvement, conflict resolution and policy discourse in South Sudan, FAO in collaboration with UNEP have embarked on a joint project - “Assessment of water harvesting structures for sustainable livelihoods and peace building in South Sudan”, financed from the Peace Building Fund (PBF) for South Sudan.

As an important part of this assessment, a gender analysis was conducted to inform the government and development partners to better understand the different needs and priorities men and women have for water harvesting interventions. Women in South Sudan often have less access to productive resources, services, and employment opportunities than they would need to be fully productive. They are burdened with time-consuming domestic tasks such as collecting water and fuel wood. It is important to recognize women’s and men’s rights as water users in their own right and consider the different implications of water harvesting for women, men, boys and girls in any project, programme, or policy to assess how they will benefit from different interventions. Such a gender approach to water harvesting interventions would contribute to sustainability and impact on conflict reduction and peace-building. The findings of the gender analysis form the basis of this gender mainstreaming guidelines for future water harvesting interventions.

This guideline is a reference document for gender mainstreaming in water harvesting in South Sudan and is meant for organizations investing in and implementing water harvesting projects for livestock. The primary target groups comprise of staff from the Ministry of Electricity, Dams, Irrigation and Water Resources (MEDIWR) at the national and state levels. The guidelines may also be of interest to the international community particularly NGOs, UN, donors and private contractors.

Section one of the guidelines highlights the way gender, conflict and water are interrelated in the South Sudan context. Guidance for considering gender aspects at different stages of the pre- and post- construction phases to ensure effective and sustainable water harvesting interventions is presented in section two. Key gender concepts are included in the annex.

1 *Hafir* is a hollow dug in the ground to store runoff water after the rainy season

1.2 Context

Cattle rearing and acquisition is central to the cultural identity and status of pastoralist communities in South Sudan. Young men are responsible for guarding the cattle, and engaging in fighting in order to protect the wealth of their families is seen as a sign of bravery and male self-worth. Masculinity and rites of passage associated with cattle acquisition and protection put young men under pressure. During the seasonal migration of herders from one state or county to another in search of water and pasture for livestock, young men stay together in cattle camps, increasing the probability of violent clashes between groups of young men.

Formerly, when conflicts occurred between villages, clans or tribes, the casualties were low because traditional weapons (sticks and spears) were used and traditional conflict-resolution mechanisms were used to control them. However, in recent years intra- and inter-ethnic conflicts have become more violent particularly among pastoralist groups due to several reasons, such as the availability of firearms, weakening of local conflict resolution mechanisms², culture of impunity, growing inequalities and poverty, as well as droughts which heavily reduce water availability³. They are characterised by violent armed conflicts resulting in alarming numbers of accompanying casualties. In addition, there has been extensive looting and destruction of property and livelihoods assets, appropriation of massive numbers of cattle from villages and cattle camps, displacement of large numbers of men, women and children and in the worst cases widespread civilian casualties through deliberate targeting (murder, violence and sexual violence) of women, children and the elderly. This triggers reprisal attacks to recoup lost cattle and loss of life. The cycle is exacerbated by the absence of other livelihood or employment opportunities for youth⁴.

Women suffer as victims of violence but also have enormous untapped potential for conflict resolution and peace building. The women of South Sudan played an instrumental role in the liberation country's struggle and they continue to carry out advocacy regarding peace building.

1.3 Main findings of the gender analysis

The gender analysis reveals a general lack of awareness of the different roles and priorities of men and women in the design and management of the existing water harvesting facilities. The initial community mobilization and consultations to create awareness on the construction of Water Harvesting Structures (WHS) only involved community leaders, who were all men. The planning did not involve a gender analysis or gender-sensitive feasibility studies to inform type, design, size and cost of WHS. Women were thus not consulted in the siting or design of the *hafirs*. This has led to many of the other problems identified:

- An important aspect left out in the planning is that the *hafirs* are often the only source of water, and are thus used also for collecting water for domestic purposes. However, they are often situated in remote locations, and for women and girls to collect water, they have to walk 5-7 km being exposed to the risk of sexual violence which could result in conflict. The daily trips used to collect water take a significant amount of time, which could be used for other activities by women and girls (e.g. productive activities and education). Some of the *hafirs* have no provisions for domestic water collection and sharing the source with livestock presents a disease risk.
- Some *hafirs* are not operational due to delays in construction and technical design errors that resulted to siltation thus no water is available for livestock or humans and this implies that women, men, girls and boys have to look for alternative sources of water.

2 International Alert, (2012). Peace and Conflict Assessment of South Sudan 2012. Understanding conflict. Building Peace.

3 Kircher, Ingrid (2013). Challenges to Security, Livelihoods, and Gender Justice in South Sudan. Oxfam Research Report

4 Peace Building Fund Priority Plan South Sudan

- In Eastern Equatoria where *hafirs* are the only source of water for livestock and humans, lack of proper management by the committees, results in communities watering livestock in hafirs during the rainy season instead of the dry season. This implies hafirs are not able to provide sufficient water during the dry season, thus forcing herders to migrate in search of water resulting to conflict.
- The analysis also pointed out weaknesses in relation to the management of the WHS. Although the *hafirs* have management committees in place their roles and responsibilities are not well defined. Despite the 30 percent female representation in committees, women are not speaking or making decisions. Men dominate the decision making and leadership positions, and there is strong resistance towards women's membership and voice in the committees.
- There has been very little capacity building of the committee members. Only in the Lokoges *hafir* (Eastern Equatoria), three elders were trained in pump operation - women did not benefit from this training. There were evident capacity gaps in relation to lack of understanding of water, natural resource and environmental management by all committee members, men and women alike. No gender awareness, peace building and conflict resolution trainings were held, nor exchange visits to expose committee members to other successful community based water management initiatives.
- Furthermore, the management of the *hafirs* is causing serious health risks. All *hafirs* have no management in place, in most of them silt traps are missing or blocked thus women have no access to potable water and they collect water directly from *hafir* posing a disease risk (diarrhea, Guinea worm, bilharzia, typhoid, zoonotic diseases from livestock and wildlife). Nakurmai *hafir* has crocodiles that pose a risk on the lives of women and girls.
- There are no formal directives on management of *hafirs* at state and community levels.

As a conclusion from these findings, it is evident that a gender approach is needed throughout any WH intervention to ensure men and women, boys and girls will be able to benefit. Inclusion of gender aspects will lead to greater:

- **Effectiveness:** the WHS will be more widely and optimally used and deliver longer term benefits for women and men during the dry season (for 5-6 months annually) when water is scarce by improving access to all groups in the community.
- **Efficiency:** with limited funds and resources, the government, development partners and donors will ensure that the impact of WHS to target communities and vulnerable socio-economic groups is maximised through appropriate management by women and men.
- **Development:** the WHS and their social processes will not only provide water for livestock and humans during the dry season, but they will also sustain communities in their home territory or along migratory routes thus reducing incidences of conflict. Overall the welfare of the target communities will improve since women, men and youth will have adequate access to water, contributing to livelihoods, peace building and a reduction of conflict.
- **Sustainable use of WHS:** participation of women and men in management of WHS will ensure better protection of the environment, thus contributing to social, economic and environmental sustainability.
- **Equity:** burdens and benefits stemming from the WHS will be shared more equitably between women and men in the community at large, reducing women's work burden and time poverty.

1.4 Guideline development

This guideline is meant to provide guidance on how to effectively mainstream gender aspects in pre- and post-construction phases of water harvesting facilities so that they are sustainably managed, contribute to livelihoods improvement and reduction of women's work burden and time poverty, conflict reduction and peace building as well as to the policy discourse on water harvesting in South Sudan.

The guideline was developed through a review of literature and secondary data from various documents related to water harvesting and gender in South Sudan, Key Informant Interviews (KII), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with communities, women and men, gender analysis and observations conducted during field missions to selected water harvesting structures in Lakes, Eastern Equatoria and Western Equatoria States by a team of water engineers, natural resource, gender and environmental and social impact specialists.

2 Gender mainstreaming in water harvesting

This section is a presentation of gender aspects that need to be considered at the pre- and post-construction phases to ensure that WH interventions are effective, efficient and sustainable.

2.1 Pre-construction phase

2.1.1 Take an integrated approach to water harvesting

Water harvesting interventions should be understood as only one priority area of the livelihoods of the people being served. Water use should be considered as a whole - if there is no other source of water for the community, the WHS will be used for both livestock as well as domestic purposes. In addition, the entire lifespan of the structures should be considered, and attention paid to supporting the establishment of sound and equitable management mechanisms.

From the outset, planning of water harvesting interventions should take into consideration the needs and priorities of different social groups of community members (women and men, boys and girls), and the potential constraints they face in participating in the planning of the operation. These aspects should then be integrated into the project cycle and in the policy dialogue.

Organisations and relevant ministries should put in place financing agreements and institutional arrangements that not only focus on provision of water but also sustainable management of water harvesting structures. Such agreements and arrangements should take into consideration the needs, opinions and interests of women and men and allow their participation for WH interventions to deliver longer term benefits to communities, contribute to livelihoods and peace building and reduce conflict.

2.1.2 Conduct Gender Analysis

A key step in gender-sensitive planning is to conduct a gender analysis at a very early stage of the process, to better understand the different user groups and stakeholders that will be affected by the planned structures.

Involving a gender expert at the inception of WH interventions to contribute to a gender-sensitive stakeholder analysis and to collect and analyze sex-disaggregated data will be an important step in ensuring that gender aspects are integrated into the process. Unless provisions for participatory planning are made from the start, there is a high risk that they will be left out altogether. The data collected should identify water users in the target communities, water needs, priorities, challenges and constraints to access to water by women and men. The process should be participatory so that different views of women and men are gathered. This can be done through:

- **Key Informant Interviews (KII)** to gather information on different groups that exist in the community, different water needs and water users by selected individuals (*Payam* administrators, women group leaders, teachers, community and youth leaders) who have in-depth knowledge and experience of the community.
- **Separate Focus Group Discussions (FGD)** with women and girls and men and boys in the target communities to find out the different water needs, constraints to access water, priorities and challenges of the different groups.

Checklists/tools for data collection should be developed to guide the gender analysis process. The checklist in Box 1 can be used as guidance.

Box 1: Gender analysis checklist for water harvesting

- Conduct KILs and separate FGDs for women and girls and men and boys in the community
- Who uses water in the community?
- How do women and girls, men and boys use water? Domestic use, e.g. cooking, sanitation and productive use e.g. irrigation, livestock, should both be addressed.
- Who collects water? From where? How is it transported? How much water is collected? Who decides on the water use?
- What water do communities use (surface, ground etc.)?
- If there is an existing WHS, who was involved in the siting/location of the WHS and why (Male/Female)?
- Who is using the WHS?
- Do WHS provide access for domestic water by women?
- Who is responsible for maintenance of WHS (women, men and youth) and why? Who is trained in O&M?
- Is community paying for water collected?
- How were the costs determined and who was involved?
- Do women and men have money to pay for water?
- How is demand for water/use of WHS determined?
- Does paying for water reduce the quantities of water collected by women and men?
- How do community/women/men ensure that water from the WHS is conserved/used well?
- Are there Water Management Committees or Water Users Associations? Who is involved in management (M/F)? Are both men and women allowed to participate? Are Female Headed Households involved?
- Community/Management meetings – do agendas/time/locations encourage women's attendance and reflect women's priorities and water needs?
- Who is responsible for sanitation/quality of water/securing WHS? (M/F/youth)? Does allocation of tasks affect responsibilities and time burdens of women?
- What are the impact/benefits of water provision for women, girls, boys and men? What skills do women and men require to effectively manage *hafirs*? - knowledge, training, new skills, Operation & Maintenance etc.? Increase women/men opportunities for decision making?
- Are protection measures in place for women, men and youth using the WHS?
- Who represents the different water users when negotiations for water use take place?
- How can the representation and needs of the less powerful groups be ensured?
- What priorities are set with respect to different water uses? Who benefits from the agreed priorities?
- How far do women and girls have to walk to collect water?
- How many times a day do women collect water?
- What security risks do women and girls (men and boys) face? Are they at risk of abuse, attack or exploitation?
- What are the challenges to water access by women, girls, men and boys?

2.1.3 Feed the results of the Gender Analysis into the design of WHS

Base the design of the WHS on the findings of the gender analysis, and seek the views of women and men, boys and girls on how planned water harvesting options and design features will affect them and their water needs and constraints to access.

Take into account the particular time and workload considerations of women and men when organizing participatory sessions. Make sure that the time of the day is suitable for the women recognizing their full workloads, and that the location is such that they can safely access.

2.1.4 Develop capacities of local institution

Government and organisations investing in water harvesting should ensure that their staffs institutionalise the need to address gender concerns and questions. One way through which this could be done is by training high level and field level staff (such as water engineers, environmental and social impact specialists, sociologists, and livestock and natural resource management specialists) in organizations in the gender issues related to sustainable water harvesting, peace building and livelihoods. This training should encompass facilitation skills in participatory approaches (to enable them to work with communities), gender analysis and collection of sex-disaggregated data⁵, and gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation.

2.1.5 Ensure skills in Operation & Maintenance

Conduct stakeholder consultation and community mobilisation that is inclusive of herders, local chiefs, men, women and youth groups to strengthen the involvement of community members in ownership and operation and maintenance of the water harvesting structures.

Train management committees (men and women) in operation and maintenance by providing technical training to women, men, and youth, in repairs, fencing, de-silting, grassing, routine inspection etc.

2.1.6 Invest in efficient and inclusive management committees

Put management committees in place to ensure equitable access to water for livestock and domestic use, protection and rehabilitation of the catchment areas, resolution of conflicts that may arise during the use of the water harvesting structures and natural resources, environmental protection of the WH sites from overgrazing, bush fires, and other risks. Ensure representation of different sections of the community including chiefs, cattle herders, men, women, youth and other stakeholders to oversee management of water harvesting structures and ensure participation of women and men.

Train management committees on their roles and responsibilities. Train women in leadership roles so that they can take up leadership positions and voice their concerns in management committees and in the community. To encourage participation of women in management committees, establish minimum quotas and in decision making processes utilize affirmative action policies. Organize separate meetings for women where they cannot speak in mixed groups to prevent men from dominating. Encourage women to express their views and ask questions for clarification, have their views listened to and discussed, and influence decision making.

⁵ This is data collected and presented separately for women and men.

Ensure that women and men have equal access to information. Taking into account the low literacy levels and language barriers, use local languages and visual aids such as comics or pictures to transmit messages in a culturally sensitive way. This could include pictures, different-coloured voting cards for women and men or different age groups and then comparing different opinions on various topics. Simple activities relevant to the local context, group dynamic activities and energizers to create a relaxed atmosphere for active sharing and learning and encourage interactive learning between the facilitator and participants (and engage them both mentally and physically).

Conduct gender awareness training for target communities, particularly for men and women in management committees by repackaging and simplifying complex issues of gender in a culturally appropriate and sensitive non-confrontational manner to avoid presenting the concept as one intending to either undermine male dominated communities or promoting female dominance over men. Involve influential men, such as chiefs or government authorities in the work to change attitudes⁶.

2.1.7 Allocate funds for gender-specific activities

Clearly identify gender-specific activities and allocate funds for them to address the specific needs of women and girls, and men and boys throughout the intervention.

For example, to ensure the participation of women in the management committees, decision-making, and operation and maintenance of the facilities, funds should be allocated for supporting their capacity development in leadership skills, communication, and technical skills. To free up time for women to participate actively in these trainings and management activities, a separate component on reducing women's work burden could be included.

2.2 Post-construction phase

2.2.1 Set up a gender-sensitive Monitoring & Evaluation system

Monitor carefully the impact of the WHS on the time use and workload of the groups, operation and maintenance responsibilities, gender inequalities, traditional systems of resource use and related conflict management.

Organizations (and donors) implementing water harvesting interventions should put a monitoring⁷ and evaluation⁸ process in place that ensures men and women are involved, with the ability to take corrective action on any gender issues identified. This must be done during project formulation by determining gender sensitive indicators against which evidence (changes in) the position and situation of women and men will be measured. Some examples of gender sensitive indicators are indicated in Box 2.

Box 2: Examples of gender-sensitive indicators

- Number (or percentage) of women and men in participating/representation in management committees
- Percentage (or number) of women and men trained in operation and maintenance
- Number of women and men with access to *hafirs*
- Percentage of women in management committee leadership positions
- Number of households with improved access to water for household use
- Number of women/girls/boys reporting time saved in the collection of water

⁶ According to a study by Oxfam the term "gender" itself has negative connotations in South Sudan, and may be seen as something imposed by the international community. A good entry point is to highlight the importance of women through their traditional roles, and encourage them to speak.

⁷ Monitoring is a continuous process of measuring or tracking what is happening.

⁸ Evaluation is a process that tries to determine as systematically and objectively as possible the worth of an intervention.

During evaluation on the impact of WH interventions, the gender issues should be clearly specified in the “terms of reference”. Gender expertise should be compulsory for evaluation teams and in addition efforts should be made to ensure that the teams include both women and men. Data collected during evaluations should be sex- and age- disaggregated and should clearly indicate the impact and benefits of water harvesting interventions for different groups of women and men.

2.2.2 Promote knowledge sharing and policy dialogue

To influence government, development partners and donors to invest more funding into WH interventions, continuous, non-linear and open social dialogue on gender and policy discourse on water harvesting is important. In addition, evidence on how a gendered approach (lessons learnt, best practices, case studies, successes, challenges and catalysts) in water harvesting and management contributes to livelihoods improvement, conflict reduction and peace building in South Sudan.

Gender glossary

- **Gender** refers not to male and female, but to masculine and feminine - that is, to qualities or characteristics that society ascribes to each sex.
- **Gender analysis** is the study of the different roles of women and men in order to understand what they do, what resources they have, and what their needs and priorities are.
- **Gender balance** is the equal and active participation of women and men in all areas of decision-making, and in access to and control over resources and services.
- **Gender discrimination** is any exclusion or restriction made on the basis of gender roles and relations that prevents a person from enjoying full human rights.
- **Gender equality** is a state in which women and men enjoy equal rights, opportunities and entitlements in civil and political life.
- **Gender equity** means fairness and impartiality in the treatment of women and men in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities.
- **Gender relations** are the ways in which a society defines rights, responsibilities and the identities of men and women in relation to one another.
- **Gender mainstreaming** is defined by the United Nations as the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action in all areas and at all levels.
- **Gender roles** are those behaviours, tasks and responsibilities that a society considers appropriate for men, women, boys and girls.

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